

# the *f*ACTivist

**In This Publication:**

Foreword: Race and Racism in Alberta - p.2

The Subtle and Commonplace Nature of Modern Racism - p.3

The Language of Discrimination - p.5

What Happened to the Good Ol' Hockey Game? - p.7

Research Review: Experiences and Perceptions of Discrimination in  
Edmonton - p. 9

History of Hate Groups in  
Alberta - p.11

Aboriginal Canadians and Reporting Hate Crime in Edmonton and  
Canada - p.13

Edmonton Inner-City Youth and Racism - p.15

Rethinking Multiculturalism - p. 17

Immigrant Health Care in Alberta: Bridging the Social, Cultural and  
Political Gaps - p. 19

Get Out and Stay Out: Discussing Race and Multiculturalism in  
Edmonton - p. 21

The Work of the Centre for  
Race and Culture - p. 23





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- Awareness Events
- Conferences
- Fundraisers
- ESPC Board Meetings
- ESPC Events
- Publication Releases
- Workshops

### COMMUNITY CALENDAR

November 2012						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
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25	26	27	28	29	30	

# Foreword: Race and Racism in Alberta

By Susan Morrissey, Executive Director, Edmonton Social Planning Council



The vision of Edmonton Social Planning Council is for a healthy, just and inclusive community. This is why we have decided to devote our attention to the topic of Race and Racism in this edition of the FACTivist. A recent report released by the City of Edmonton entitled, Experiences and Perceptions of Discrimination in Edmonton: A Survey of Edmonton Residents, which provides the impetus for this FACTivist. This edition also comes in the wake of our September Lunch and Learn on race and racism and its subsequent Fact Sheet.

Problems of racism and discrimination stand in the way of our vision. In order for change

to this, we must look into the history and current status of not only the overt and obvious forms of racism and discrimination, but also the underlying, hidden types of it as well. A few of the articles unpack the range and forms of discrimination. These include the history of hate groups and hate crimes in Alberta, and the subtle nature of everyday language, which can prove to be hurtful to some groups.

Other articles explore the concept of multiculturalism and interculturalism and what it means to better serve immigrant communities and racialized minority groups. Some pieces reveal the difficulties facing First Nations at an aggregate and individual level. This edition also highlights some of the excellent work and dialogue being conducted in Edmonton to combat racism and discrimination. We are grateful for our contributing writers, who lend their insights and experiences in the community as teachers, students, researchers, and frontline staff.

## Community Resources: Race and Racism

### Centre of Race and Culture

"The Centre for Race and Culture works within the community to promote and support individual, collective, and systemic change to address racism and encourage intercultural understanding. Our expertise spans workplace development, community building, research, and education."

<http://www.cfrac.com/about-crc/about-us>

### Alberta Human Rights Commission

"The Commission has a two-fold mandate: to foster equality and to reduce discrimination. It fulfills this mandate through public education and community initiatives, through the resolution and settlement of complaints of discrimination, and through human rights tribunal and court hearings."

<http://www.albertahumanrights.ab.ca/>

### Alberta Civil Liberties Research Centre

Their mission is "to promote respect for civil liberties and human rights in Alberta through research and education to contribute to a more just and inclusive community."

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/uofc/Others/acrlc/index.html>

### Edmonton Coalition Against War and Racism

The Edmonton Coalition Against War and Racism is dedicated to "opposing repression and racial profiling in Canada."

<http://www.ecawar.org/>

### John Humphrey Centre for Peace and Human Rights

The John Humphrey Centre is dedicated to programming that fosters a sense of dignity, responsibility and justice

<http://www.jhcentre.org/>

# The Subtle and Commonplace Nature of Modern Racism

By Maxwell Jenkins, Volunteer Writer

Racism has made the transition over the past century and a half from an everyday, normalized practice to a widely shunned taboo. Canada has a reputation for its inclusion and tolerance of multiple ethnicities, a cultural tendency generally known as multiculturalism (Cotter, 2011). The 20th century saw the transition from the residential schools and Japanese-Canadian internment camps to the thoroughly amended Indian Act and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Discriminating a person or a group of people explicitly because of their ethnicity is nearly synonymous with extremism or lunacy in mainstream Canadian society. The term “racist” is now an insult. The tarnished nature of racism in the public eye was exemplified as on March 24, 2012 a nominally racist 'white pride' rally consisting of around 15 individuals was met with a counter protest of nearly 300 (Dykstra, 2012).

With such ubiquitous, vocal contempt for anything perceived as racist, an outside observer might assume that racism is a practical non-issue in daily Canadian life. But as Racism Free Edmonton (a collaboration of over a dozen Edmonton organizations) attests, this assumption is far from fact. The problem is that while overt examples of racism produce a reaction reminiscent of an acute immune response, subtle racism has proved tenacious and pervasive. A recent study by Krahn and Haluza-Delay (2012) sheds some light on the state of general racism in Edmonton. The study surveyed Edmontonians perception of discrimination against residents based on ethnicity. Interestingly, though 59 per cent of Edmontonians thought Aboriginal residents “frequently experienced discrimination”, only 20 per cent said they often saw or heard of Aboriginal residents being treated unfairly because they were Aboriginal (Krahn & Haluza-Delay,



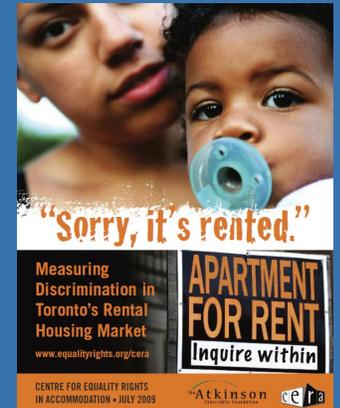
Photo by Jawhara Almajhad

2012). This seems to suggest a kind of cognitive dissonance between the perception and the actual occurrence of racism. Though most residents are aware that racism against Aboriginal people is common in Edmonton, the same people are less than half as likely to perceive racism against Aboriginals actually occurring. This disconnect could be attributed to the perception of racism as being inherently overt and extreme, while the reality is that modern racism is subtle, implied and even unconscious.

Modern racism refers to this kind of subtle, unconscious prejudice, and its presence has been used to explain a great number of social inequalities in Canada. Pfeifer and Ogloff (2003) showed that participants reading a transcript of a sexual assault were more likely to rate the defendant guilty if the defendant was identified as French or Aboriginal as opposed to English. This is an example of aversive racism as described by Gertner and Dovidio (1986), where racist behaviour is implicit or subconscious. Aversive racism is often justified by stereotypes or incomplete rationalizations. Ouellet (2007) showed that racism can strongly manifest against ethnic-minority owned businesses in terms of consumer preference. Brief et al. (2000) show that, when mandated by an authority figure, even if said authority is illegitimate, people are far more likely to perform discriminatory acts based on loose justifications or stereotypes.



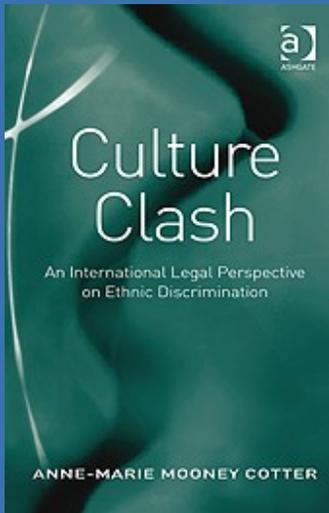
## Additional Resource



Centre for Equality Rights in Accommodation. (2009). *Sorry, It's Rented: Measuring Discrimination in Toronto's Rental Housing Market*. Retrieved from Advocates for Youth: [http://www.advocatesforyouth.org/storage/advfy/documents/fsglbtq\\_yoc.pdf](http://www.advocatesforyouth.org/storage/advfy/documents/fsglbtq_yoc.pdf)



## Additional Resource



Cotter, A-M. M. (2011). *Culture clash: an international legal perspective on ethnic discrimination*. Surrey, England: Ashgate Publishing Limited.



Photo by David Bloom, QMI Agency

Considering these studies that reveal modern racism in all institutions and strata of Canadian society, it seems obvious that the problem is endemic and should be treated. But actually fixing institutions to avoid or prevent racism, or finding ways to push the public away from unconscious prejudices has proven difficult. This is at least partially due to the difficulty in accurately diagnosing something as subtle and actively hidden as modern racism. Blanton and Jaccard (2012) point out how nearly all studies that imply unconscious racism are conducted in laboratory settings, and that in real world scenarios the existing tools for measuring unconscious racist bias are muddled by behaviour based on the complexities of each unique environment. This makes them inconsistent and limited, to the point where the authors doubt whether unconscious racism is pervasive at all. Without a way to pin-point modern racism in mundane activities, it is surpassingly difficult to enact effective policies to combat it.

Modern racism represents a unique challenge for a society seeking equality and justice for all its members. To flush it out, we need more thorough and precise terms and methods of diagnosis, so that we can easily spot the recurring themes of racism and point them out to policy makers, institutions and the general public. A good first step is combatting the anachronistic view of racism being overt and to emphasize the reality of racism's modern incarnation. Racism Free Edmonton is already making an effort in this regard. With an informed public and more explicit evidence of underlying racist attitudes, modern racism can go the way of residential schools and popular anti-Semitism.

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## Additional Resource



Pruegger, V. (2009). *Alberta Hate/Bias Crime Report*. Retrieved from: [http://www.threesource.ca/documents/December2010/hate\\_crime\\_report\\_card.pdf](http://www.threesource.ca/documents/December2010/hate_crime_report_card.pdf)



Photo by David Bloom, QMI Agency

(2012) go further and suggest that if someone chooses to confront or counter the perpetrator of a micro-aggression, the process “can be psychologically and physically draining,” which often leads “to higher levels of stress and poor mental health outcomes” (p. 16). Micro-aggressions add up, and they matter.

But what does this really mean for our day-to-day lives? Do we constantly need to censor what we say to avoid offending people? Not necessarily. In fact, this is what some scholars believe we should avoid (cf. DeAngelis, 2009). It does not mean we shackle ourselves with some sort of ‘political correctness’ because we are worried about offending people. It does not mean avoiding conversations or encounters with members of racial or ethnic minorities for fear of offending or upsetting them; if anything, this would be worse. Rather, we need to reflect on and be conscious of what we think, do, and say. We must remember just how powerful our words can be to some groups of people and individuals. It is good practice to think about and consider

what it might feel like to be a member of a racial or ethnic minority. Above all, we have to recognize that just as our words can bring people down, they can also help lift people back up.

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Subscribe to the Research Update, our monthly e-newsletter containing informative reviews on the latest Canadian social research! To subscribe, visit our Research Reviews page on our website and fill in the box titled **{Sign Up For The Research Update Today!}**.

The screenshot shows the website interface for the Edmonton Social Planning Council. The header includes the council's logo and name. Below the header is a navigation menu with options like Home, About Us, Our Work, Support Us, Resource Library & Links, and Research Reviews. The main content area is titled 'Research Reviews' and contains information about the monthly Research Update email newsletter. A search bar is located in the top right corner. On the right side, there is a 'COMMUNITY CALENDAR' for November 2011, showing dates from Sunday to Saturday. At the bottom right, there is a blue button that says 'Sign Up for the Research Update Today!'.

# What Happened to the Good Ol' Hockey Game?

By Diana Varvis, Volunteer Writer



Photo by Dave Chidley

It's 2012. You're sitting in an arena watching a professional hockey game, surrounded by fans. A fight breaks out on the ice and the crowd gets riled up. You hear a chant slowly build up. The audience starts yelling at one of the players involved in the fight. It's a black player, and people are yelling racial slurs.

Does this scenario seem ridiculous or hard to believe? Well, believe it. It's October, 2012, in the Czech Republic. Wayne Simmonds, a forward for the Philadelphia Flyers NHL team was playing a game with the Liberec of the Czech Extrajihla team during the NHL lockout. A fight breaks out between him and another player when the crowd begins to chant, "Opice! Opice! Opice!" which translates to 'monkey.' Sadly, this was not the first time an incident like this has occurred for Simmonds. In 2011, a spectator threw a banana peel at him during a game in London, Ontario, as he was skating towards the net on a shootout attempt. Simmonds' response to these incidents has shown his diplomacy and grace. He states, "When you're a black man playing a predominantly white man's sport, you've got to come to expect things like that" (Robinson, 2011).

While most people would agree that the crowd's behaviour is appalling, we have to wonder why it occurs. Although we can point out many positive examples of how society has come a long way in terms of racial equality, why does Simmonds feel compelled to expect and accept racist behaviour just because he is a black man playing what is deemed to be a "white man's sport"?

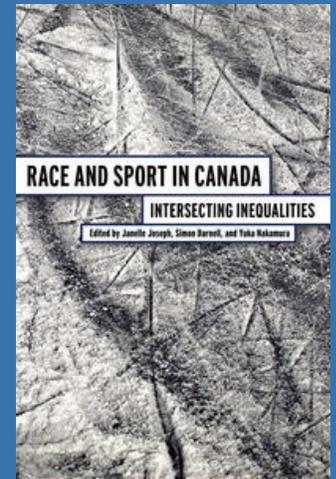
A base definition of racism is the belief that all members of each race possess characteristics, abilities, or qualities specific to that race, especially so as to distinguish it as inferior or superior to another race or races" (Oxford Dictionary, 2012). Going further, the concept of racism refers to *inferiorization*, whereby a group who is defined by their inherited physical traits is denigrated due to perceived biological inferiority. Racism also denotes *antipathy*, or the "bigotry, hostility, and hatred," towards a group defined by their inherited physical traits (Blum, 2002, p. 8). These two immoralities deserve heightened condemnation because they violate the contemporary moral norms of "respect, equality, and dignity" and because they are historically connected to extreme and overt forms of racial oppression (Blum, 2002, p. 28). Such prejudgement against an individual or a group because of their biological or physical traits is jarring for mainstream society since it infringes upon our conceptions of equality in a liberal democracy.

With these in mind, it is useful to unpack prejudice into three different components - cognition, affect, and behaviour - to better understand the discord between our moral norms of equality and the racial and prejudicial expressions evident in society.

The cognitive component can be linked to evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins' theory that suggests racial prejudice could be interpreted as an irrational tendency to identify with individuals who physically resemble oneself, and to be cruel to individuals who are different in appearance. In other words, we are more comfortable around people who look like us, and are suspicious of those who look different (Dawkins, 2006, p. 99). However, stereotypes are the basis of this component of prejudice. Stereotypes are assumptions that members of a particular group are more similar than they actually are, and



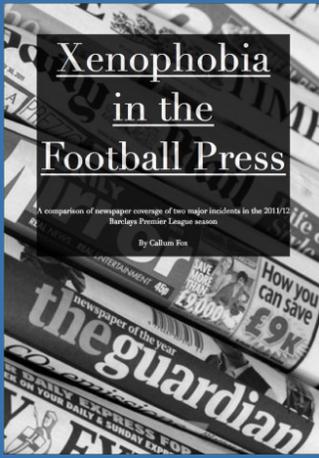
## Additional Resource



Walcott, R. (2012). Thinking Race in Canada: What the Critique of Race and Racism in Sport Brings to Anti-racism Studies. In J. Joseph, S. Darnell & Y. Nakamura (Eds.), *Race and Sport in Canada: Intersecting Inequalities* (ix - xii). Toronto, ON: Canadian Scholars' Press. Retrieved from: [http://www.cspi.org/sites/default/files/Race%20and%20Sport%20in%20Canada%20excerpt\\_0.pdf](http://www.cspi.org/sites/default/files/Race%20and%20Sport%20in%20Canada%20excerpt_0.pdf)



## Additional Resource



Fox, C. (2012). *Xenophobia in the Football Press*. Retrieved from: <http://northeastfox.wordpress.com/category/part-i-xenophobia-in-the-football-press/>

reflect our personal image of the typical example of a member of that group. Once we hold a particular stereotype, we are more likely to look for and remember information that is consistent with our stereotype (Symbaluk & Bereska, 2013, p. 179). In the example above with Simmonds, one can argue that hockey is generally seen as a “white man’s sport” as the majority of players are Caucasian. Black athletes are typically seen participating and excelling in other sports such as basketball and football. Could the assumption be made that Simmonds was on the receiving end of these racist acts because he is a black athlete who is excelling at a “white sport”, and is therefore going against the stereotype?

The affective component of prejudice reflects the emotions that we attach to the stereotype. Many studies have demonstrated that prejudicial attitudes are accompanied by strong emotions, sometimes ones that we aren’t even aware of. One study attempted to measure this by using a device called the Galvanic Skin Response (GSR). The GSR measures the electrical conductivity of the skin, which increases when in the midst of strong emotions. Participants were initially given a questionnaire to determine their level of ethnocentrism (the belief or attitude that your group is superior to others). Subsequently, they were asked to wait for a research assistant to come in and assign them a problem-solving task. The results of the study indicated that participants who scored high in ethnocentrism showed a greater GSR when in the presence of a black research assistant, and participants who scored low in ethnocentrism did not show this pattern. It is this emotional component that makes prejudice so difficult to change. It is much easier to correct someone’s inaccurate cognitive beliefs by presenting facts than it is to change their emotions, especially if they are not even aware of them (Symbaluk & Bereska, 2013, p. 179-180).

The behavioural component involves putting prejudice into action. This can include anything from refusing to sit next to



someone because of the colour of their skin, to laws that treat certain groups unequally. Individual discrimination, which is what was witnessed in the incident against Simmonds, can include avoiding contact with certain groups, using derogatory names, insulting, verbally abusing, using physical violence, and committing hate crimes.

It is interesting to note that the cognitive and affective components of prejudice do not always correspond with its behavioural component. On the one hand, individuals who have discriminating thoughts and feelings may not necessarily act on them. On the other hand, individuals may engage in discriminatory acts, but have no corresponding thoughts and emotions. People may act in a prejudice way because of group pressure, or without realizing that they are doing so (Symbaluk & Bereska, 2013, p. 180-181). This raises the question regarding the number of fans that were chanting the racial slur at the hockey game. How many of them truly harboured racist beliefs and feelings towards Simmonds, and how many were engaging in the act simply to join the crowd?

Eight of those fans have been arrested and charged with “misdemeanour disorderly conduct and defamation of nation, race, and other ethnic groups” (Wyshynski, 2012). They face a hearing and a maximum sentence of three years in prison if convicted. This has the positive effect of sending a strong message that this kind of behaviour is unacceptable and should not be tolerated, however, whether or not this will be enough to force people to re-examine their thinking and change their actions remains to be seen.

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# Research Review: Experiences and Perceptions of Discrimination in Edmonton

By Michelle Harkness, Volunteer Researcher

This report looks at Edmontonians' experiences with and perceptions of racial discrimination in Edmonton. As part of the University of Alberta's Population Research Laboratory (PRL), over 100 Edmonton residents were surveyed in 2011 to learn more about discrimination in our city. Most survey participants said that they believe Edmonton is a very welcoming place to live. However, respondents from certain groups in our city believe that they are victims of racial discrimination. Researchers found that those respondents who identified as an Aboriginal or member of a visible minority group (including foreign-born and Canadian-born) are more likely than other groups to report that they were discriminated against.

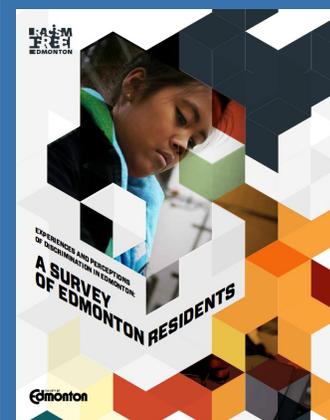
As well, most respondents said that "discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, immigrant status and related variables is perceived to be more prevalent than discrimination on other grounds" (Krahn & Haluza-DeLay, 2012, p. 7). According to Amarjeet Sohi, City Councillor and Multiculturalism Liaison, "Racism Free Edmonton is guiding our bold vision of becoming a municipality where all residents have equal access to participation in every aspect of life in our great city" (Krahn & Haluza-DeLay, 2012, p. 3).

As a Member of the Canadian Coalition of Municipalities Against Racism and Discrimination (CMARD), The City of Edmonton and 16 local organizations came together to form Racism Free Edmonton. The purpose of this organization, which is defined in their action plan, is to recognize and attend to the social and institutional barriers that have a negative impact on the well being and social inclusion of racialized groups in our city. Removal of such barriers will lead to a safer, more inclusive Edmonton that is free of racism and respects cultural diversity.

Questions were asked "about experiences and perceptions of discrimination and related topics" in the Edmonton section of the PRL's 2011 Alberta Survey (Krahn & Haluza-DeLay, 2012, p. 7). From May 25 to June 22 2011, 400 residents of Edmonton were contacted by telephone so they could participate in this survey. During this process, 28 per cent (or 116) of those contacted agreed to complete the survey. This response rate is "several times higher than the industry standard" (Krahn & Haluza-DeLay, 2012, p. 7). At the same time, the authors also acknowledged that "it is likely that the survey (slightly) under-represents less educated Edmonton residents" (Krahn



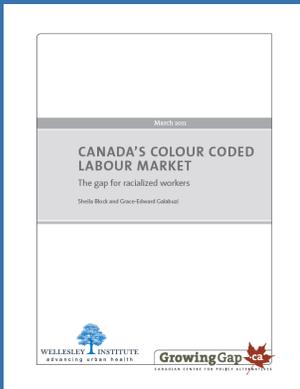
## Additional Resource



Krahn, H. & Haluza-DeLay, R. (2012). *Experience and Perceptions of Discrimination in Edmonton: A Survey of Edmonton Residents*. Retrieved from the City of Edmonton: [http://www.edmonton.ca/05\\_17\\_ReportRFESurvey\\_Findings\\_2012.pdf](http://www.edmonton.ca/05_17_ReportRFESurvey_Findings_2012.pdf)



## Additional Resource



Block, S. & Galabuzi, G-E. (2011). *Canada's Colour Coded Labour Market: The Gap for Racialized Workers*. Retrieved from the Wellesley Institute: [http://www.wellesleyinstitute.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/Colour\\_Coded\\_Labour\\_MarketFINAL.pdf](http://www.wellesleyinstitute.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/Colour_Coded_Labour_MarketFINAL.pdf)

& Haluza-DeLay, 2012, p. 7).

Below are some of the key findings from this survey:

### **The majority of survey participants feel that Edmonton is a welcoming city.**

- 7 out of 10 participants said that they believe that Edmonton is welcoming to newcomers and is a very friendly city (Krahn & Haluza-DeLay, 2012, p. 8).
- 76 per cent of respondents felt that Edmonton is a better place to live because of the diverse cultural background of its citizens. Less than 1/3 of participants held the perception that newcomers should conform to “be more like other community members” in the community (Krahn & Haluza-DeLay, 2012, p. 8).

### **Incidences of discrimination in Edmonton, are more likely to be reported by visible minorities (both foreign-born and domestic-born) and Aboriginals.**

- A small percentage of respondents (16 per cent) said that over the last 12 months, they or one of their family members were discriminated against “because of who they were, for whatever reason” (Krahn & Haluza-DeLay, 2012, p. 14).
- Of the 16 per cent who reported facing discrimination, most of them cited that the main reasons given for being treated unfairly were related to their race, immigrant status, ethnicity and/or religion (Krahn & Haluza-DeLay, 2012, p. 14).

### **Law Enforcement is more likely to unjustly treat non-Caucasian and Aboriginal residents who are shopping and or looking for jobs or housing.**

- In the past year, between 18 and 25 per cent of non Caucasians responding to the survey felt that law enforcement were more likely to discriminate against them in public settings that were not considered to be educational or municipal settings. Respondents were able to recall personal examples or incidents of more discrimination or prejudice from those in a law

enforcement when shopping, looking for work or housing (Krahn & Haluza-DeLay, 2012, p. 12).

### **The Consensus is strong among survey participants that Aboriginals faced discrimination frequently.**

- Despite being perceived as a very open and welcoming city, survey participants nonetheless felt that prejudice and discrimination exists in Edmonton. The survey results found that 59 per cent of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that Aboriginals faced more frequent incidences of discrimination than visible minorities and Caucasians (Krahn & Haluza-DeLay, 2012, p. 9).
- Only 12 per cent agreed that the incidence of discrimination was higher against Caucasians. Conversely, 36 per cent felt that visible minorities experience some form of racism or discrimination (Krahn & Haluza-DeLay, 2012, p. 9).

### **Conclusion**

*Experiences and Perceptions of Discrimination in Edmonton: A Survey of Edmonton Residents* is a report that not only makes the average Edmontonian aware of the fact that discrimination and racism exist within our city, it brings to light the level of racism that visible minorities and aboriginals experience. Through initiatives such as Racism Free Edmonton, The City of Edmonton can become a tolerant and respectful municipality where opportunity and social inclusion is equal for all citizens.

This report would be of interest to those who are concerned about discrimination in our city.

### **Works Cited**

Krahn, H. & Haluza-DeLay, R. (2012). *Experience and Perceptions of Discrimination in Edmonton: A Survey of Edmonton Residents*. Retrieved from the City of Edmonton: [http://www.edmonton.ca/05\\_17\\_ReportRFESurvey\\_Findings\\_2012.pdf](http://www.edmonton.ca/05_17_ReportRFESurvey_Findings_2012.pdf)

# History of Hate Groups in Alberta

By Darlene Lau, Volunteer Writer

Records of hate groups in Canada appeared as early as the 1830s when the Grand Lodge of Orangemen of British North America (a pro-British, anti-Catholic secret society) was established. Thereafter, organizations opposing Asian communities, such as the Working Man's Protection Association and the Asiatic Exclusion League, developed as immigrants entered the workforce in Canada. The infamous Ku Klux Klan (KKK) also had a presence throughout Canada. Originally formed in the southern United States following the Civil War; the KKK used harassment, violence and terrorism to oppose the abolition of slavery and civil rights gained by African-Americans (Canadian Race Relations Foundation, n.d.). The Canadian branch of the KKK was rooted in Montreal. Formed in 1921, the group focused on loyalty to the British Crown, anti-French Propaganda and opposition to Roman Catholicism (The Applied History Research Group, 1997). Unfortunately, the KKK had more support in Alberta than once believed. Historical research done by Baergen revealed that Albertans supported the KKK's mentality both covertly and candidly. The Alberta government approved of the KKK's activities by being the only Canadian jurisdiction to grant a formal charter to the group (Lund, 2006).

A decade after the arrival of the KKK into Alberta, a political group with radical ideas was victorious in sweeping power in the province. In 1935 the Social Credit Party won 56 out of 63 seats in the provincial election. While Social Credit promoted structural economic reform after the Great Depression, it was the only democratically elected party in Canada whose platform had major elements of anti-Semitism (Lund, 2006). The Social Credit Party held onto its reign of power over Alberta until 1971. Groups that promoted anti-Semitic views were able to gain traction, in part, because of the influx of new immigrants, which incorrectly instilled fear amongst the Anglo-Saxon population (Lund, 2006).

In 1984 Terry Long formed the Aryan Nations and was connected to the beating of a retired Edmonton broadcaster (Keith Rutherford) in 1990. Mr. Rutherford was brutally beaten by Dan Sims and Mark Swanson, members of Edmonton's Final Solution Skinheads. The men claimed that Long had informed them Mr. Rutherford had released the name of a suspected Nazi war criminal living in Winnipeg, causing him to commit suicide (McDonald & Came, 1995). Although linked to the beating, Terry Long did not garner much attention until September 1990, when he organized the Aryan Fest in Provost. At this event, prominent members of the racist right wing participated in cross burnings and displaying and chanting hate messages. Long was later placed before the Alberta Human Rights Commission tribunal for the Aryan Fest (McDonald & Came, 1995).

In recent years White Supremacist groups continue to have a presence in Alberta. The Western Canada for Us (WCFU) was formed by Glen Bahr and Peter Kouba in January of 2004 (Canadian Press, 2007). Although short-lived (WCFU disbanded in April 2004), the group was successful in espousing discriminating messages in Alberta, Manitoba and British Columbia. Thanks to the work of the community, police and media the WCFU collapsed just as quickly as it was formed. The Canadian Anti-Racism Education and Research Society monitored internet posts written by the WCFU and the media helped expose the link between the WCFU, KKK and Aryan Nations (Simoneau, 2005). In 2006 the Canadian Human Rights Commission Tribunal found Bahr guilty of spreading hate propaganda on the internet. The Aryan Guard is another notable hate group in Alberta. Formed by Kyle Robert McKee in 2006, the Aryan Guard abided by the mantra of the international White Power movement to "secure the existence of our people and a future for White Children" (Jarvie, 2012). Activities of the Aryan Guard include handing out anti-immigration flyers and White Pride CDs as



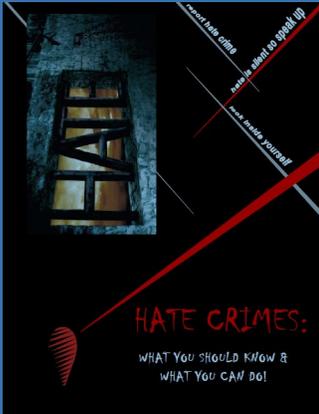
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well as conducting white pride marches in Calgary and Edmonton. The Aryan Guard has also been associated with more violent acts such as the assault of two East Indian men in Edmonton (Jarvie, 2012).

Although hate groups at times appear to be an ever-growing presence in society, this is not the case according to hate-group experts. Stephan Camp (former officer with the Edmonton Police hate unit and president of the Alberta Hate Crimes Unit Committee) states that most hate groups come and go in cyclic patterns. There are periods of increase in recruitments followed by breakups. Camp found that groups are usually formed as pet-projects of White Supremacist leaders and are composed of small cliques of like-minded people.

Leo Adler, the national director of Toronto's Friends of Simon Weisenthal Centre for Holocaust Studies, notes that the peaks and valleys of hate group formation can vary according to factors like the socio-economic landscape and fluctuations in multicultural growth. The lifecycle of the Aryan Guard was true to the patterns predicted by Camp and Adler. Not long after the Aryan Guard was created, it separated into the Western European Bloodline and Blood and Honor (Komarnicki & Seskus, 2008). In addition to a drop in membership rates in 2009, Kyle McKee and another 17 year-old boy were convicted of "attempted murder, possessing, making or controlling explosives, and possession of a weapon or imitation for a dangerous purpose" on a member of the rival White European Brotherhood (Massinon & Zickefoose, 2009).

Alberta and Canada has a long history of groups that existed to promote hate and/or social exclusion against minority groups. As we have seen, such groups continue to exist in pockets around the province even to this day. As several of the other articles in this *FACTivist* assert, we need to remain alert to overt and subtle expressions of racism. Hate groups have no place in society, let alone a contemporary and multicultural one. It is a collective responsibility between governments, civil society groups, and individuals to ensure

that hate groups like those outlined earlier remain on the fringes altogether.

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# Aboriginal Canadians and Reporting Hate Crime in Edmonton and Canada

By Chris Rudge, Volunteer Writer

## Introduction

Canada and the City of Edmonton generally likes to be perceived as open and welcoming places, especially to newcomers. While in many ways this is true - and something to be proud of - our nation and our city are not immune to the effects of hate crime and institutionalized discrimination. A recent report by local organization Racism Free Edmonton surveyed the experiences and perceptions of discrimination by Edmonton residents. The overall finding of the report was positive, with approximately three-quarters or respondents feeling that Edmonton is a welcoming city. A total of 36 per cent of respondents felt that non-whites face frequent discrimination in Edmonton; however, almost double that percentage, 59 per cent, felt that those of Aboriginal origin faced the very same discrimination (Haluz-Delay & Krahn, 2012).

The report goes on to state that discrimination on the basis of "race, ethnicity, immigrant status and related variables are perceived to be more prevalent than discrimination on other grounds" (Haluz-Delay & Krahn, 2012, p. 7). Looking at the aforementioned perceptions of respondents, the discrimination based on an individual's status as Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal may be an equally, if not more, accurate statement regarding discrimination in our city. While these perceptions do not prove systematic discrimination, it reflects a worrying indication that the treatment of Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals in Edmonton, and Canada, remain disparate and a serious issue yet to be resolved in any meaningful manner. As we look at reported crime data in Canada, additional questions are also raised in relation to discrimination faced by Aboriginal peoples.

## Hate Crimes in Canada and Edmonton

When addressing the issues of 'hate crimes'

in Canada, we are specifically referring to four offences under the Criminal Code:

- Advocating genocide
- Public incitement of hatred
- Willful promotion of hatred
- Mischief in relation to religious property

In addition to those offences, any other offence (such as assault, criminal harassment or homicide) can be classified as a hate crime if the perpetrator(s) target a specific group based on race/ethnicity, origin, language, religion, orientation, gender, etc. The collection of hate-crime data has occurred on a national scale since 2006, when the Uniform Crime Report Survey (UCR2) was established. The UCR2 collects hate crime incidents, as reported by police departments throughout Canada. These reports are based on reported crimes that were later substantiated by investigations or suspected of being motivated by hate due to the circumstances around the reported crime (Dowden & Brennan, 2011).

In 2010, the UCR2 document 1,401 reported hate crimes by Canadian police departments. Of those reported crimes, mischief accounted for 56 per cent and no hate-motivated murders were reported in 2010, but one hate-motivated attempted murder was recorded. Alberta has a police-reported hate crime rate of 3.6 per 100,000 people, lower than the national average of 4.1. Edmonton's rate was even lower at 2.4, while Calgary sat at 4.9. The highest recorded rate in a Census Metropolitan Region was Guelph, Ontario at almost 16 per 100,000 (Dowden & Brennan, 2011). Despite the positive numbers for Edmonton in comparison to Canada, Alberta and our cousins to the south, these numbers must be taken with a grain of salt. These same recorded incidents of hate crime included zero reported incidents in Thunder Bay, Ontario, a city that has consistently ranked at the top for violent



## Additional Resource



Dowden, C. & Brennan, S. (2012). *Police-reported Hate Crimes in Canada, 2010*. Retrieved from the Statistics Canada: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85-002-x/2012001/article/11635-eng.pdf>



# Edmonton Inner-City Youth and Racism

By Dan Scratch, Volunteer Writer



Photo by Jes A, Flickr

Racism is a morally repulsive scar that touches many of Edmonton's residents. It can be a barrier to employment, social mobility, and act as a form of oppression that divides people from each other within society. As a teacher who works with at-risk youth in Inner City Edmonton, I have had the opportunity to listen to the experiences that many of the youth face with racism and poverty. For these students, earning an education to put their lives on the path to success is of vital importance. However, as racism is an unfortunate part of their everyday lives, it can act as a barrier to their commitment to move away from a high risk life, and towards a life where they are both personally and professionally successful. Following is an interview and discussion conducted with a group of my students surrounding their experiences with racism in Edmonton. It should be noted that for privacy reasons, their real names and identities have not been used in this interview.

**Dan:** In your opinion, what is racism?

**Mary:** I would define racism as not accepting someone else's differences.

**Bill:** The thing about racism in Canada, is it's not in your face, it's not someone out there with a sign saying "white Canada" it's someone behind closed doors calling you a "wagon burner." That's the racism that's in Canada, it's behind the smiles.

**Jim:** There's also a lot of racism on TV and that's what teaches a lot of kids.

**Dave:** I think to an extent I almost act racist back (in return) now. I'll see some white preppy kid walk by and I almost want to rob

him. I almost want to be the stereotype, you know what I mean, 'cause I've been put in that situation and why not live up to it. You've been knocked and called it your whole life, and I want to beat it and get past it, but if you want to be racist to me I'll be everything you think we are.

**Mark:** In my opinion, look at the prison population alone, the majority is Aboriginal males. I just think Aboriginal youth today, and even before this century, are just sick and tired of all the racism and discrimination towards the population.

**Bill:** No, there's way more reasons than that. We don't have our land, we don't have our culture, we don't have our language, none of us grew up with fathers, so many addiction issues that stem from residential schools, you know what I mean?

**Dan:** Can you tell me about a specific time in your life when you have either witnessed or been a victim of racism?

**Mary:** When I was younger I remember this one time when I was on the bus with all my friends, and there was this older Caucasian male, and he told me to get off his land and he called me a "squaw". He said I didn't belong here and I should go back to my country, and me being a smart-ass at the time I told him this was my land and he was in my county.

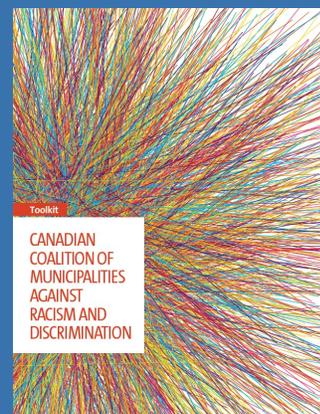
**Dave:** I can be walking down the street and I'll see a person step off the side walk and move over.

**Bill:** Or when people pass by you they'll say something under their breath and you know it's about you. It's like I said it's hidden. I see a lot you know, I look white but I'm Native so I see a lot. Say I see somebody and they insistently start saying some racist stuff.

**Mary:** Yeah it's a stereotype actually. I think that it's connected to heredity and learned behaviours because a lot of Aboriginal kids go through group homes and foster care and they don't really care about you, the staff there, to them it's just another job.



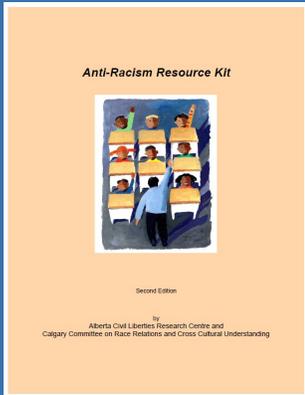
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Photo by Cree Health

**Dan:** How do you think we can combat racism?

**Mary:** I think if there were centres with programs and services, or something to acknowledge racism in the city because there are different groups and cliques and other ethnics that don't get along.

**Dan:** Is ending racism even possible?

**Jim:** It's possible. It's not natural to be racist, you're taught that at a very young age. It's all in the mind, how you grew up, how you were raised, what you were taught, what you saw, what you learned.

**Bill:** Education is the key, if everyone was educated towards other people's cultures and beliefs, well maybe there wouldn't be racism.

Although this is only the experiences and ideas of a small group of students living in Inner-City Edmonton, it is evident that racism against Aboriginal youth is prevalent and dangerously debilitating for students to find the strength and encouragement to improve their lives. Many of the stereotypes and prejudices that inner-city youth face can be directly correlated to issues of poverty. In fact, "nearly two in five Aboriginal residents of Edmonton live below the poverty line (this is more than twice as

high as for non-Aboriginal residents (City of Edmonton, 2010, p. 22). We cannot ignore the socio-economic issues that ail the Aboriginal community in Edmonton. Dealing with racism and poverty as separate issues will not be an adequate response in order to eliminate it completely. While working first-hand with the inner-city youth of Edmonton, I have seen the extraordinary talent and potential that these students have to not only improve their own lives, but greatly improve the communities and city they live in. If we allow all forms of racism and poverty to persist within our city, we will lose a great deal of human potential and not allow our city to grow into a place where all people are cared for and respected.

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# Rethinking Multiculturalism

By Lindsay Loset, King's College Internship Student



Canada is a nation well-known for its diverse population and multiculturalism policy. Edmonton has a growing immigrant and refugee population, which has more than doubled since 2000 (Edmonton Social Planning Council, 2011). According to Racism Free Edmonton's 2011 report on experiences and perceptions of discrimination, "76% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that having people from many racial backgrounds makes Edmonton a better place to live" (Haluza-Delay & Krahn, 2011, p. 18). There are many benefits to multiculturalism, including supporting social cohesion and cultural tolerance (Liodakis & Satewich, 2010). Multiculturalism gives Edmontonians variety and opportunities to learn about cultures different from their own.

The Multicultural Act of Canada serves to promote preserving, enhancing, and sharing cultural heritage to shape Canada's future, allowing full participation and fair treatment to all citizens, encouraging all social, cultural, economic and political institutions to be respectful and inclusive, as well as recognizing, respecting and valuing different cultures, ethnicities and languages while still strengthening the two official languages of Canada. This policy recognizes that multiculturalism is part of Canada's past, the initiative to foster it in the present, and to continue positive interethnic relations for its future (Government of Canada, 2012).

It is interesting to note that despite the expressed benefits of diversity, discrimination against different ethnic groups in Edmonton is evident. When asked if "Edmontonians think that racism is a problem in the city, 59% of the respondents

agreed or strongly agreed that Aboriginal residents of Edmonton frequently face discrimination," and "36% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that non-White residents of Edmonton frequently face discrimination" (Haluza-Delay & Krahn, 2011, p. 18). Because discrimination based on ethnicity is a significant problem in Edmonton, this calls for a different look at the policy of multiculturalism and how beneficial or detrimental it is to nations with a mixed population.

By noting some of the criticisms of multiculturalism, it is suggested that it can actually contribute to racist thoughts, attitudes, or actions of members within a diverse population. Critics of multiculturalism believe that the policy can result in segregation of different ethnicities and creates conflict between and within ethnic groups (Garcea, 2008). While the multicultural policy of Canada promotes the respect and tolerance of other cultural groups, segregation of those groups can result because there is no required interaction between groups in the policy. Instead, it places more importance on the development of ethnic communities instead of fostering intergroup relations. It is interesting that a policy formed in the hopes of including and respecting all members of society can actually result in the opposite when put into practice.

An intercultural approach has been argued to be more effective and have a more positive result in unifying a diverse nation. "Interculturalism calls for a complex dynamic made up of interactions, continuity, and change that is constantly negotiated and renegotiated on all levels of society, within a framework of respect for basic values and in...firmness in principles, flexibility in their application" (Bouchard, 2011, p. 466). The integration of cultures together can lead to a better understanding of others who are different from their own ethnicity. If there is a lack of respect between groups of people on any grounds whether it is culture, race, or gender, there will either be negative



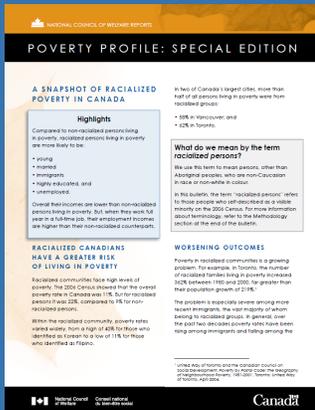
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interaction between them or none at all. If there is no interaction or no positive interaction, a diverse population cannot be connected with one another and ethnic tensions will always be present. This can lead to many negative consequences such as racism and discrimination.

While interculturalism sounds like a better approach to take, it also, like multiculturalism, has its critics. The province of Quebec practices interculturalism to manage its diverse population. While promoting respect and interaction between different cultural groups, Quebec wishes to keep French culture and language significant and not allow it to become another minority culture within the province, as it has felt it has become within the country (Bouchard, 2011). Controversy has been found in issues cropping up following how Quebec manages keeping its culture strong. "Québec's intercultural governance model articulates a distinct political community whose cultural and language priorities supersede the salience of ethnic diversities" (Fleras, 2012, p. 48). Interculturalism can then also foster conflict between ethnic groups if one does not follow French culture or speak the language. Ethnic groups that are different from the majority French in Quebec may also feel segregated as well.

Segregation of ethnic groups resulting from either multiculturalism or interculturalism dangerously fosters racism and discrimination as well as other problems. Segregation is an important issue because it makes it more difficult for immigrants to interact and engage in society. When groups are segregated, there is little to no interaction between them. The lack of interaction can lead to misconceptions of certain groups, and therefore lead to stereotyping as well as other forms of racism.

The question then to ask is: to what extent should a nation such as Canada be intercultural or multicultural? How does a country such as Canada with a diverse population manage problems of racism and discrimination? Multiculturalism has been a considerable aspect of Canada's past, and will probably continue to be important in the

future. By first getting people to think about multiculturalism in a different way, it can be suggested that there needs to be a change either in policy or in people's attitudes and actions towards other ethnicities in Canada. This change would involve being more interactive and inclusive instead of only respectable and tolerant in order to combat issues of racism and discrimination.

There are opportunities within Edmonton that serve to foster interaction needed to eliminate segregation of ethnic groups. This can be done in the city by volunteering at various organizations that focus on creating equal opportunities for immigrants and refugees such as Mennonite Centre for Newcomers, the Somali Canadian Cultural Society of Edmonton, or at Edmonton Multicultural Coalition, where volunteers are appreciated and needed. Volunteering at these and other organizations can be an effective way of building relationships and interacting with different ethnicities.

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# Immigrant Health Care in Alberta: Bridging the Social, Cultural and Political Gaps

By Rebecca Leonard, Volunteer Writer

In the literature related to the social qualities of health care, there are recurring questions as to how culture affects the provision and accessibility of health services. Alberta is a highly diverse and multicultural region. The necessity of understanding and accounting for the differences and possible disparity among health care patients is paramount in ensuring the overall good health and wellbeing of the population. Alberta's immigrant population is one such group of patients who encounter particular challenges with the health care system (Alberta Health and Wellness, 2011, p.7). I will discuss immigrant Albertans as a disadvantaged community within the health care system in two respects:

- Cultural misunderstanding
- Government policy regarding immigration as it relates to health care accessibility

In any discussion on cultural discrimination in health care, a key assumption is that health care is a universal concept. This is defined as the diagnosis, treatment and management of any mental or physical health concern. There is general agreement on *what* constitutes a state of good health, or well-being. However, *how* to maintain a state of health, treat illness and pain, or manage symptoms are in many ways culturally and socially determined (Fernando, 2012, p. 115-117).

We should not presume that everyone holds the same trust or belief in Western medicine. What many Canadians consider to be axiomatic in medical science may not be regarded as such by people from other cultures. For example, treating depression or anxiety by means of oral medication is a common prescription in Canada, but may not be universally embraced by people from different backgrounds. This incongruity of

health culture contributes to feelings of alienation or cultural discrimination in immigrants seeking health care (Truong Donnelly et al., 2011, p. 280).

In a case study of Chinese and Sudanese immigrant women living with mental illness in Alberta, the "lack of cultural acceptance and appropriate health care services, [as well as the] lack of social resources, [and] ethnic inequality" prevented immigrant women from acquiring adequate health care services (Truong Donnelly et al., 2011, p. 280). In this instance, it is important to be culturally sensitive to the needs of Alberta's diverse citizenry to ensure they are not lost or ignored within the health care system.

To help address this issue, many health care service providers employ a 'cultural broker'. This broker belongs to a patient's culture and helps find treatment for their health concerns. They bridge the gaps between health cultures by promoting understanding and treatment for the patient (Stewart et al., 2006, p. 334). Such services promote more effective intercultural understanding and inclusivity within the health care system. In Edmonton, the Multicultural Health Brokers Co-operative represents 22 different cultural and linguistic communities. They help new immigrants navigate Alberta's health care system, as well as its social services, education, justice, immigration, and support systems (Multicultural Health Brokers, 2012). It is a daunting task for immigrants to supplant their lives from their home countries and develop roots in Canada. Finding a job, housing, and schools for their children are not easy tasks. To then steer through the rules, norms, and regulations is even more challenging. Having a 'cultural broker' can help find that harbour in a tempest of red tape.



## Additional Resource

**Colour Coded Health Care**  
The Impact of Race and Racism on Canadians' Health  
Sheryl Nestel PhD

January, 2012  
Wellesley  
Institute  
wellesleyinstitute.com

Nestel, S. (2012). *Colour Coded Health Care: The Impact of race and Racism on Canadians' Health*. Retrieved from the Wellesley Institute: <http://www.wellesleyinstitute.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/Colour-Coded-Health-Care-Sheryl-Nestel.pdf>



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Another major factor in immigrant health care is our structure of governance. Canada's federal system does not necessarily help. While immigration is a federal matter, health care is a constitutional concern of the provinces. This division between immigration law and health care provision causes immigrants a great deal of difficulty in accessing adequate care (Stewart et al. 2006, p. 330). This is compounded by an already lengthy and complex citizenship process. It becomes a real challenge to know which services are available to people at each stage of the immigration process. Illness does not discriminate, and neither should treatment. Ready access to health services should be made available to refugee claimants, refugees, landed immigrants, permanent residents, and new citizens.

In addition, the services available for immigrants, including health care, elder care and language training, have been reduced over the past several decades in the "economic restructuring" of services for newcomers settling in the country (Stewart et al., 2006, p. 330). This is rather paradoxical. Alberta benefits from immigrants to meet the needs of the labour market. In 2011, immigrants in this province had the highest labour force participation rate in Canada at 70.2 per cent (the national average was 61.8 per cent) (Government of Alberta, 2011, p. 5). New immigrants are employed in important sectors like health, trade, professional, technical, scientific, manufacturing, and accommodation (Government of Alberta, 2011, p. 10). The scaling back of services to help these individuals undermines their ability to contribute to Alberta's economy.

Alberta benefits from its diversity in both economically and culturally. For immigrant Albertans, a large part of the process of becoming Canadians involves learning how to access treatment for health concerns. Challenges facing the immigrant communities include cultural misunderstanding, differences in health cultures, exhaustive bureaucratic processes, and inadequate service provision. However, some gains have been made in addressing

these concerns, such as the existence of cultural brokers. As the demographic landscape in Alberta grows more diverse, our health care system must adapt to meet the needs and promote the health and well-being of its citizens.

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# Get Out and Stay Out: Discussing Race and Multiculturalism in Edmonton

By Noelle Jaipaul, Volunteer Writer



On November 1st, the John Humphrey Centre for Peace and Human Rights and the Kule Institute for Advanced Study hosted 'Get Out and Stay Out', a symposium discussing xenophobia, racism, and multiculturalism in the Edmonton context. The event featured a public dialogue on November 1st with Dr. Alana Lentin, a political sociologist from University of Western Sydney, and Dr. Mojtaba Mahdavi, a political scientist from University of Alberta. On November 2nd, the conversation continued, with a full-day roundtable discussion. This meeting served as an opportunity for community agencies and scholars to come together to talk about the issues surrounding racism and discrimination that service providers and citizens in Edmonton face.

The conversation produced many important points that we need to address in order to challenge racism in our community. Firstly, we need to eliminate the idea that we live in a post-race society. This involves exposing our flaws, and recognizing that racism exists in our actions, words, and structures. As Charlene Hay of the Centre for Race and Culture indicated, we know that there are groups of people who are hired less often, promoted infrequently, earn smaller salaries, and are retained less. In Ms. Hay's discussion, she stated that it takes a long time to get to the point of being able to recognize that issues of racism do exist, and are a part of society (C. Hay, personal communication, November 2, 2012). Although it is a big step, we can no longer avoid the fact that at structural and individual levels, we perpetuate, or are complicit in, acts of racism.

Many participants at the symposium acknowledged that historically, Canada has had a proud history of multiculturalism. The Canadian Multiculturalism Act, enacted as

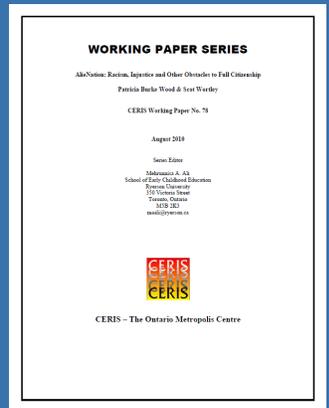
law in 1988 under Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, enshrined the

equality rights of diverse populations into government policy. The Act included the recognition that multiculturalism is a characteristic of Canadian society, and therefore should allow "the freedom of all members of Canadian society to preserve, enhance, and share their cultural heritage" (Department of Justice, 1985). At the time of the Act, visible minority groups were demanding that the legislation address racism, employment equity, and language rights. However, by the end of the decade, the trajectory seemed to shift. As Dr. Yasmeen Abu-Laban, professor in Political Science at the University of Alberta discussed, despite previously being touted as a key component of the broader Canadian character, multiculturalism began to be viewed as a threat to national identity. Dr. Abu-Laban stated that as a result of a neoliberal shift, Canada saw a weakened equity agenda in both policy and practice (Abu-Laban, personal communication, November 2, 2012). This included cuts to funding for multiculturalism programs that lead to many minority groups lacking the ability to mobilize and lay claim to the rights guaranteed in the Multiculturalism Act.

Recurring over the course of the meeting was the discussion of Islamophobia in Canada and worldwide. Especially following the 9/11 attacks, there has been an undercurrent of xenoracism towards not only practicing Muslims, but more generally towards those of the population who seem to be affiliated or identify with Middle Eastern or South Asian backgrounds. For instance, Discover Canada, the study guide for immigrants taking the citizenship exam,



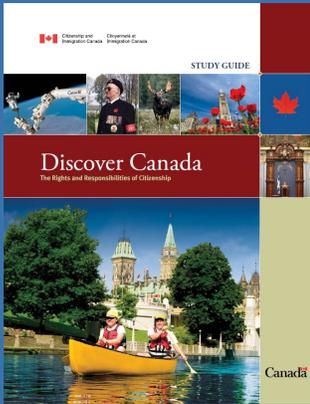
## Additional Resource



Burke, P. & Wortley, S. (2010). *AlienNation: Racism, Injustice and Other Obstacles to Full Citizenship*. Retrieved from: <http://ceris.metropolis.net/Virtual%20Library/other/CWP78.pdf>



## Additional Resource



Citizenship and Immigration Canada. (2012). *Discover Canada: The Rights and Responsibilities of Citizenship*. Retrieved from <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/pdf/pub/discover.pdf>



Photo by TrustoCorp, Flickr

has implicitly Islamophobic statements that perpetuate myths of brutality within Islamic culture. The guide reads, “Canada’s openness and generosity do not extend to barbaric cultural practices that tolerate spousal abuse, ‘honour killings’, female genital mutilation, or other gender-based violence” (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2012). However, while indeed these are abhorrent acts, the guide fails to acknowledge that spousal abuse and gender-based violence occur in our society on a daily basis, regardless of color, race, or ethnicity. To frame these violent acts as something that primarily occurs in other cultures is a fallacy, and further fuels xenophobia. When we frame gender-based violence as a malady of ‘the other’, we inevitably place our own culture as morally superior. Dr. Sourayan Mookerjee, Associate Professor of Sociology at the University of Alberta, articulately referred to this as the false heroics of “white men saving brown women from brown men” (S. Mookerjee, personal communication, November 2, 2012).

Responding to participants, Dr. Lentin turned the discussion towards the ways in which we need to address race and racism in a meaningful way. First, we need to target the idea of tolerance that comes with multiculturalism. The concept of tolerance suggests that we grudgingly allow for or acknowledge multiculturalism; however we

do not aim to be welcoming or embrace these cultural differences. Instead of merely enduring a diverse society, we need to strive to be an inclusive society, with mutual respect and dignity at the basis of our interactions with one another.

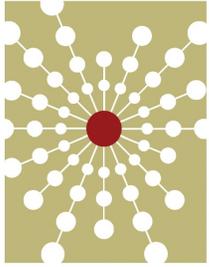
Further, Dr. Lentin proposed that we must commit to having critical discussions on the topic. Talking about racism is unpopular – and thus we have framed difference as diversity. While diversity is something that we celebrate, or at the very least pay lip service to, we are framing race and racism in a positive light. When we do this, we avoid the discomfort that comes with talking about racism –we also then neglect having those critical and often difficult dialogues. We need to acknowledge that racism in our society is real, and that is an issue of conflict. Dr. Lentin asserted that it is through discussion of this conflict that we can move forward as a society to produce positive change.

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# The Work of the Centre for Race and Culture

By Charlene Hay, Executive Director, Centre for Race and Culture



## CENTRE FOR RACE AND CULTURE

The Centre for Race and Culture (CRC) is a non-profit, charitable, membership-based organization based in Edmonton. Our vision is an inclusive society free of racism. Our work toward this includes doing research, providing education to all ages and sectors, and working toward systemic change.

We define racism as individual attitudes and actions that limit the rights of racialized and Aboriginal people. But most importantly, and with greater effect, there is institutional racism, embedded in policies and practices, that has developed over the past 500 years. Every institution and organization carries this history and racism is part of all of us. We all have bias and prejudice and we all discriminate. Some of us are more aware of it than others.

In order to progress, we believe that we must work toward equity. Equity is not equality, treating everyone the same. Equity levels the playing field. If I were to treat each reader of this article equally, I may give each of you an identical pair of shoes. That would only meet the needs of people with a certain size of foot. If I were treating you with equity, each of you would have a unique pair of shoes that met your individual needs.

For example, let us think about a large organization. We know that certain groups are hired less, earn less, retained less, and promoted less when education and experience are equalized. There can be no overt racism taking place when this happens. Foreign sounding names from India, for example, are less likely to be called for an interview. When people change their names and reapply they are

more likely to get the interview. We must examine causes for the difference and work to level playing field.

Edmonton has work to do in this area. We have not taken on the issue in any significant way. Cities in Ontario have been working on becoming more equitable for 40 years. Part of the reason is that the demographics in Ontario are different. Toronto is approximately half mainstream Canadian and half Aboriginal and racialized people; Edmonton is currently composed of 20 per cent of people from these populations. Ontario has city and provincial policy and legislation directed toward equity. In the early 1980s, at the same time as the federal government, equitable employment legislation was passed in Ontario. All school districts in the province were required to develop anti-racism policies.

What does this all mean? I recently came to know a teacher from an Ontario district who does not understand why is it so hard to get this discussion going in Edmonton. In the Ontario district it is part of the way all things are done.



Photo by Christopher Furcher

In Edmonton we have some policy but no real action. What we need are effective strategies and well executed action plans to produce equitable education, workplaces, and services in all sectors. This is what the Centre for Race and Culture is working towards.



### Additional Resource



No. 11-13  
September 2011

**Why do some employers prefer to interview Matthew, but not Samir?**  
*New evidence from Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver*

**Philip Oreopoulos and Diane Dechief**

Series editor: Linda Sheldon, SFU  
Krishna Pendur, SFU and Daniel Haber, UBC, Co-directors

*Oreopoulos, P. & Dechief, D. (2011). Why do some employers prefer to interview Matthew, but not Samir? New Evidence from Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver. Retrieved from the Metropolis British Columbia Centre of Excellence for Research on Immigration and Diversity: <http://mbc.metropolis.net/assets/uploads/files/wp/2011/WP11-13.pdf>*



## Want to volunteer for the ESPC?

Get involved with some of our existing and new volunteer opportunities!

We are looking for people who can:

- research and / or write reviews
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- serve on the board
- plan events / fundraise

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Photo by James Tworow

While doing anti-racism, we encounter resistance in many forms, at many levels, in all sectors. CRC has worked with youth and schools during the last decade. We ran a program called Peace Ambassadors - anti-racism for youth. We trained youth leaders to use interactive education, scenarios, and games to educate other youth.

When asking to present to groups of youth, we encounter resistance. Many school officials are unaware of the racism that exists and are nervous about bringing up the topic. We have presented one-time sessions to thousands of youth each year. For the leaders, the experience is intense and life changing. Peace Ambassadors ran for 10 years and was suddenly cut last April, part of federal budget changes.

Youth leadership programs are delivered. Young people learn, among many other aspects of leadership, about how to deal with racism, and build their self-confidence. We also work with Aboriginal youth and new immigrants and refugee youth. The focus with this group is life skills in general, including the ability to deal with racism and other challenges in positive ways. We also educate adults. Anti-racism education is delivered, in partnership with Zenev and Associates, for institutions involved in Racism Free Edmonton. Institutions involved include post-secondary institutions, school districts, our police service, our chamber of commerce, among others. We will do this through the lens of 'cultural competency' if that works best for the group. Professional development for teachers and other professionals is available, as are many resources.

Often people and organizations feel they have no time for this work because they have other priorities. Yet, we know that to teach all students equitably means lower dropout rates and higher achievement. It will take time to learn but it is a new way of doing things, not an additional task. The impetus for this work must come from district hierarchies and elected officials.

There is much to be gained by taking seriously all forms of oppression. A society where all people are respected, where their gifts and talents are utilized fully, and where we share in the richness of our differences - that is what we must work toward.

Edmonton Social Planning Council  
**Seasonal Celebration Open House**  
 Tues, December 4, 5-7PM  
 Suite 37, Commonwealth Building,  
 9912 - 106 Street NW  
 Light snacks and refreshments to be served.  
 Join our friendly Board and Staff for a social visit, light snacks and refreshments. It will be a pleasure to see community members help us usher in the holiday season and wrap up a busy year!  
 Please RSVP by December 3, 2012 at [info@edmontonsocialplanning.ca](mailto:info@edmontonsocialplanning.ca)



In 1940, the Edmonton Council of Social Agencies formed a Christmas Committee to coordinate the Christmas hamper programs being run by various social agencies in the city. The agencies involved with the Council agreed that in the past there had been wide variation from agency to agency in the quality of Christmas hampers, resulting in some injustice and dissatisfaction. The Christmas Committee developed a standard for agencies to use in preparing Christmas hampers.

The Council office became the centre for the "Christmas Exchange", which kept records of all families recommended for hampers each Christmas season. In its first year, 54 organizations used the exchange to avoid duplication of services and ensure that the available resources reached as many families in need as possible. The annual report from 1941 states that 1,070 client units (a client unit can be a family of any size, couple without children or an individual) received help from various organizations associated with the Christmas Exchange. Fundraising was a combination of cash and food donations.

The Edmonton Council of Social Agencies role as the coordinator of the Christmas Bureau came to an end in 1973 when the Christmas Bureau formally registered as a separate society and became the Christmas Bureau of Edmonton (June 7, 1973).



The people we assist (families, seniors and individuals) receive more than a meal - it's Christmas with hope and dignity and the knowledge that there is support from the community. The Christmas Bureau is non-denominational, providing inclusion for all Edmontonians. For those who do not need support from the Christmas Bureau, it is a chance to put the true meaning of the Christmas season into



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practice by volunteering, organizing a fund raiser, sponsoring an event or donating money or gift in kinds to the Christmas Bureau. The Christmas Bureau's mission and purpose is truly community inclusive.

Many of our clients are use our program for a year or two to help them get over a very difficult time in their life. Some examples of people who turn to the Christmas Bureau are:

- individuals who have lost their job due to economic events,
- had a medical crisis that resulted in loss of income,
- are new to Canada and are not yet established,
- are single parent families who have gone back to school to better the circumstances for their families,
- grandparents, who through tragedy or circumstance, are now caring for their grandchildren while living on a basic pension,
- or are seniors living on limited income.

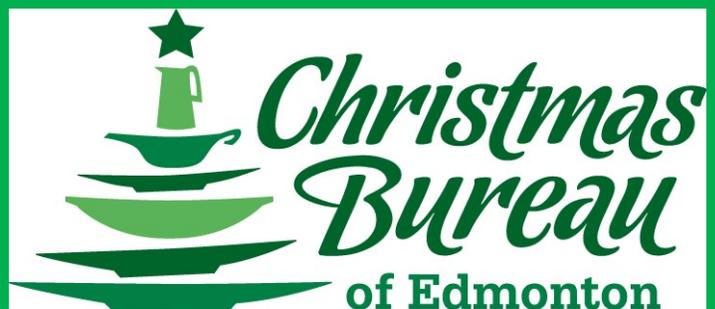


2010 saw our highest level of service - 25,493 client units, 16,484 families, 2,654 seniors, and 6,355 individuals for a total of 71,827 Edmontonians receiving assistance. In 2011, 23,301 client units were served; 13,966 families, 2,750 seniors and 6,585 individuals for a total for a total of 64,267 Edmontonians receiving assistance.

The Christmas Bureau of Edmonton is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors. Without the support of 800 plus volunteers giving just over 9,000 volunteer hours in six short weeks, the Christmas Bureau of Edmonton could not provide a festive meal for 65,000 Edmontonians in need. It is these volunteers who give of their time, energy and compassion that ensures the tradition of sharing and caring is alive each Christmas.

Christmas Bureau of Edmonton Honorary Campaign Chairperson, Kevin Lowe, sums it up best: "It takes an entire community to ensure that the tradition of sharing and caring continues and that no one is left behind at Christmas time. With your support, all Edmontonians will have the opportunity to celebrate with a festive meal at Christmas time."

Non-denominational and accessible to all, the Christmas Bureau of Edmonton has one mission: to provide a festive meal to Edmontonians in need. In 2012, 65,000 will turn to the Christmas Bureau for assistance.



Tel: 780.421.XMAS (9627)

[www.christmasbureau.ca](http://www.christmasbureau.ca)

[www.twitter.com/christmasbureau](http://www.twitter.com/christmasbureau)

P.O. Box 16000

Edmonton, Alberta

T5J 4B4

# Board Member Profile: Vasant Chotai



## Biography

Vasant Chotai pursued Dip. Teach, BA (Hon) in psychology and MPI (Queen's) in planning, and has 29 years of experience with the Government of Alberta and 2 years with Nairobi High School. Vasant was a senior manager and Director of Policy with Alberta Ministry of Employment, Immigration and Industry. Since retirement, Vasant has a private consulting business. He is also the President of the Board of Directors of the Edmonton Social Planning Council.

## President's Message

Over the years, Edmonton Social Planning Council has successfully focused on social research, particularly in the areas of family poverty and the working poor, and has provided leadership in addressing social issues by informing the public and influencing government policy and priorities. This is reflected in our research releases like *Tracking the Trends* and our monthly public Lunch and Learn sessions on current community issues. We have played a prominent role in holding public sessions for the development of Alberta's Social Policy Framework. You can also follow our discussions on our Website, Facebook, Twitter and ThreeSource.

However, we have set further goals for 2013 in addition to continuing with the work in which we have developed an expertise. In the next year, we will exchange training and information with other non-profit organizations. We will work even closer with the other NGOs in the task of informing government policies and simplifying its delivery of services. We are excited about our future that will have a clearer identity and greater impact. We welcome you to join us in this exciting endeavour.



## Looking for research assistance?

The Edmonton Social Planning Council provides **FREE** research services to social advocacy organizations in Edmonton! Are you seeking publications or statistics in social policy areas such as:

- |                     |                                |                                 |
|---------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <b>Housing</b>      | <b>Transportation</b>          |                                 |
| <b>Education</b>    | <b>Food Security</b>           |                                 |
| <b>Urban Issues</b> | <b>Social Services</b>         | <b>Health</b>                   |
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| <b>Labour Force</b> | <b>Crime and Safety</b>        | <b>... and more!</b>            |



If you or your organization needs a hand finding information about local social issues or related topics, feel free to contact our Resource Coordinator Stephen MacDonald by phone at 780.423.2031 ext. 354 or by email at [stephenm@edmontonsocialplanning.ca](mailto:stephenm@edmontonsocialplanning.ca). Or, submit a research question to us using our Research Inquiries form. To access the form, please visit <http://goo.gl/7b6VH>.



# You Tube

Visit our YouTube Channel to view past Lunch and Learn talks and speeches made by the ESPC.

[www.youtube.com/edmontonspc](http://www.youtube.com/edmontonspc)

# flickr

All of ESPC's events are archived on our photostream at [www.flickr.com/photos/edmontonsocialplanning](http://www.flickr.com/photos/edmontonsocialplanning)

## About the Edmonton Social Planning Council

The ESPC is an independent, non-profit, charitable organization. Our focus is social research – particularly in the areas of low income and poverty.

We are dedicated to encouraging the adoption of equitable social policy, supporting the work of other organizations who are striving to improve the lives of Edmontonians, and educating the public regarding the social issues that impact them on a daily basis.

### Our Vision

A healthy, just and inclusive community.

### Our Mission

The Edmonton Social Planning Council provides leadership to the community and its organizations in addressing social issues and effecting changes to social policy.

### As a Member

- support our efforts to remain on the forefront in dealing with social issues
- make it possible for us to distribute our materials freely and widely to all
- receive our newsletters, fact sheets and other publications
- be eligible to vote at ESPC AGMs and have a say in the direction of the organization
- be eligible to serve on the board of directors
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