

## Welcome to our Learning Network & Knowledge Hub Webinar

### Anti-Asian Racism and Gender-Based Violence: Historical and Contemporary Realities

**Date & Time:** Tuesday, June 8 | 1:00-2:30 PM ET

- All attendees are muted during the webinar.
- Cameras are also turned off except for panelists.
- If you are experiencing issues, please type into the chat box.
- If you have a question for the presenters, please type into the Q&A box and we will spend 20 mins near the end on Questions and Answers.
- There will be an evaluation link in the chat box at the end of the webinar, please fill out the form as your feedback will guide our future webinars.
- Once you complete the evaluation form, you will be directed to a website where you will be prompted to enter your full name and email address. A certificate of attendance will be generated and emailed to you.
- Presentation slides are posted on our website, there will be a link in the chat box.
- The webinar recording will be posted on our website within the next few days: [Recorded Webinars - Learning Network - Western University \(vawlearningnetwork.ca\)](#)

**Western**  Centre for Research & Education on  
Violence Against Women & Children



Financial contribution from



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Please think about the traditional lands you are currently situated on and join us in acknowledging and thanking the generations of Indigenous peoples who have cared for these Lands and in celebrating the continued strength and spirit of Indigenous Peoples. The ongoing work to make the promise of truth and reconciliation real in our communities and to bring justice for murdered and missing Indigenous women and girls across the country should inform our discussions in this webinar and beyond.

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## The model minority myth and anti-Asian racism intersected with gender, class and sexuality

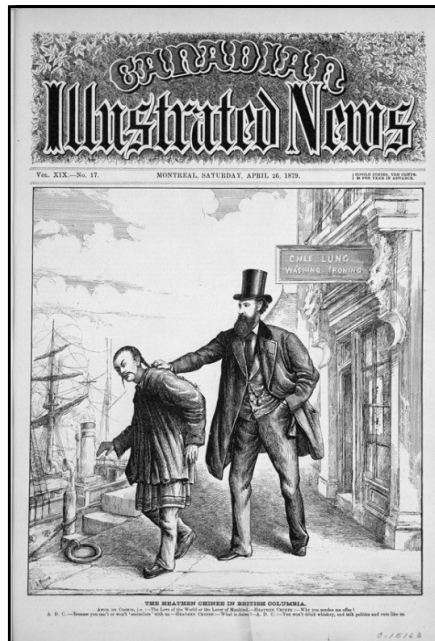
Learning Network Webinar: Anti-Asian Racism and Gender-Based Violence: Historical and Contemporary Realities

Jiyoung Lee-An, PhD  
Instructor, Carleton University  
June 8, 2021



Source: vogue

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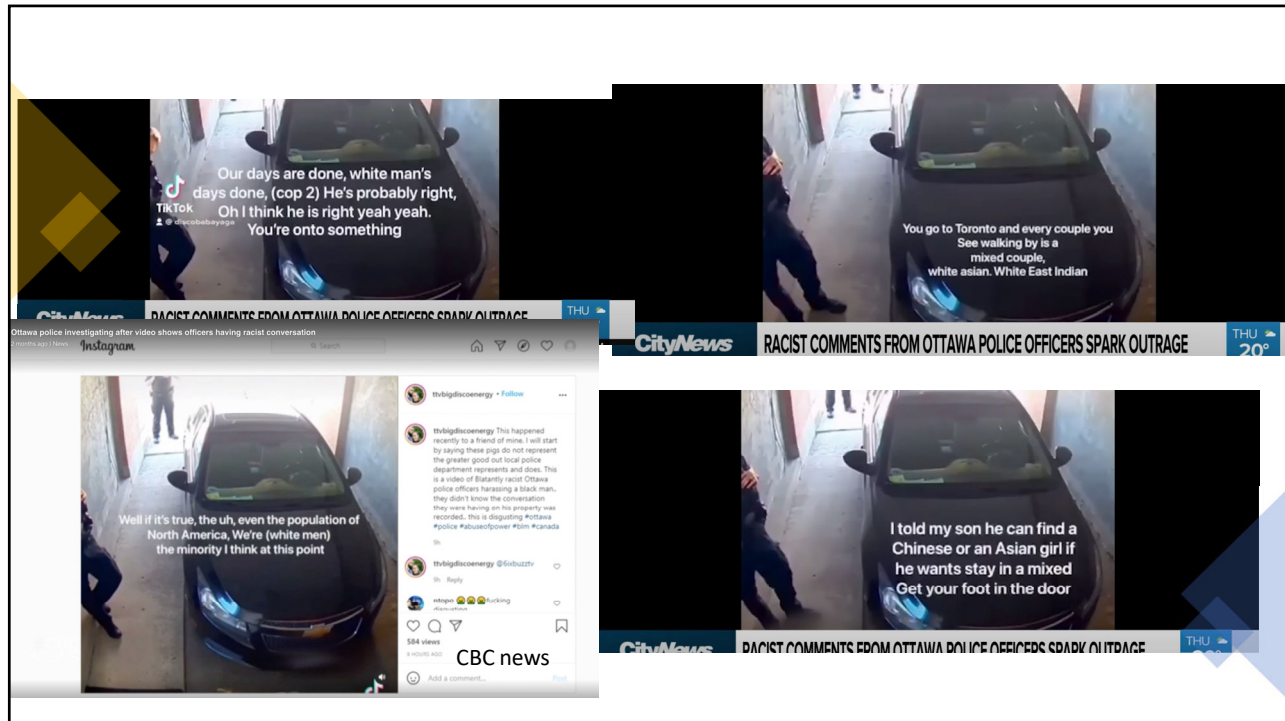


Canadian Illustrated News on 26 April 1879  
(Source: The Canadian Encyclopedia)

## Exclusion of Asians and sexualization of Asian women in Canadian nation-building

- The Chinese Immigration Act of 1885 and the Chinese Exclusion Act
- Komagata Maru incident
- The internment of Japanese immigrants/Canadians during the WWII.
- Asians as “perpetual others”: “Go back to your country”.
- Sexuality of Chinese women as a threat to white nation building.
- The fear of inter-racial relations and inclusion/exclusion of Asian women at the national border
- The sexualization of Asian women and fetishization of Asian women’s bodies: European colonization of the Asia Pacific and colonial discourse of orientalism that constructed Asian women as “exotic” sexual objects.

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## The model minority myth

- It has been popularized since the 1960s.
- It is based on prevailing stereotypes of Asians as hard-working, independent, economically prosperous but not politically challenging.
- The model minority myth as part of white nation-building and a discourse to maintain the existing racial hierarchies
- It hides historically rooted anti-Asian racism, poverty, labour abuse, and psychological needs.
- The myth is utilized to disrupt inter-racial solidarity and used against other racialized communities.

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### Honorary whites

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**Honorary whites** is a term that was used by th who would otherwise have been treated as nor groups of people, mostly people of **East Asian** and **Taiwanese** which were granted this "honor races were added as well.

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## Discrepancy among Asian diaspora communities

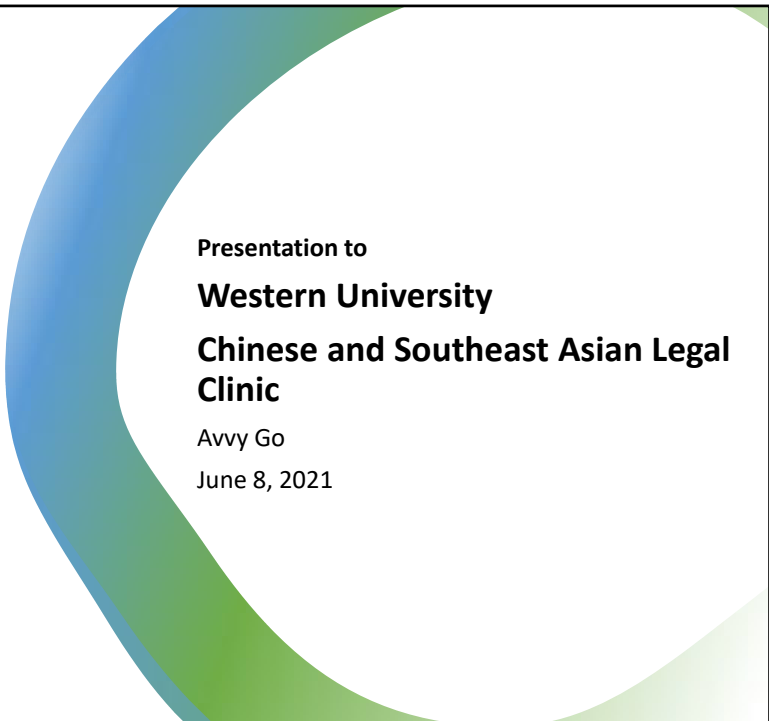
- Among Korean, Arab and West Asian Canadians, the poverty rate ranged from 27 per cent to 32 per cent. Among Chinese and also Black Canadians, the poverty rate reached 20 per cent compared to the white population (12.2 per cent) (Hou, Frank and Schimmele, 2020).
- Asian Canadians are also highly represented in skilled occupations, particularly among those born in Canada. (Chen and Hau, 2019)
- The model minority myth systemically excludes the reality of working-class Asian women in Canada who are mainly employed in feminized workforce including domestic and care work, service industry, and sex industry.

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## Moving forward: Anti-racist movements and decolonization

- Building inter-racial solidarity with Indigenous, Black and other racialized communities
- Anti-Asian racism movements in line with full awareness and respect of and support for Indigenous resistance and pathways to decolonization


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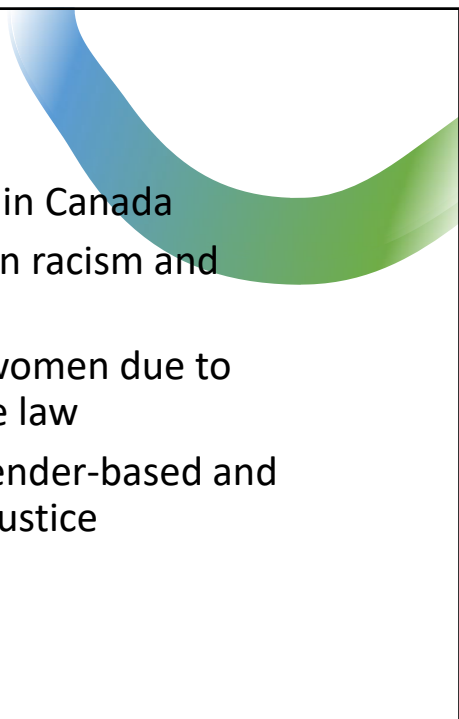
**Anti-Asian Racism  
and GBV: Historical  
and Contemporary  
Realities**

**Presentation to  
Western University  
Chinese and Southeast Asian Legal  
Clinic**

Avvy Go  
June 8, 2021


 **CSALC**  
CHINESE AND SOUTHEAST ASIAN  
LEGAL CLINIC  
華越柬法律服務中心  
Trung Tâm Hướng Dẫn Luật Pháp Hoa-Việt-Khmer-Lào  
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**Workshop Objectives**

- Historical context of Anti-Asian racism in Canada
- Current day manifestation of Anti-Asian racism and gender-based violence
- Legal Issues faced by Asian Canadian women due to discriminatory laws/indifference of the law
- Advocacy work by CSALC to address gender-based and racial inequities and other forms of injustice

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## System Racism- Overview

- Systemic racism occurs when an institution or set of institutions working together creates or maintains racial inequity. This can be unintentional, and doesn't necessarily mean that people within an organization are racist. It is often caused by hidden institutional biases in policies, practices and processes that privilege or disadvantage different groups of people. It can be the result of doing things the way they have always been done without considering how they affect particular groups differently.



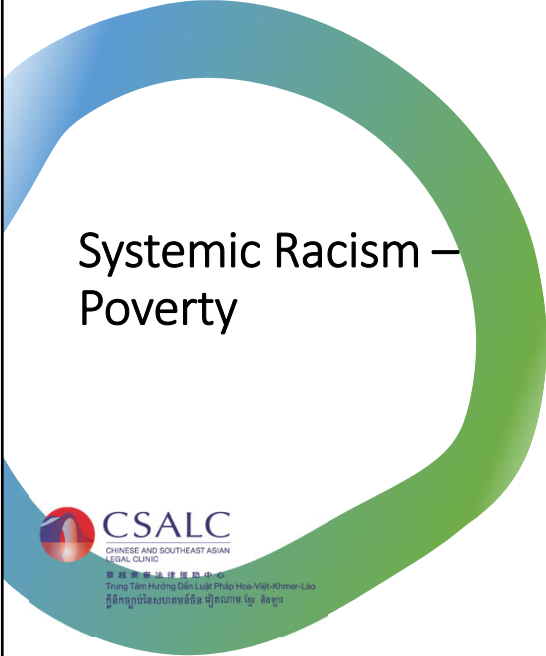
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## System Racism- Overview (cont'd)

- Acknowledging systemic racism and understanding what it does and looks like is the first step toward effective advocacy for racial justice. It is important to note that doing so does not detract from the personal experiences and adversities of individuals not targeted by systemic racism. Acknowledging systemic racism allows us to identify in what ways certain people are privileged and disadvantaged, therefore addressing the systemic and contextual issues, biases, and barriers hampering equity and equality




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## Systemic Racism — Poverty


- Racialized persons are two to six times more likely to live in poverty in Ontario.
- Poverty rates in Ontario: Chinese (22.2%), South Asian (18%), Southeast Asian (18.2%), all racialized people (21.3%), all Ontario population (14.4%) and all non-racialized population (11.5%).



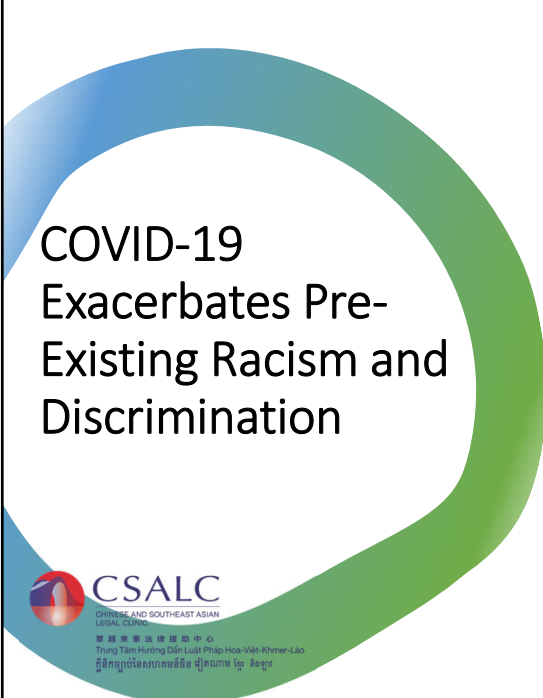
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## Systemic Racism - Employment

- Racialized people living in Ontario have higher unemployment rates than white residents. Racialized men are 24% more likely to be unemployed than non-racialized men. Racialized women are 43% more likely to be unemployed than non-racialized men
- Racialized women earned 58 cents, and racialized men earned 76 cents for every dollar a white man earned in Ontario in 2015; the 'colour-code' persists for second generation workers of colour.
- People with Asian sounding names are at least 30% less likely to be called for interviews when they apply for a job



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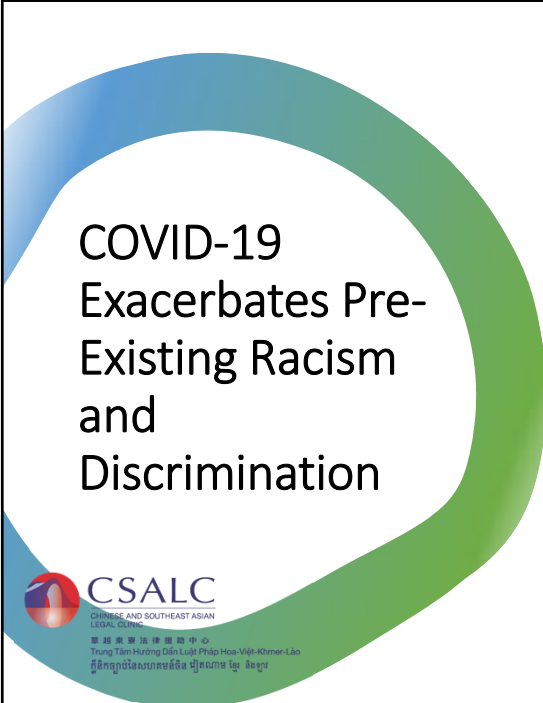


**COVID-19 Exacerbates Pre-Existing Racism and Discrimination**

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- According to a Statistics Canada [Labour Force Survey](https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/200807/dq200807a-eng.htm) (<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/200807/dq200807a-eng.htm>) released in August, 2020, there have been unprecedented increases in unemployment due to the COVID-19 economic shutdown, and the impact falls most harshly on racialized communities. While the national unemployment rate for those aged 15 to 69 was 11.3% in July 2020, several racialized communities had rates of joblessness significantly above this average including South Asian (17.8%), Arab (17.3%), and Black (16.8%). The Report also found that South Asian (+9.1 percentage points) and Chinese (+8.4 percentage points) Canadians experienced a much higher increase in unemployment from July 2019 to July 2020, compared to other groups.

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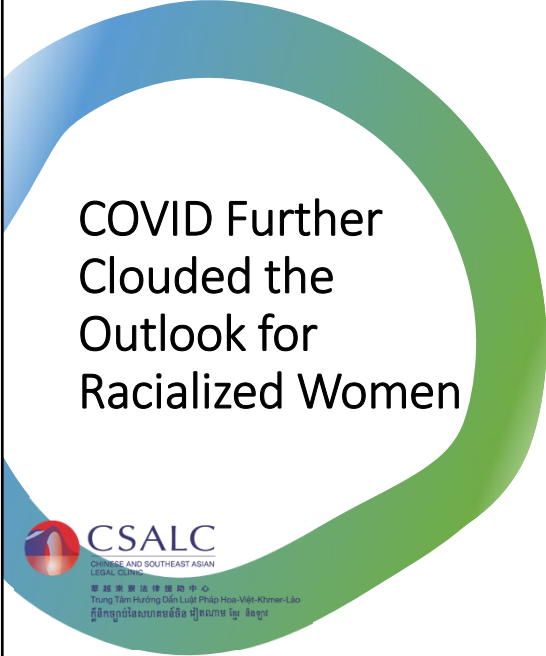
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- In a more recent [Labour Force Survey](https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/210205/dq210205a-eng.htm) (<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/210205/dq210205a-eng.htm>) released on January 20, 2021, Statistics Canada reported the unemployment rate among Southeast Asian Canadians aged 15 to 69 increased by 7.6 percentage points to 20.1% in January (not seasonally adjusted).

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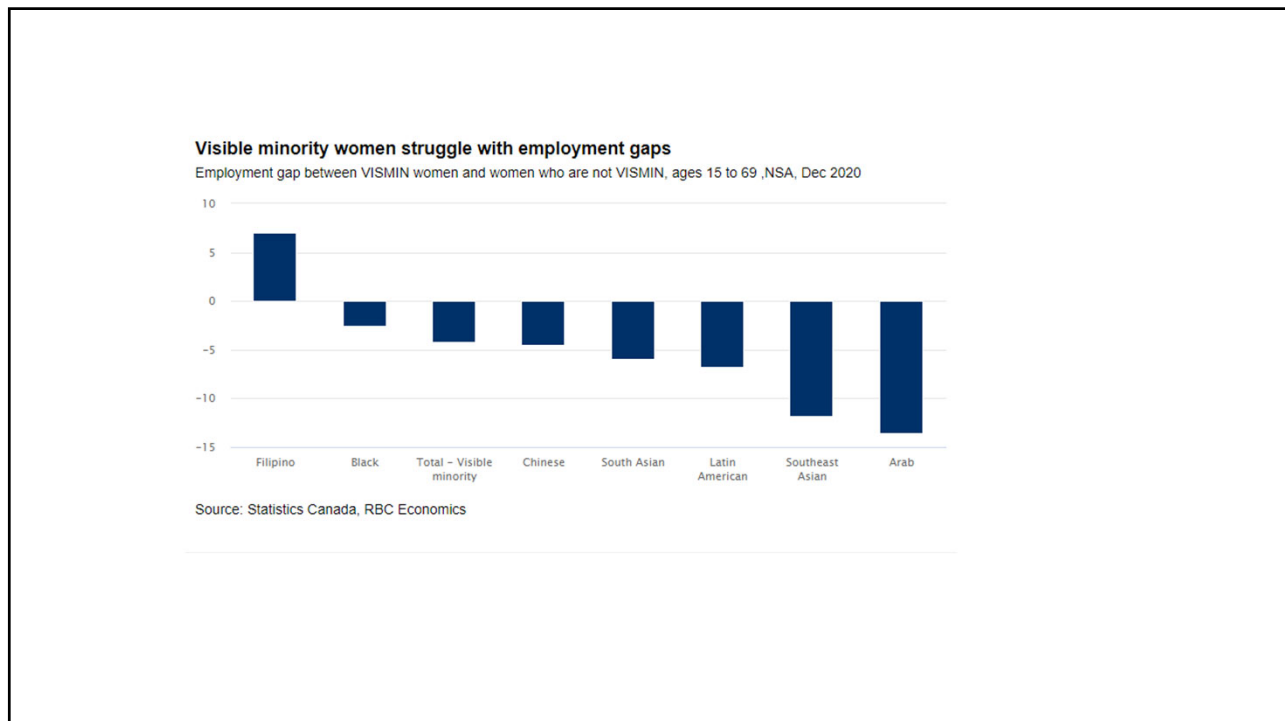


**COVID Further  
Clouded the  
Outlook for  
Racialized Women**

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- RBC report almost half a million Canadian women who lost their jobs during the pandemic hadn't returned to work as of January 2021 and the loss is disproportionately felt by women of colour
- Jobless rates among visible minority women have been higher. Many still face double-digit unemployment rates, compared with a jobless rate of 9.7% for women overall.

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## COVID-19 and Rise of Anti-Asian and Anti-Chinese Racism

- 1150 incidents were reported to an online reporting tool hosted by Chinese Canadian National Council, Toronto Chapter since February 2020. And to a site hosted by Project 1907 in Vancouver.
- Women made up over 60% of those who experienced racism
- Elderly, young people (under the age of 18) and people who do not speak English as first language are more likely to experience racism and face greater emotional and psychological impact



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## History of Anti-Chinese Racism in Canada

- Chinese first came to Canada during gold rush in 1858.
- Labour was brought in from China to build the Canadian Pacific Railway from 1881 to 1885
- After the completion of the railway, Chinese were seen as a threat taking away jobs from white people. Sir John A. Macdonald was worried that allowing Chinese to stay in B.C. would breed a “mongrel” race threatening the “Aryan” character and all in all leading to “evil”.
- Head Tax was imposed on Chinese in 1885 starting at \$50, increased to \$100 in 1900 and \$500 in 1923. \$500 was equivalent to two years of wages in 1923.



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## History of Anti-Chinese Racism in Canada (cont'd)

- Because of the costly head tax, by 1923, Canada's Chinese communities were largely “bachelor societies,” where men outnumbered women by a ratio of almost twenty-eight to one. Many Chinese men had come to Canada alone, hoping to save enough money to bring over their wives and families.



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## History of Anti-Chinese Racism in Canada (cont'd)

- Chinese given right to vote in 1948. First Chinese Canadian called to the bar in 1947 lobbied to have the Exclusion Act repealed.
- After the Exclusion Act was repealed, restrictions on Chinese immigration continued, limiting entrance to only spouse and children of Canadian citizens and permanent residents of Chinese descent. About 11,000 Chinese came to Canada illegally as “paper sons”.



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## Anti-Asian Racism in COVID-19

- “Yellow Peril” referred to Asian settlers specifically Chinese and Japanese since they started coming to Canada in 1800’s. These Asians were seen as unassimilable, unsanitary, underhanded and scheming, therefore a threat to white Canada.
- For example, in 1890’s, City of Victoria classified Chinatown as the same as sewage system because it was seen to be spreading germs.
- 1885 Royal Commission on Chinese Immigration described Chinatowns as “hotbed of diseases”
- “Dirty Chinese” is a racist stereotype that is rooted in Canadian history and resurfaced blatantly in 2003 due to SARS and 2020 due to COVID-19.



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## Chinese Canadians as Perpetual “foreigners”

- 1979 CTV’s W5 – Campus Giveaway
- 2004 – Deputy Mayor of Markham’s comment about Chinese Canadians pushing away “backbone” of community
- Ongoing – Chinese Canadians as “foreigners” pushing up real estate market
- Chinese Canadians caught up in geopolitical politics and must “pledge” loyalty to Canada



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## Model Minority Myth

- Chinese and Asian Canadians seen as rich, successful, and smart. We are good in math and science. Many are doctors, accountants, engineers and researchers.
- Chinese and Asian women are perceived as “submissive” and exoticized
- Impact of this myth:
  - There is no racism against Asian Canadians
  - Pressure on individuals to conform to the “norm”
  - Asian women who speak out are “trouble makers”



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## Challenges facing low income clients of CSALC

- Barriers (including linguistic) in accessing legal services and justice system
- Intersecting disadvantages on the basis of race, immigration status, gender and other grounds
- Legal system not responding to their specific needs
- Systemic racism within Canadian laws and policies



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## Examples of Legal Issues faced by Asian Canadian women due to discriminatory laws/indifference of the law

- Denial of Canada Child Benefits and other benefits on the basis of immigration status
- Barriers to family sponsorship of extended family members
- Immigration status tied to spousal sponsorship or employer
- Ineffective remedies for women fleeing domestic violence



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## Examples of Systemic Advocacy by CSALC

### Intervention before the Supreme Court of Canada

- The right of an accused to be informed of the immigration consequences of their guilty plea:
  - <https://scc-csc.lexum.com/scc-csc/scc-csc/en/item/17100/index.do>
- The right to vote for Canadian citizens living abroad:
  - <https://scc-csc.lexum.com/scc-csc/scc-csc/en/item/17446/index.do>
- Racial profiling and unlawful detention by police:
  - <https://scc-csc.lexum.com/scc-csc/scc-csc/en/item/17804/index.do>



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## Examples of Systemic Advocacy by CSALC



### International Human Rights Advocacy

- Submission to the UN Special Rapporteur on Racism regarding rise of Anti-Asian racism during the pandemic:
  - <https://csalc.ca/joint-submission-un-special-rapporteur-racism/>
- Submission to the UN re Canada's compliance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC):
  - <https://csalc.ca/joint-submission-un-committee-rights-child-march-2020/>

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## Examples of Systemic Advocacy by CSALC



### International Human Rights Advocacy, cont'd

- Submission on Canada's compliance with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)
  - <https://csalc.ca/joint-submission-un-committee-elimination-discrimination-against-women/>
- Submission and appearance before the UN Committee on the Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination:
  - <https://ocasi.org/racism-canada-report-un-committee>

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## Examples of Systemic Advocacy by CSALC



### Current Litigation and Strategy:

- Challenge to s.122.6(e) of the Income Tax Act which denies Canada Child Benefits to parents with precarious immigration status:
  - <https://csalc.ca/campaign-to-extend-canada-child-benefits-to-all-children-living-in-canada/>
- Petition to the House of Commons:
  - <https://petitions.ourcommons.ca/en/Petition/Details?Petition=e-3347>
- Colour of Poverty Colour of Change:
  - <https://colourofpoverty.ca/>

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**SWAN Vancouver Society:**

# **Im/migrant Sex Workers: race, immigration, & sex working status**

**Kelly Go , Outreach coordinator**

**Western University: Anti-Asian Racism and GBV:**

**Historical and Contemporary Realities , June 8, 2021**



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## **ABOUT SWAN**

**Our mission:** To promote the rights, health & safety of im/migrant women engaged in sex work, through front-line service & systemic advocacy

- Supporting Women's Alternatives Network
- In 2002, SWAN began carrying out health-based outreach to massage parlours
- SWAN now provides social, legal, immigration, health and housing information and/or services to im/migrant women who do sex work from Richmond to Abbotsford



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## Who do we serve?

SWAN supports over 500 im/migrant, self-identified women annually who work in indoor sex work venues, like massage parlors, apartments & condos.

- Over 90% of the women we serve are from East Asia (i.e., China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Korea)

We work with women with various types of immigration status: Canadian citizen, permanent resident, visitor, student, women with work visas and women waiting for immigration application approval.



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## Current legal context

### **Criminal Law: The Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act (PCEPA)**

Selling sex in Canada is not illegal, although many activities associated with it are.

### **Immigration policy: Immigration & Refugee Protection Regulations prohibition on sex work**

Prohibits all temporary residents (e.g., students, visitors and temporary foreign workers) from working in any capacity for a business providing striptease, erotic dance, escort services, or erotic massage.

### **Crimmigration**

the fusion of criminal and immigration enforcement



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## Stereotypes that are reinforced

“Innocent” “Voiceless” “Young”  
 “Passive” “Victims”  
 “Criminal” “Trafficker”



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## Current legal context and its impact

- ◆ Criminalization of sex work systemically denies im/migrant sex workers the same equality, rights and protections as other citizens
- ◆ Im/migrant sex workers are perceived to be trafficking victims.
- ◆ Sex work is not trafficking
- ◆ Im/migrant sex workers experience increased surveillance, arrest, deportation and detention
- ◆ Im/migrant sex workers are often reluctant to access health, social and other services



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## Contact

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