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Beyond Binaries: In Diverse Societies Prejudices are more complex than simply us and them

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Introduction and Methodology

March 21st is International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. The day serves as a call to action for individuals, organizations, and all levels of government to actively work to eliminate all forms of racial discrimination, injustice, systemic racism and hate. In Canada we've witnessed changing patterns in the main targets of prejudice and hate over the past few years. The targets of negative sentiment have remained relatively stable with racial and religious minorities most likely to be the object of such feeling. The survey results (March 1 and 2, 2025) that follow examine the extent to identify which groups are most likely to be the object of negative sentiment and by whom. What is particular about this study however is that it reveals that analysis of negative sentiment which is generally framed as a binary where majorities inevitably hold prejudice or negative views on minorities offers a partial view of who holds prejudices and why. Documenting the demographic diversity of groups harboring negative sentiment is essential towards a proper comprehension of prejudice in Canada and in other diverse societies.

The survey was conducted by Leger for the Association for Canadian Studies with 1539 respondents in Canada over the period March 1 and 2, 2025.

A margin of error cannot be associated with a non-probability sample in a panel survey for comparison purposes. A probability sample of 1539 respondents would have a margin of error of $\pm 2.5\%$, 19 times out of 20.

Arab Canadians are viewed most negatively by Canadians while Black Canadians are seen least so

Net Negative	Total	Male	Female
Jews	14%	17%	10%
Indigenous	14%	18%	11%
Black	11%	13%	10%
Arabs	26%	30%	23%
Chinese	15%	18%	12%

Arabs and Jews viewed most negatively by those between the age of 18 and 34

	18-34	35-54	55+
Net Negative			
Jews	18%	15%	10%
Indigenous	13%	17%	13%
Black	15%	15%	7%
Arabs	22%	30%	26%
Chinese	13%	17%	14%

Arabs and Jews viewed most negatively by Francophones

Net Negative	French	English	Others
Jews	22%	11%	16%
Indigenous	12%	15%	16%
Black	13%	10%	17%
Arabs	36%	23%	32%
Chinese	19%	13%	22%

Negative views of selected groups are more complex than suggested by Visible minority/non Visible minority binaries/dichotomies

	Immigrants	Non-Immigrants	Not Visible Minorities	Visible Minorities	South Asian	Chinese
Net Negative Opinion						
Jews	20%	12%	11%	22%	26%	14%
Indigenous	15%	14%	14%	17%	21%	19%
Black	16%	10%	9%	19%	29%	30%
Arabs	27%	26%	27%	26%	26%	26%
Chinese	19%	14%	11%	19%	23%	NA

Islam viewed considerably more negatively than Christianity and Judaism

Net Negative	Total	Male	Female
Christianity	27%	28%	25%
Judaism	25%	30%	20%
Islam	49%	54%	44%

Gap in Negative views between Islam and Christianity and Jews narrows somewhat amongst the 18-34 cohort

	18-34	35-54	55+
Net Negative			
Christianity	30%	33%	19%
Judaism	28%	27%	21%
Islam	41%	52%	51%

Islam highly unpopular amongst the country's francophones and Judaism and Christianity far more unpopular amongst francophones than amongst non-francophones

Net Negative	French	English	Others
Christianity	36%	26%	13%
Judaism	36%	22%	21%
Islam	61%	45%	49%

Negative views of selected religions are more complex than suggested by visible minority/non visible minority binaries/dichotomies, though Islam is viewed less negatively by visible minorities than by non visible minorities

		Non-Immigrants	Not Visible Minorities	Visible Minorities		
Net Negative	Immigrants				South Asian	Chinese
Christianity	20%	28%	28%	20%	23%	26%
Judaism	26%	21%	25%	23%	26%	17%
Islam	44%	50%	51%	38%	37%	46%

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