



# NEWSLETTER

Social Justice Research Institute (SJRI)

March 2020: Part One

The SJRI is a vibrant collective of affiliates, associates, fellows, and members brought together by a shared concern for pressing social justice issues. The month's newsletter comes to you in two parts: this **first** part provides highlights from recent SJRI events and reminders about upcoming important dates; the **second** part showcases insights from some SJRI affiliates regarding the current global pandemic.

## [Navigating Ethics in Community-University Research Relationships: Highlights](#)

This [SJRI Workshop](#) took place in the SJRI office (WC 251) on Wednesday March 4 and was attended by affiliates from across the university. The ensuing transdisciplinary conversation touched on several questions and related issues, such as:

- How do we address what are sometimes the very different practical needs of community organizations and those of the university? For example, a number of attendees noted challenges associated with the need to outline very specific plans for university Research Ethics Board applications, while at the same time not always being able to predict what happens in the field, especially if we are involved in more participatory research.
- How do we address what are sometimes the divergent goals of community organizations and faculty researchers? This question led to some thoughtful discussion about the importance of open communication and relationship-building to help prevent misunderstandings in community-university projects and about the fact that such partnerships can lead to various 'outputs' that include both community reports and academic publications. It also led to some critical reflection on how to work both as allies to organizations and as critically engaged researchers, especially when our reporting can be pivotal to organizations' access to funding. Part of this discussion was about the use of academic literature reviews and/or government documents (sometimes only available via access-to-information requests) to contextualize the critiques we make as part of our work with community organizations.
- How do we address differences between faculty-community collaborations and university-community collaborations? Here the discussion focused on the positioning of faculty researchers who are subjects of university mechanisms to mitigate researcher risk and vulnerability that do not always fit with they encounter in the field while at the same time being invested in research that may sometimes feel risky and remind us of researcher accountability.

## 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Arts, Archives, and Affinities Event: Highlights

This year's AAA took place at the Marilyn I. Walker School of Fine and Performing Arts on Wednesday March 11 and featured two talks, each of which spoke to the overarching topic "Public Pedagogies."



Dr. [Dolana Mogadime](#) gave a talk titled *Re-imagining Community Consultation and Engagement with Museums* during which she spoke about her work with the Canadian Museum of Human Rights to develop open-access curriculum that encourages youth to investigate and learn more about Nelson Mandela. Dr. Mogadime described communities as integral assets for museum curators to engage and learn from to ensure that cultural representations of these groups are fair, and for researchers studying the lives of community leaders (e.g. Mandela and [her mother, Caroline Goodie](#)). For Dr. Mogadime, taking this asset-based approach involves studying biographical and defining moments of people's stories and is central to a feminist epistemology that recognizes and values community as a central part of African Indigenous Knowledge Systems.

[Dr. Joe Norris](#) gave a talk titled *Participatory Theatre as Dialogic Research Dissemination*, which began by framing performative arts-based research as based on dialogic knowledge generation and mediation (rather than on an epistemology based on data collection and analysis and didactic forms of dissemination). As examples, Dr. Norris directed us to vignettes posted [online](#) based on collaborations between [Mirror Theatre](#) and community groups to explore various issues (e.g. academic integrity, homelessness, heart disease). This talk involved an invitation for those of us in the audience to engage with three actors from Mirror Theatre (Nadia Ganesh, Abby Rollo and Rosa Moreno) using various techniques to allow us all to think critically about how we might deal with gossip in the workplace and about how we respond to different corporeal presentations. The talk ended with a Q & A with the actors about their involvement in this type of 'spectatorship.'



Thank you Dolana and Joe for your interactive and inspiring talks!

Click [here](#) to learn more about this yearly event.

## Upcoming Events: Mark your calendars



- [Applications to the SJRI Grants Program](#) are due by **Wednesday April 22**
- [Applications to become an SJRI affiliate](#) are due by **Thursday April 30**
- [Applications to become an FSC member](#) are due by **Thursday April 30**
  - Please click on the embedded links above for more details
- Our semi-annual general meeting is planned for **Wednesday May 20**
  - Please stay tuned for information about how we will be conducting this meeting given the current circumstances



# NEWSLETTER

Social Justice Research Institute (SJRI)

March 2020: Part Two



In light of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, SJRI affiliates were invited to provide short reflections on the importance of thinking about this event - and related issues - from a social justice perspective. We have compiled these insights below.

**From Simon Black, Assistant Professor, Labour Studies:**

From a feminist political economy perspective, the COVID-19 pandemic, and state responses to it thus far, bring into light the contradiction - always there under capitalism - between capital accumulation and social reproduction, or profit-making and life-making. In a time of pandemic and economic crisis, the reproduction of individuals, households, and communities in a state of health and well-being requires massive state investments in care. However, forty plus years of neoliberalism has weakened public health infrastructures and collective care capacities more broadly. More often than not, women pick up the slack left by a retreating state and particularly poor and working class women who cannot afford to purchase care on the market. While corporations demand bailouts and governments look to shore up financial markets, only limited protections for working people - who face illness, unemployment, and increasing precarity - have been forthcoming. As with the global economic crisis of 2008, the question is whether the COVID-19 bailout will be a “people’s bailout” that prioritizes public health, rebuilds social safety nets, protects the most vulnerable, and advances social justice.

Click [here](#) to learn more about Dr. Black’s work.

**From Spy Dénommmé-Welch, Associate Professor, Department of Educational Studies and Robyn Bourgeois, Assistant Professor, Women's & Gender Studies:**

Kwey. Aaniin. Spy Dénommmé-Welch nindizhinikaaz. Anishnaabe-Algonquin indaaw. Timiskaming indonjiba. To translate: My name is Spy Dénommmé-Welch, and I'm Anishnaabe-Algonquin originally from Timiskaming region.

Tan'si, Niya Robyn Bourgeois, I am a mixed-race Cree woman born and raised in the Syilx and Splots'in territories of British Columbia and connected through marriage and my children to the Six Nations of the Grand River.

When called to share some thoughts about COVID-19 from a social justice perspective we decided to collaborate as an expression of Indigenous solidarity. Although we come from different Indigenous backgrounds, we share many concerns about the impacts of COVID-19 and events unfolding around this pandemic, particularly with regard to Indigenous and other socially marginalized peoples. Life-threatening crises such as this pandemic are nothing new for Indigenous peoples: we have survived several hundred years of genocidal colonial domination. Despite our resilience, the impacts of colonialism make our communities extraordinarily vulnerable to the deadly consequences of this pandemic, and Indigenous people face additional barriers to access resources such as health care and the basic necessities of life in our already depressed local economies.

Indigenous peoples are not alone: despite its ability to kill anyone, the dominant interlocking systems of oppression that hierarchically control much of our world - heteropatriarchy, racism, colonialism, classism, ableism, and ageism - ensure that socially marginalized people are most vulnerable to the negative consequences of this pandemic. Rooted in the colonial and capitalist exploitation of land, resources and people, these vulnerabilities expose the deep and disturbing behaviours of our broader, more affluent society that can hoard resources without regard to its potential impact on those living in poverty or in compromised realities.

While physical distancing is fundamental to slowing the spread of COVID-19, social solidarity, collaboration, and caring for one another will ensure our survival. Indigenous worldviews are grounded in community and wholistic ethics of care and responsibility to promote collective well-being that has kept us alive since time immemorial, even in the face of colonial extermination. Social systems of oppression have convinced us that it's every person for themselves - but we are in this together and our collective survival depends on coming together.

Click [here](#) to learn more about Dr. Dénommmé-Welch's work.

Click [here](#) to learn more about Dr. Bourgeois' work.

**From Natalee Caple, Assistant Professor, English Language & Literature:**

To cope with anxiety and helplessness, I am training to volunteer from home on Kid's Help Phone. I can't give blood because I travelled recently. I can't do many of the things I would normally do to feel useful. I feel keenly aware of my privilege as I sit in my house with my healthy children, scared, but aware that I hold one of the most secure possible jobs in the world. The impact on families during this crisis will be enormous. Domestic violence will rise; queer kids trapped at home with uncompromising family will be at increased risk of suicide; families who lose a member will not be able to grieve together or perform the ceremonies they need for healing; people with mental health issues will have those issues aggravated by stress and may have to go without counseling for reasons that include closures, lack of access to computers, and increased poverty. This is a time of reckoning with values that illustrates how closely tied social justice is to the survival of people, economies, and the planet. My greatest fear is that we exit this crisis into an era of increased xenophobia, racism, and narcissistic self-protection. My greatest hope is that we exit this crisis with a new understanding of how interrelated our lives are; how deeply capitalism has failed to account for its impacts; and a new concept of how we all benefit from social responsibility on local, national, and global levels.

Click [here](#) to learn more about Dr. Caple's work.

**From Rebecca Raby, Professor, Child & Youth Studies:**

PM Trudeau spoke directly to children this week, recognizing that their social isolation can be tough. Some children are enjoying time with families and pets; they're cooking or building things; they're posting videos on TikTok and talking to friends; and they're investigating educational resources online. But lots of children are having a harder time. There are those inclined towards anxiety and depression who find the uncertainty and the health implications upsetting. The Kids Help Phone Line has been flooded with calls. Many parents are working online, requiring quiet and potentially creating tension, while other parents are working outside the home in situations that feel risky. Some children are now staying with unfamiliar or difficult caregivers. Some are also in households that are not safe for them. This moment significantly exacerbates financial inequalities and their long-term effects. Many families are experiencing deep stress related to loss of income and uncertain financial futures; some children live in very small spaces and/or lack internet and are thus extremely isolated; and homeschooling is just not an option for many families. A final point is that children's offline, public presence, including through activism, has been deeply curtailed.

Click [here](#) to learn more about Dr. Raby's work.

**LET'S STAY CONNECTED**

Click [here](#) to check out our always updated website

Click [here](#) to follow us on Twitter

*Your feedback and suggestions are always welcome @ [jgregory@brocku.ca](mailto:jgregory@brocku.ca)!*