

September 4, 2019

The Common Ground Podcast: Exploring narratives of hate and counter-hate in Alberta

Edmonton – Police-reported hate crimes have seen big increases in Canada. In 2017 alone 2,073 hate crimes were reported, up 47 per cent from the previous year.

“The increase reflects a mix of potentially more hate crimes occurring and more people reporting incidents as potential hate crimes,” says Irfan Chaudhry, director, Office of Human Rights, Diversity and Equity at MacEwan University.

To examine race-related issues in Alberta, Chaudhry, in collaboration with Iman Bukhari from the Canadian Cultural Mosaic Foundation in Calgary, has produced a five-segment podcast *Let’s talk about Common Ground* that explores the narratives of hate and counter-hate in Alberta. “We reached out to a number of people across the province who work in agencies and organizations that deal with race-related issues to find out their perspectives and what may be done to improve the way we look at each other.”

The first episode, *The Context of Hate in Alberta*, features Omar Mosleh, a reporter with Star Edmonton and Jason Levine with Anti-Racist Action (Calgary) who discuss the question of how we understand the diverse and divisive viewpoints that fuel the rhetoric of hate.

Episode two examines the historical legacy of hateful treatment towards the Indigenous community. Titled *All Walks of Life: From Hate to Healing* outlines what, if anything, has changed in Albertans’ attitudes toward Indigenous people, and how Indigenous knowledge can help us heal from historical and current narratives of hate. Providing their insights for this segment are Keestin O’Dell, kihew waciston Indigenous Centre, MacEwan University; Michelle Robinson, Indigenous Liaison, 12 Community Safety Initiative (Calgary); and Garret Smith, founder, Camp Mohkinstsis (Calgary).

Canada is a nation that is welcoming and accepting of immigrants. But in recent years, views regarding immigration, refugees and resettlement have shaped many narratives both online and offline. Episode three, *Welcome to Canada: Now fit in, or Fxxk off - Immigration and the Fear of the ‘Other,’* explores the voices of anti-immigration in order to understand how these attitudes impact newcomers and the agencies that help them settle in Canada. Zeina Sleeman-Long from NorQuest College, an institution that serves a large percentage of new Canadians, provides insights into relating with newcomers and how racist language impacts the quality of their lives.

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What do young Albertans think about race-related issues in the province? Episode four features the insights of Daliso Mwanza and Riley Osadchuk, both MacEwan students, to find out if they see any hope in looking past the hateful noise that appears to be dividing the country. They will discuss their perspectives on hate, and what this demographic thinks can be done to address the issue.

The final segment of the podcast is *Can We Find a Common Ground?* Based on the responses of all those interviewed, this segment asks the question: Do we have any hope of finding common ground in the current climate of political and social polarization?

Funding for promoting the podcast was provided by the Human Rights Education and Multicultural Fund from the Alberta Human Rights Commission.

The Common Ground Podcast: Exploring narratives of hate and counter-hate in Alberta is available on [Apple iTunes](#), [Spotify](#) and [Google Play](#). Chaudhry is available for media interviews.

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