

ABSTRACTS

Name

S. Harris Ali and Fuyuki Kurasawa

Title

Anti-Asian Mis/Disinformation on Social Media During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Anti-Asian COVID-19 mis/disinformation on social media platforms is fostering to new forms of racist and xenophobic speech and action both online and offline (e.g. Sinophobic posts targeting Chinese communities and peoples of Chinese descent in North America, verbal and physical violence aimed at Asian-Canadians and Asian-Americans, etc.). Based on computational methods (topic modeling, semantic network analysis, and sentiment analysis) and qualitative analysis of content on three social media platforms (Twitter, Reddit, and YouTube) and relevant websites, we will present our findings regarding the forms of COVID-19-related racist and xenophobic misinformation and disinformation, the forms of anti-misinformation and -disinformation campaigns that North American-based Asian community organizations and activists are developing, and the implications that these findings have for public health and political responses.

Name

Nadia Caidi

Title

Newcomers' (Dis)Information Practices: The Role of Trust in Immigrant Networks

Nadia Caidi will share findings from ongoing research that examines the dynamics around engagement and effective use of information resources that cater to the ways of knowing of migrants and refugees to Canada. Specifically, she interrogates how the multiple and overlapping local and transnational information environments of communities are negotiated and comprehended, and come to embody new kinds of knowledge. The interaction between new Canadians' information practices and critical literacies (e.g., assessing the credibility of information) are examined from a socio-cultural perspective, thus shedding light on how migrants' knowledge practices are enacted; how newcomers (pre and post-arrival) make sense of their information environments; and how migrants' ways of knowing shift and adapt.

Name

Yemisi Dina

Title

Legal Responses to Domestic Violence during COVID-19

There has been a rise in the number of domestic violence incidents across the world. In Canada there was a spike in the number of calls to the police and helplines ranging from verbal abuse, threats to assaults on women. This presentation will review the legal responses to and legislation on domestic violence in selected jurisdictions like Canada, South Africa, United States, Kenya, Brazil and the United Kingdom.

Name

Fay Faraday

Title

Erasure as Disinformation

Disinformation campaigns are often thought of as active insertions of false information into a fact-based public discourse. But the deeper, more difficult disinformation campaign to dislodge is the erasure from public knowledge and memory of active policies of racism, colonialism and misogyny that create and uphold structural inequality in our society. This disinformation normalizes the privilege of dominant classes and the suffering of those who are impoverished, marginalized and oppressed. The COVID-19 pandemic clearly exposed those deep structural inequalities and the ways in which racialized communities bear the heaviest burdens of sustaining essential social infrastructure.

With a focus on low-wage migrant workers, this presentation will examine how disinformation in the form of erasure is strategically leveraged to sustain ever growing communities of people with precarious or undocumented status and how migrant and undocumented workers, during the pandemic, used digital mobilizing to push back at dominant narratives and resist erasure.

Name

Jane M. Heffernan

Title

Mathematical modelling, quality of information and social behavior

Infectious diseases are subject to much media coverage. When an individual considers vaccination and/or social behaviour change, i.e., physical distancing, their decisions are based on information accessed through mass and social media. Ultimately, their decisions affect not only themselves, but also the population at large. Mathematical models can be used to quantify the individual- and population-level effects of such decisions, including scales of information quality. They can also be used to optimize public health policy messaging so that misinformation effects can be minimized.

Name

Carl James

Title

How COVID-19 exacerbates educational inequities among racialized students

Added to the educational issues with which Indigenous, Black and other racialized youth have to contend, is the impact of COVID-19 on their health, social, community and educational lives. I explore how concerns pertaining to daily meals, academic support, mental health, and remote and online schooling are not serving the educational and social needs, expectations, concerns and interests of racialized students and their parents. In concluding, I argue that the time has come for us to develop more equitable schooling and educational program to effectively meet the needs of racialized students.

Name

Suzanne Johnson

Title

Historical Distrust of the state in recent immigrants as a cause of disinformation in the Era of Covid-19 (Withdrawn)

CLASP is a legal clinic funded by Legal Aid Ontario at Osgoode Hall Law School at York University. Under the supervision of lawyers, volunteer law students provide legal advice and represent clients. CLASP promotes access to justice by providing quality legal services to low-income individuals in Ontario and providing a clinical education that trains future lawyers who are themselves committed to social justice.

To qualify for CLASP assistance, prospective clients must meet Legal Aid, Ontario's financial eligibility criteria. Our clients are not just euphemistically low-income; they are living in deep and persistent poverty. In addition to the presenting legal issue that brought them to us, they are often also dealing with significant other legal and non-legal problems such as homelessness, food insecurity, low literacy, disability, unemployment, lack of immigration status, addiction, and mental health issues.

Many of the clinic clients served by the Community and Legal Aid Services Program at Osgoode Hall Law School are recent immigrants, many relying on their ethnic groups to get their information. Often the cause in recent immigrants is a history of trauma and misinformation in their home country. This mistrust of government continues when they are in Canada. In times of fear, such as in a pandemic, this fear of the government is further exacerbated. For public health authorities to adequately fight against misinformation during the pandemic, they should reframe the issue as just fighting against conspiracy theories to understanding have the root cause of this government mistrust and communicate in a way to ensure that the information is communicated in plain language and in a way that is appropriate to the communities. This paper will examine the root causes of government mistrust in recent immigrant communities and propose public health officials' solutions.

Name

Eric Kennedy

Title

Trust, Expertise, and Information Sources during the COVID-19 Pandemic in Canada: A National, Longitudinal Survey

Throughout the pandemic, we have tracked national attitudes and perceptions of COVID through longitudinal surveying. In this presentation, we describe the views shared by respondents about trusted information sources, confidence in different expert groups, and attitudes towards medical officers. We explore both quantitative data related to confidence, as well as qualitative, open-ended data about personal decision-making and assessment of information, to better understand the range of views expressed by a diverse sample of Canadians. We also discuss the complexity of analyzing this data based on race, given its deep interconnectedness with other forms of marginalization, including economic, employment, and residential situations.

Name

Nazilla Khanlou and Thumeka Mgwigwi

Title

Digital exclusion of racialized women at risk of GBV during the COVID-19 pandemic

Racialized women at risk of gender-based violence are a priority group to focus on for upstream mental health support during the COVID-19 pandemic. Data collection is a strategic tool to address the specific risks of women experiencing GBV. We will present findings from our knowledge synthesis project to analyze guiding principles for data collection. Our findings highlight the challenges to gathering data and the difficulties of adhering to methodological, ethical and safety principles in the context of the pandemic. Safety risks are at stake when collecting data remotely; even though mobile phones and web platforms facilitate data collection, they can also put women and girls at risk of breaching privacy, since the conditions to guarantee confidentiality cannot be met.

Name

Jack Leong

Title

What is in a name: the COVID-19 virus naming variants and their impact on Chinese Canadian community

Chinese Canadians have settled in Canada since as early as in 1788 (Lai, Leong “Chinatown Series – Toronto”). The first large scale of Chinese immigrants came to Canada during the Fraser

River Gold Rush in the 1850s, followed by waves of Chinese railroad workers in the end of the 19th century. Most Chinese Canadians have changed their sojourner mentality to calling Canada home from the 1960s, the latest documented by researchers (Leong; Poy). While most Chinese Canadians see themselves as Canadians, but are they seen as ones? The COVID-19 Pandemic has once again taken this notion into spotlight. From anti-Asian racism, naming of the virus, and contesting Chinese Canadians as simply Chinese, the pandemic highlights the subtle, unconscious, and systematic discrimination against Chinese Canadians. In this presentation, I'll discuss various names used to refer to the COVID-19 virus, specifically the ones related to race and origins, and reveal the anti-Chinese racism associated with these terms. I argue these terminologies, most often claim to have derived out of convenience or common sense, denote deep rooted racist classification and information practices.

Name

Obiora Okafor

Title

International solidarity and the (Diminishing?) global vaccine divide

The proposed presentation will deal with the question of international solidarity as a moral and legal right of peoples and individuals in international law and how it should frame or frames access to vaccines during this COVID-19 Pandemic. It will explore how vaccine hoarding has produced a largely racialized vaccine divide as between the richer and weaker states and peoples of the world. It also systematically makes a case for greater respect for the international solidarity right in think about and designing systems that ensure or prevent global access to vaccines.

Name

Justin Poy

Roundtable Title

Is all "news" equal?: A cross-cultural discussion of the dissemination and sharing of news in the era of COVID-19

Justin Poy will lead a panel presentation to explore the role of social media, news media, and fake news during the pandemic, and its effect on diasporic communities in Canada. He and his fellow panelists' discussions will center on the media representation of Canadians of Asian-descent, migrant workers, newcomers and other racialized communities. How do we as a research community counteract or combat online disinformation targeting racialized and vulnerable groups? This presentation will generate possible steps or actions to address this

question.

Name

Geoffrey Reaume

Title

A Brief History of Infectious Disease, Disability and Racial Conceptions of 'Healthy Citizens'

This presentation will provide an overview of how xenophobia and ableism has historically been a part of responses to outbreaks of infectious diseases in western society. From Christians scapegoating Jews and people with leprosy during medieval plagues to white people blaming east Asians during epidemics/pandemics in more recent times, this presentation will provide a brief summary of how racist and ableist concepts of "healthy citizens" has a long and dubious history in which the most privileged in society sought to cast out those with the least power based on conceptions of race, ethnicity, disability and class. There will also be reference to how some people have resisted these attacks and sought to re-orient the focus away from targeting marginalized populations.

Name

Jeffrey Squire

Title

Covid-19, Healthcare Waste and the Information Gap in the Global South

This paper posits that current Covid-19 safety protocols propagated by leading public health agencies including the World Health Organization (WHO), United States Centres for Disease Control (USCDC) as well as the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) largely neglects the issue of healthcare waste. This creates an information gap which can have serious public health ramifications especially, for countries in the global south. To date, the Coronavirus has infected close to half a billion people worldwide, resulting in more than 6 million fatalities (WHO, 2022). A significant number of infections and fatalities have been recorded in the global south where in addition to providing care for infected patients, massive testing and vaccination programs aimed at curbing the spread of the virus have been rolled out. Such activities, contributes to generating massive volumes of healthcare waste including potentially infectious needles, syringes, masks, gloves, blood products and bodily fluids. The mismanagement of such waste in this era of Covid-19 is highly antithetical to curbing the spread of the virus. Abridging the information gap requires a robust risk communication strategy that prioritizes healthcare waste management as an essential nonpharmaceutical intervention in the fight against Covid-19.

Name

Leah F. Vosko

Title

COVID-19, Mis/Disinformation and the Racialized Externalization of Migrant Agricultural Workers Social Reproduction

My remarks will focus on the treatment of seasonal migrant workers in agriculture in Canada during the COVID-19 pandemic. It will explore how dis/mis/information exacerbated the externalization of the costs of and risks confronting this group of workers perform essential work in the agri-food, with particular attention to those migrating from Latin America and the Caribbean.

Name

Teresa Woo-Paw

Roundtable Title

COVID and its effects on racialized communities

Teresa Woo-Paw will chair a roundtable discussion joined by leaders from the Asian-Canadian community. She will facilitate a conversation about the lived experiences of Asian-Canadians during the pandemic. The focus will be the small and large incidents of racism and discrimination – in schools, neighbourhoods, and other settings - faced by community members. What actions can individuals or communities take to support or serve as allies to Asian-Canadians? The roundtable will generate possible steps or actions to address this question.

Name

Cary Wu

Title

Race, trust, and COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy in Canada

A large body of literature has suggested that vaccine hesitancy is higher among racialized populations. In this article, I consider racial disparities in COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy and the role of institutional trust. Analyzing data from a nationally representative survey studying the social impacts of COVID-19 across Canada, I find that compared to white Canadians, only Black Canadians show a significant higher COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy and about 15% of the Black-white gap can be attributed to their lower institutional trust. My additional analysis further shows that low trust among Black Canadians explains fully their unwillingness to do what the government recommends about vaccines. Findings of this study suggest that efforts toward

addressing systemic racism and promoting institutional trust are key to tackling the prevalence of vaccine hesitancy among racialized communities.