



Policy Number: 1.03 <i>Updated: October 2020</i>	
Creation Date: July 2020	Effective Date: July 2020

The Muslims in Canada Archives (MiCA)
PROTOCOLS OF PRACTICE

PURPOSE

This document outlines the values, ethics, and principles that influence the Muslims in Canada Archives (MiCA). It is meant to provide transparency and clarity on the decisions made for MiCA, and to serve as a guide for MiCA staff.

OUR FRAMEWORK

The Muslims in Canada Archives operates under a feminist ethics of care framework centered on radical empathy in its practices. In the context of archives, the application of an ethics of care framework to govern practice has been championed and explicated best by archival studies scholars Michelle Caswell and Marika Cifor.¹ We draw heavily from their research in informing our practices.

A feminist ethics of care framework emphasizes the complex and interlocking relationships people have with one another and “larger communities through webs of responsibilities.”² These relationships are continuous, constantly evolving, and involves applying rigorous reciprocity. In archives, this is actualized when the archivist critically approaches their relationships with all stakeholders of the archives with radical empathy. According to Caswell and Cifor, employing radical empathy – as opposed to empathy that is not radical – means accepting and consenting to being “affected, to be shaped by another’s experiences, without blurring the lines between the self and the other.”³ There are four key archival relationships that the archivist must then reconceptualize to employ radical empathy: between archivist and record creator, between archivist and record subject, between archivist and user, and between archivist and larger communities. Each relationship of radical empathy between the archivist and any of the stakeholders already mentioned will manifest differently.

MiCA aims to implement this framework and apply it in all our relationships. Below are protocols that demonstrate how MiCA exercises this framework in our day-to-day operations.

PROTOCOLS

1. A relationship of radical empathy with the larger community means thinking about who is often *not* part of the conversation⁴ MiCA acknowledges the traditional marginalization of minority or underrepresented identities within Muslim communities and will prioritize records that capture their histories and stories. These groups include (but are not limited to): minority sects, women, refugees, Indigenous, Black, queer, non-binary, youth, and gender non-conforming Muslims in Canada.

¹ See Caswell, Michelle, and Marika Cifor. "From human rights to feminist ethics: radical empathy in the archives." *Archivaria* 81, no. 1 (2016): 23-43.

² *Ibid*, p. 28.

³ *Ibid*, p. 31.

⁴ *Ibid*, p. 39.



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2. We are participatory. MiCA is committed to continuous and ongoing consultation with Canadian Muslim communities, individuals, families, and organizations to ensure that we are responsibly representative. Being participatory means that we aim to consult key community partners and the larger Canadian Muslim communities when making significant decisions for MiCA.
3. MiCA aims to be reflexive. As an initiative borne out of the Institute of Islamic Studies at the University of Toronto, MiCA realizes its positionality and acknowledges the power structures at play. When we enter community spaces, we are undoubtedly representatives of the University of Toronto, a traditionally Euro-centric research institution with histories of structural racism, discrimination, and inequity. Researchers of major institutions have historically abused their powers when studying marginalized communities, often disadvantaging the study population. Communities remember these invasive, extractive methodologies. As representatives of the University of Toronto, MiCA's responsibility and aim is to shift the balance of power to favour the historically disadvantaged community and its members.
4. MiCA practices reciprocity. We recognize that the Canadian Muslim individuals and organizations that we consult are providing us their expertise on their own time and through their own generosity. We are grateful for this free labour and will endeavour to give back in-kind if financial compensation is not possible. We acknowledge and understand the power, privileges, and networks we possess, especially as a unit of the University of Toronto, and we aim to practice reciprocity by leveraging these privileges for those we consult.
5. MiCA has a take-down policy. If a creator/donor requests that any of their digitized archival materials be removed from our various digital platforms (including social media), we will aim to connect with the creator/donor as soon as possible to discuss their concerns. During discussions, the content will be taken down temporarily until next steps can be determined.

ACCOUNTABILITY

MiCA is run by a team of staff that are committed to always learning and growing. While we aim to hold each other accountable, we also invite the community to hold us accountable to the outlined protocols. We hope to foster meaningful dialogue and encourage discussions on how we can do better for Canadian Muslim communities.