



**Western**  
Centre for Research on  
Migration and Ethnic Relations

**Winter Colloquium  
Series 2023**

## **Kimberly Noels**



**KIMBERLY A. NOELS** (PhD, UOttawa) is a Professor in the Social and Cultural Psychology Area of the Department of Psychology and the Associate Dean of Graduate Programs in the Faculty of Arts at the University of Alberta. Her interdisciplinary research program focuses on how social interactions facilitate or hinder the complex and dynamic processes of language acquisition, socio-psychological acculturation, and intercultural relations, with a particular emphasis on language and identity development across various multicultural contexts. She also examines the reciprocal relations between the socio-cultural ecology and people's motivation to learn languages inside and outside the classroom. Her research has been recognized with awards from the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues, the International Association for Language and Social Psychology, and the International Association for the Psychology of Language Learning and Teaching.

### **“COVID and its Consequences for Chinese Canadians: Discrimination, Identity, and Adaptation to Canada during the Pandemic”**

International migration and adaptation to a new society can be a challenging experience, but it is even more so during a global pandemic. Many Chinese Canadians experienced increased racism and xenophobia since the beginning of the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, in addition to increased health and financial pressures. This presentation focuses on how this rise of anti-Chinese discrimination affected not only Chinese Canadians' well-being, but also their Chinese and Canadian identities. A first study looks at patterns of Canadian and Chinese identities in first- (G1) and second-generation (G2) Canadians prior to COVID to establish a baseline. We then consider data, collected in collaboration with the Angus Reid Institute during the early months of the pandemic, where we found alarming rates of reported discriminatory experiences, such that more than half of the Chinese Canadian respondents reported that they had been treated with less respect because of their ethnicity (G1: 60.6%; G2: 56.8%), and over a third reported that they had been personally threatened or intimidated (G1: 35.2%; G2: 39.8%). Generational status moderated Chinese Canadians' pandemic experiences, such that G1 Chinese Canadians perceived more health, financial, and cultural threats due to the pandemic, but G2 Chinese Canadians reported more personal and group discrimination. Perceived discrimination was associated with Chinese Canadians' negative affect even after controlling for pandemic threats. The type of discrimination had different implications for heritage and mainstream cultural identities. For both groups, personal discrimination was negatively associated with Canadian identity, whereas group discrimination was positively associated with Chinese identity. The findings' implications for acculturation, identity, anti-racism strategies, and empowerment in reporting harassment are discussed.

**Thursday, March 30, 2023  
4:00 pm, Social Science Centre, Room 5220  
All Welcome!**