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Tory Leadership Race Is Fracturing The Chinese-Canadian Community

Some of the organizing tactics that Conservative supporters are using to target ethnic communities are particularly problematic. To many people's surprise, a candidate with the name Brad Trost has become hugely popular in the Chinese community, especially with the Chinese evangelicals.

By [Karen Lin, Contributor](#)

HuffPost

May 4, 2017, 09:32 AM EDT

Dubbing the Conservative leadership race a zoo exhibition is the easy way out.

Maclean's contributor Scott Gilmore expressed his distaste of how far right the party has gone, from Maxime Bernier wanting to send troops to the border, to Brad Trost denying climate change flat out. Gilmore is left wondering how he "ended up in party seemingly dominated by xenophobic, economically illiterate, populist buffoons."



Brad Trost, member of Parliament and Conservative Party leadership candidate. (Photo: Ben Nelms/Bloomberg via Getty Images)

What he doesn't realize is that some of the organizing tactics that Conservative supporters are using to target ethnic communities are particularly problematic. To many people's surprise, a candidate with the name Brad Trost has become hugely popular in the Chinese community, especially with the Chinese evangelicals.

Brad who? Yeah, my thoughts exactly. If you follow mainstream Canadian politics, you are probably oblivious to what a Conservative backbencher from Saskatchewan does. Targeting ethnic communities is

not new in Canadian politics. However, this Conservative leadership race has opened up a whole new can of worms of ethnic and identity politics which will haunt them in the long run.

Supporters have exploited the same tactics and rhetoric that were used during the Cultural Revolution.

The most visible political mobilization has not come from the left, but rather from the far right of the Chinese communities. And they have had some recent success. In 2015, the riding of Markham-Unionville was considered a safe Liberal seat with 57 per cent Chinese residing in the riding. However, the Parents Alliance of Ontario, a now-defunct organization which consists of mostly Chinese Christians from mainland China, distributed rounds of fliers in the riding claiming the Liberals will make children smoke marijuana, build injection sites and force children to address their parents as "sperm donors." That coupled with a very unpopular sex-ed curriculum in Ontario pushed out the heavily favoured Liberal candidate. The Conservatives snatched that seat to everyone's, surprise including their own.

A specter is haunting the Chinese-Canadian community. But nobody can agree about what it is, and whether it's good or bad. In my opinion, it is a very interesting phenomenon that deserves national attention. In this round of Conservative leadership race, some of Brad Trost's Chinese supporters have exploited the same tactics and rhetoric that were used during the Cultural Revolution. I am just as amused and bewildered as I am frightened.



为了我们孩子的未来，为了我们移民之初的期望和向往的生活，请大家从我做起，从现在做起！请马上加入保守党，明天下午三点截止！加入加拿大保守党链接：<https://donate.conservative.ca/Membership-BradTrost>，选出代表自己观点的党魁，这是关系到我们今后切身利益和生活的大事，让我们从沉默和冷漠中醒过来，发出我们有力的呼声！

与此同时，穆斯林也在行动，他们推举一个叫庄文浩的华人竞选保守党党领，作为他们在保守党的代言人，他们参与入党和投票率占总人口的80%，我们华人才20%，这是一个赛跑也是一场较量，我们必须超过他们的选票，才能推出Brad作为我们的代言人。

加油，同胞们！只剩下一天时间，让我们跑赢木木



一片叶

20:06

@英姿 肯定有害他的人，谁都能看得出来，几乎咬牙切齿。甚至到了威胁温...

Literature I received on my phone reads in Chinese: "In order to save Canada, we need to join the Conservative Party on the firing line to vote for Brad Trost." The phrase "join the party on the firing line" was a frequently used slogan during the Cultural Revolution. Its purpose was to urge the mass to join the communist party and pledge allegiance to chairman Mao.

Free oil changes at a body shop, a discount on visa applications at a travel agency, a discount at a restaurant in the multitudes of \$15 (the cost of buying a Conservative Party membership) were also offered by this apparent supporter.

Other campaign literature content is far more incendiary. They consistently demonstrate a theme of homophobia and Islamophobia. But it is far too easy for me to call these people homophobes, Islamophobia or bigots, although some of them probably are.

The Conservative Party's tactics of campaigning on social values will no longer pay out political dividends.

I talked to some Chinese Christians who openly support Brad Trost. Beneath the veneer of their anger and frustration, I sensed their pain and struggle. They felt that casting a ballot for Trost is their way to tell the rest of the world that they still exist and their values still matter. If we are honest with ourselves, we have to admit that these are legitimate reactions they have when they experience cultural change. We are asking these new immigrants to absorb a lot very quickly. And not everybody is good at that. Change is hard. Canada has become far more cosmopolitan, multicultural, tolerant and socially liberal than it was a generation ago. These social and demographic shift cannot be undone.

Traditionally, Conservatives have always organized and mobilized the Chinese community with the message that Chinese Canadians and they share similar social values, such as a strong sense of family with the occasional add on of opposition to same sex marriage, marijuana and abortion depends on which riding they are targeting at the time. What they do not realize is that there is an undercurrent of social change within the Chinese community, too, as more people from Mainland China immigrate to Canada.

In a recent survey done by [Global Times](#), a communist propaganda mouthpiece, more than 40 per cent polled said they would support same-sex marriage in China, another 40 per cent expressed a neutral position on the issue, while 19 per cent opposing the same-sex marriage. This represents a gradual shift from their perceived "value voters" base within the Chinese community. In a decade, the Conservative Party's tactics of campaigning on social values will no longer pay out political dividends as the issue of same-sex marriage will likely be sidelined by the changing demographic within the Chinese community.



In the age of alternative facts and fake news, both the Conservative and Liberal parties must rethink their outreach strategies.

The Conservatives and Liberals have traditionally organized the Chinese community on social and economic issues, respectively. They have consistently and intentionally swayed Chinese Canadians to the polar opposite of what mainstream Canadians feel on these issues. Pew Research Global in 2013 have shown that at least 75 per cent of Canadians are overwhelmingly supportive of same-sex marriage. But the Conservatives have always used this as wedge issue in their outreach to the Chinese community. Similarly, the Liberals have always campaigned on its trade success with China when the most recent Nanos polls have shown that 90 per cent of Canadians are weary of trade deals with China.

Instead of creating these artificial fissures just to gain a few seats within some heavily Chinese-populated ridings, both political parties must spend some of their political capital to educate and encourage Chinese constituents to embrace Canadian values and give them time and space to accept cultural shifts they experience as newcomers.

Nanos survey: Canadians' view of Conservative race

CTVNews.ca

Friday, May 26, 2017 5:08PM EDT

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A new poll suggests half of Canadians can't decide which of the 13 Conservative leadership candidates would make the best prime minister.

Twenty per cent of Canadians say none of the hopefuls would make the best prime minister, and 33 per cent aren't sure, according to the latest data from a Nanos Research survey for CTV.

- A random telephone and online survey of 1,000 eligible voters asked: "Which of the following candidates for the leadership of the Conservative Party of Canada would make the best Prime Minister?"

One in six Canadians believe Maxime Bernier would make the best prime minister, and more than one in four say Kellie Leitch would be the worst PM.

The survey, conducted earlier this week, comes days before the Conservative candidates and members gather in Toronto for the final leg of the year-long race. Speeches are scheduled Friday, and a winner will be announced Saturday.

Nanos survey participants were chosen randomly and reflect the feelings of voters nationwide, and not solely the Conservative membership.

Respondents said the best potential prime minister was:

- Unsure: 33.1 per cent
- None of them: 20.3 per cent
- Maxime Bernier: 17.4 per cent
- Michael Chong: 10 per cent
- Lisa Raitt: 7.7 per cent
- Andrew Scheer: 4.1 per cent
- Erin O'Toole: 2.3 per cent
- Steven Blaney, Kellie Leitch and Chris Alexander: 1 per cent
- Pierre Lemieux: 0.7 per cent
- Deepak Obhrai and Brad Trost: 0.5 per cent
- Rick Peterson and Andrew Saxton: 0.2 per cent

Asked who would make the worst prime minister, respondents said:

- Unsure: 43.8 per cent
- Kellie Leitch: 27 per cent
- Maxime Bernier: 8.2 per cent
- None of them: 5.5 per cent
- Deepak Obhrai: 4.4 per cent
- Lisa Raitt: 2.2 per cent
- Brad Trost: 2 per cent
- Chris Alexander: 1.8 per cent
- Steven Blaney: 1.7 per cent
- Michael Chong: 1.5 per cent
- Erin O'Toole and Pierre Lemieux: 0.6 per cent
- Rick Peterson: 0.4 per cent
- Andrew Saxton and Andrew Scheer: 0.1 per cent

Best PM by region

New numbers from the Conservative Party suggest that this leadership race is the largest of any party in Canadian history. By Thursday, 125,000 ballots had been received from the eligible 259,010 members – a turnout of nearly 50 per cent. That surpasses the previous record turnout of 200,000 for the Canadian Alliance in 2000.

Many of those ballots have been cast by mail from ridings across Canada. Voters are asked to rank their candidates by order of preference. The winner must have 50 per cent plus one of the votes, or 16,901 points through the party's points system. The system assigns 100 points to each riding.

According to Nanos survey results:

- One in four B.C. respondents said "none of them" would make the best prime minister, followed by Michael Chong (11 per cent)
- In the Prairies, one in five respondents said Maxime Bernier would make the best prime minister
- Ontario respondents were narrowly split over Michael Chong (17 per cent) and Maxime Bernier (16 per cent)
- "None of them" led the survey in Quebec (28 per cent), followed by Bernier (25 per cent)
- In Atlantic Canada, more than one in five respondents said "none of them" would make the best PM, followed by Lisa Raitt (18 per cent)

Who can unite the Conservatives?

The crowded race has often sparked heated policy debates. Kellie Leitch's divisive "Canadian values" pitch and plan to screen newcomers to Canada has drawn consternation from other candidates, and Michael Chong's vocal support for a carbon tax has made him stand out from the pack.

Survey respondents were asked which candidate would best unite the Conservative party. Almost half (45 per cent) said they were unsure, but Maxime Bernier came out as the top candidate, at 15.4 per cent.

- Unsure: 45.4 per cent
- Maxime Bernier: 15.4 per cent
- None of them: 11.2 per cent
- Lisa Raitt: 7.5 per cent
- Andrew Scheer: 7.4 per cent
- Michael Chong: 4.3 per cent
- Erin O'Toole: 2.9 per cent
- Steven Blaney: 1.6 per cent
- Kellie Leitch: 1.2 per cent
- Deepak Obhrai and Brad Trost: 0.7 per cent
- Chris Alexander: 0.6 per cent
- Pierre Lemieux: 0.5 per cent
- Rick Peterson: 0.4 per cent
- Andrew Saxton: 0.3 per cent

Bernier, Raitt, Chong best for drawing votes

Survey respondents were asked how likely they would be to vote Conservative in the next federal election based on each possible leadership candidate. Maxime Bernier drew the most support, with 30 per cent of voters saying they'd be more likely or somewhat more likely. Similar support was reported for Lisa Raitt (26 per cent) and Michael Chong (23 per cent).

In terms of unfavourability, half of respondents said they'd be less likely or somewhat less likely to vote Conservative under Bernier. Those numbers dropped to 48 per cent under Raitt and 46 per cent under Chong.

Almost two thirds of those polled said they'd be less likely to support the Tories under Kellie Leitch's leadership, with 58 per cent less likely to vote Conservative and 6 per cent somewhat less likely.

Liberals likeliest to work with Trump, manage economy

Each of the 13 Conservative candidates has fought hard to position themselves as the best alternative to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau in 2019. But when it comes to the economy, survey results suggest Canadians believe the Liberals have the best economic program and are most likely to work with the Trump administration.

More than a third of Canadians (38 per cent) said the Liberals have the best economic plan, followed by the Conservatives (30 per cent) and the NDP (13 per cent). Two per cent say the Green Party has the best plan, and 1 per cent support the Bloc Quebecois. Fifteen per cent are unsure.

The new numbers reflect 13 per cent growth in support for the Liberals' economic plan compared to polling in August 2015. Support for the NDP's plan has dropped 13 per cent since the pre-election survey. Conservative support remained unchanged.

The Liberals are also considered the most likely to work with the White House (40 per cent), followed by the Conservatives (35 per cent) and the NDP (3 per cent). Both the Greens and Bloc Quebecois garnered 1 per cent support. One in five respondents said they weren't sure who was likeliest to work with Trump.

Poll Methodology

Nanos conducted an RDD dual frame (land-and cell-lines) hybrid telephone and online random survey of 1,000 Canadians, 18 years of age or older, between May 24 and 25, 2017 as part of an omnibus survey. Participants were randomly recruited by telephone using live agents and administered a survey online. The margin of error for a random survey of 1,000 Canadians is ± 3.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

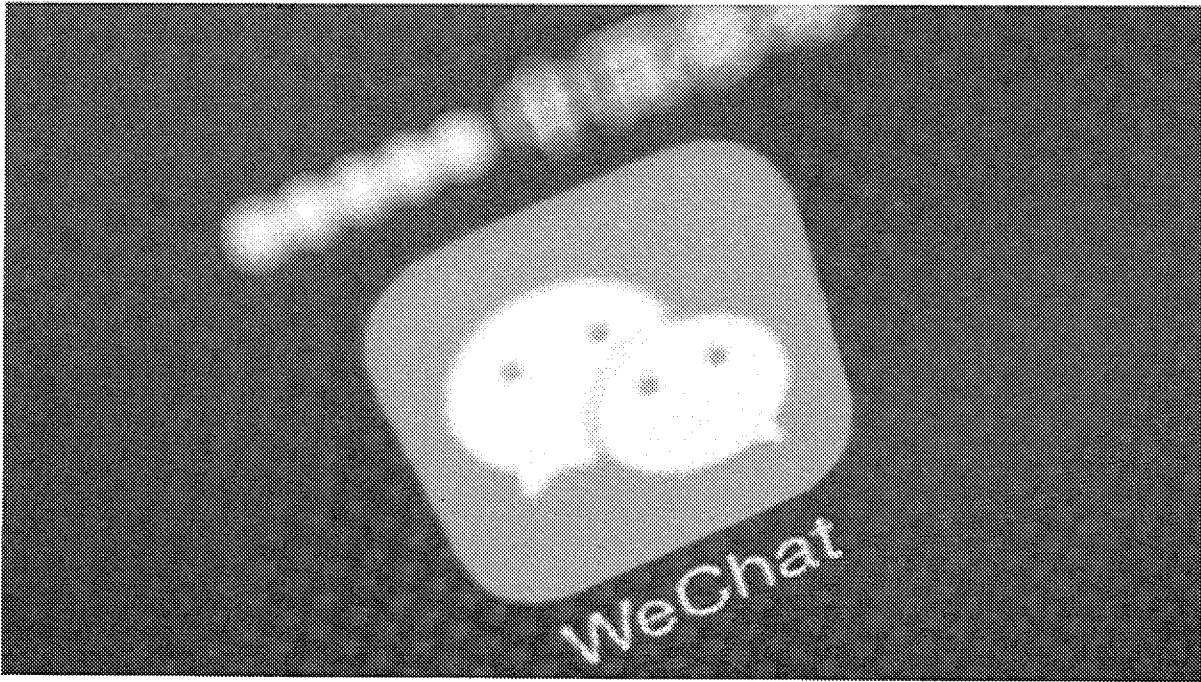
Election ads on WeChat posted by users: company

Chinese social media company says it doesn't accept political ads

Elizabeth Thompson

CBC News

Posted: Oct 14, 2019 4:00 AM EDT | Last Updated: October 20, 2019



Canadian election ads are appearing on the popular WeChat social media platform. (Petar Kujundzic/Reuters)

Note: This story has been updated from a previous version to include new information from WeChat owner Tencent. See full note below.

A Conservative attack ad spotted on Chinese social media giant WeChat was posted by a user without the company's knowledge, says the owner of the popular site.

The platform's owner, Tencent, says election ads aren't running on its popular WeChat social media site and it has not set up an ad registry in Canada.

"WeChat does not accept or support political ads on its platform," spokeswoman Lisa Kennedy wrote in a statement.

CBC News obtained a copy of a Conservative Party attack ad that ran on WeChat the week of October 9 in Chinese and English, claiming that a re-elected Liberal government under Justin Trudeau would legalize "hard drugs".

杜魯多的自由黨計劃要將硬性毒品合法化!
JUSTIN TRUDEAU HAS A PLAN TO LEGALIZE HARD DRUGS!

在黨領法語辯論中，杜魯多被問及
 會否將硬性毒品合法化。他說：
 「不會馬上進行。」

杜魯多的自由黨計劃要將硬性毒
 品合法化，就像當年把大麻合法
 化一樣。

During the Leaders debate in French,
 Justin Trudeau was asked if he would legalize
 hard drugs. He said "Not right away."

Justin Trudeau's Liberals have a
 plan to legalize hard drugs just like
 they legalized marijuana.

只有安德魯·謝爾的保守黨會阻止杜魯多的
 硬性毒品合法化計劃，並確保我們的
 孩子安全。

Only Andrew Scheer's Conservatives will stop Trudeau's
 hard drug legalization plan and keep our kids safe.

為確保我們的孩子安全，請在10月
 21日投票給你的保守黨候選人。

 PLEASE VOTE FOR YOUR CONSERVATIVE
 CANDIDATES ON OCT 21.

AUTHORIZED BY THE OFFICIAL AGENT FOR THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY OF CANADA

This Conservative Party ad appeared on WeChat. After an internal verification, the site's owner says it was posted by a user.

"Justin Trudeau's Liberals have a plan to legalize hard drugs just like they legalized marijuana," reads the ad. "Only Andrew Scheer's Conservatives will stop Trudeau's hard drug legalization plan and keep our kids safe."

The ad carries the Conservative Party's logo and says it was "authorized by the official agent for the Conservative Party of Canada." It's similar to an attack ad that appeared on the Conservative Party's official website on Oct. 9.

Members of Elections Canada's social media monitoring team also have spotted Canadian election ads on WeChat, said spokeswoman Natasha Gauthier.

"WeChat is one of the websites that they keep an eye on," she said. "The team has seen political ads on WeChat but the team is not focused on detecting potential compliance or non-compliance."

Gauthier could not say which parties or candidates' ads Elections Canada officials have spotted on WeChat.

Kennedy said Tencent conducted an internal review after the CBC reported on the presence of the Conservative ad on WeChat and confirmed it did not receive payment for it to be on the site. The company said it appears to have been posted there by a WeChat user.

"WeChat allows users to send messages or share images and videos with other users but has no role in the creation or posting of user-content on its platform," the company said in a statement. "Some user-posted content on WeChat may contain personal political views or advocacy."

She said the company has been contacted by Canadian authorities about the ad and is answering their questions.

No comment from Conservatives

Conservative campaign manager Hamish Marshall refused to comment on which social media platforms the party is using for advertising in the election.

"We don't comment on our advertising strategy," he said.

Since then, he has not responded to requests to confirm that the party placed the ad found on WeChat. The party has been running a similar ad on Facebook.

Canada's Chinese community is one of the groups the Conservative Party hopes to win over in this election.

Trudeau has denied the Liberals have any plans to legalize hard drugs.

The Liberals said they are advertising on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, but not on WeChat.

The New Democrats said the party has focused its online advertising on Facebook and Instagram and the national campaign is not advertising on WeChat.

The new elections law

Under recent changes to Canada's elections law, online companies that accept political ads during the election campaign have to set up digital registries of all of the political ads running on their platforms, with copies of the ads and information about who authorized them. The requirement has prompted some internet giants, including Google, to stop accepting political ads in Canada during the federal election.

The law can apply to companies located anywhere in the world if the number of visitors from Canada to their sites exceeds a certain threshold.

Platforms that publish in a language other than English or French must have more than 100,000 unique visitors from Canada each month to be subject to the law. Bryan Segal, senior vice-president of Comscore (which measures web traffic), said WeChat gets an average of 616,000 unique visitors in Canada per month.

Elections commissioner can investigate

Gauthier said Elections Canada's monitors are looking for examples of online misinformation or disinformation about how and where to vote. They are not, however, responsible for checking whether an online platform that is subject to the law has set up an online registry.

Commissioner of Canada Elections Yves Côté can investigate if someone files a complaint, said Gauthier.

"It is an offence to be an online platform that meets these thresholds and to not have this registry. So that is an offence under the act," she said.

"Penalties can range from administrative monetary penalties to what the commissioner calls compliance agreements, which it publishes on its website."

However, parties and candidates are not required by law to verify whether an online platform has set up a digital ad registry before they advertise, she said.

Michelle Laliberté, a spokeswoman for Côté, said the commissioner's office doesn't "proactively carry out monitoring or surveillance of digital platforms," but it can investigate complaints.

"While I can't speak to whether or not we have received complaints in relation to this issue, if someone were to bring forward a complaint we would evaluate it to see if it falls within the Commissioner's mandate."

THE HAMILTON SPECTATOR

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CANADA

Extreme-right misinformation is flooding Chinese media in Canada - and observers say there's virtually nothing stopping it

Articles spouting anti-refugee and anti-LGBTQ rhetoric are running virtually unchecked on Chinese-language publications in Canada and community members are concerned it could hamper the ability of Chinese people in Canada to make informed decisions.

By **Jeremy Nuttall** Star Vancouver

▲ Sun., Oct. 20, 2019 ⌚ 10 min. read

🕒 Article was updated Mar. 03, 2020

JOIN THE CONVERSATION

VANCOUVER—Some of the posts suggest teaching sexual and gender identity in schools could cause an AIDS outbreak. Others warn Mexicans are streaming across the border to sell drugs or that hatred against Muslims is only natural. The articles are called misinformation by some and flat out hate speech by others.

They are but a sampling of the far-right rhetoric on Chinese-language websites and social media platforms like WeChat, often described as a cross between Facebook and Twitter. Observers warn that there's almost nothing challenging a torrent of anti-refugee, anti-LGBT and anti "white liberal" literature spiking online.

"When this privileged group settled down in Canada, they will have an easy life without even finding a job," reads one article touching on Muslim refugees when discussing Chinese voters. It was written by contributor Feng Si Hai on Chinese-language news publication Lahoo.ca. in March 2019.

"What's more, some of them could make trouble, break the law and even harm a child. It is natural that hatred toward them will arise. The religious conflicts will make the situation worse. How could our society be peaceful?!" reads the article.

Such sentiments have also popped up in Chinese political organizations and churches, according to community members. They worry that barriers to truthful information combined with conservative politics are leading to the exploitation of Chinese people by far-right elements and could hamper the ability of Chinese people in Canada to make informed decisions.

There are votes to be gained as Canadian political parties reach out to immigrants, and Chinese voters are one of the largest pools.

Chinese people represent about 20 per cent of minorities in Canada, according to Statistics Canada, with hundreds of thousands living in Vancouver and Toronto alone. In those cities, some ridings are more than 50 per cent Chinese.

They are increasingly being courted by far right content or outright misinformation created by writers who often use pen names.

5/17/23, 2:23 PM

Extreme-right misinformation is flooding Chinese media in Canada - and observers say there's virtually nothing stopping it | TheSp...

For example, Feng, who has also written that a child being proud of having two mothers is a "scorn on human ethics," is not the writer's real name. In an interview with Star Vancouver, Lahoo editor-in-chief Lao Mai said Feng is a real person writing under a pen name for protection.

But prior to Lao's explanation, other staff at the publication said Feng was actually a floating pen name used by a number of people. In the interview Lao insisted that isn't the case and underlined he and his staff don't necessarily agree with the opinions written.

"We have that freedom of speech," Lao said through an interpreter.

In Feng's 2019 column about voting, it's alleged Justin Trudeau ignored the case of 13-year-old Marrison Shen, whose body was found in a park in Burnaby in July 2017. In September 2018, a Syrian refugee, Ibrahim Ali, was charged in her death.

In January 2018 an 11-year-old girl in Toronto told police she had been attacked by an Asian man with scissors who cut off her hijab. Justin Trudeau tweeted his condemnation of the attack. Police investigated the alleged incident and determined that the events did not happen. The family of the girl who made the false claims later apologized.

Feng's column accuses Trudeau of caring more about the Muslim girl in Toronto than he did about the Shen murder because Muslims vote more than Chinese people.

Lao said the article is being misinterpreted and it's really just meant to encourage Chinese people to vote. He said that when columns by Feng are submitted, they believe what he writes and don't feel the need to fact check them.

Lahoo also publishes straight news pieces and Feng is just one columnist, but the internet is flooded with Chinese-language misinformation from a number of sources.

Back in May, Chauncey Jung, a contributor for website SupChina, who once interned for the Liberal Party and has written about the issue, said there has been a steady increase of false news or misinformation in Toronto since the story about the Muslim girl who claimed to be have been attacked broke in 2018.

Chinese articles on WeChat raged against the girl and against Trudeau for tweeting his response to the incident before police said they had determined that the attack did not happen. But the incident caused a spike in "pure hate speech" written in Chinese, Jung said.

The tension was made worse later in the year when Ali was arrested and charged with Shen's murder. His court appearance in Vancouver brought anti-refugee protests by demonstrators carrying Chinese signs.



所以，当我们目睹其他国家的惨案时，首先应该反思的是加拿大是否也有一些可能引发激烈冲突的潜在危险因素。回音问题并不能解决问题。“美好的狂想”并不能真正建设和谐社会，不根据国情去盲目引入难民，甚至放开边境不会有好结果，只有不偏不倚实事求是的态度去分析总结，才有可能找到应对方式。

不过，对那些用惨案拉票的人嗤之以鼻的同时，不要忘记选举时去投票！



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Refugees are becoming a frequent target of far-right Chinese-language articles posted online, like this article about Muslim refugees and Chinese voters written by contributor Feng Si Hai on Chinese-language news publication Lahoo.ca, in March 2019. | LAHOOC.A

Jung said it's not just Muslims who are targeted. He said he's seen stories on WeChat alleging hundreds of Mexican drug dealers are flooding into Canada since Ottawa stopped requiring visas for Mexicans and others claiming that Toronto police want to get children hooked on drugs.

"It's going to be challenging for people who don't have the access to the actual information," he said. "If you don't speak English, that's going to be a barrier, if you don't like to read things in English, that's another barrier there."

Kevin Huang of Vancouver's Hua Foundation, an organization aimed at bridging cultural gaps between Chinese and other communities, said not only is there an increasing amount of Chinese-language misinformation targeting immigrants and other minorities, but nothing is in place to counter it.

"People are usually just overwhelmed by the fact this exists and not at a stage where we're about to design and or think about how to counter," he says.

Much of it stems from a history of Chinese voters being "ruled by fear" Huang said, adding that politicians and the media often use scare tactics to dissuade Chinese voters from supporting their opponents rather than presenting a positive alternative.

The 2015 election was full of it, he said.

"The literature was fear mongering attacks on Trudeau, prostitution, needles," Huang said. "Is our community in general really only about just being fearful of these things?"

Huang says one possible solution would be for governments to distribute information in more languages than just English and French. If more government materials were written in languages like Chinese, those who speak it as a first language would at least

have access to basic, credible information, he said.

"No one's engaging them except for 'do your taxes and fill out these forms for your benefits,'" Huang said.

One man in Surrey, B.C., isn't waiting for the government to pitch in.

"Fake news brings people to the wrong direction; prejudice and hate," says Jacky Jiao after tidying up a picnic table in a Surrey park before sitting down to talk, condemning whoever left it a mess. "Few people think, they just follow others."

When he's not scrubbing picnic tables, the real estate agent and immigration consultant is cleaning up the internet. Jiao says he spends about 15 hours a week on WeChat motoring through Chinese language media and writing articles debunking false information.

WeChat has become the premier source of information for Chinese people around the world and Jiao says that often misinformation from other countries, like the United States and United Kingdom, is spun to fit the Canadian narrative.

Much of what appears on WeChat is published elsewhere and simply shared there, similar to Twitter. Often the articles contain false figures such as the number of refugees allowed into Canada each year, he says.

Jiao says his attempts to combat the misinformation or far-right rhetoric online have led to a lot of pushback.

"In WeChat groups, I get a lot of attacks," he says. "A lot of people are Trump fans. They always think right is right. They can't distinguish the right and the extreme right."

Jiao says the courting of the far right via Chinese social media happens at a time when similar efforts are being made through churches in Canada. Chinese immigrants hold Christianity in high regard, he says, reasoning that many of the world's developed countries have Christianity as a dominant religion.

As a result, many are curious about the religion and become involved in churches, and some of those churches have strong views against homosexuality or taxes, says Jiao.

Combined with the misinformation and right wing columns on WeChat, he said it makes some in the Chinese community ripe fruit for the far right to pluck.

But even if WeChat didn't exist, the far-right politics are hosted by other websites and the messaging would still seep through.

In 2018, a consortium of Chinese activists in Vancouver and Toronto formed the Let's Vote Association, a group with a website in Chinese and English encouraging people to vote for right-wing candidates in federal, provincial and municipal elections.

The organization was in the news when some municipal candidates decried the endorsements in B.C. last year. It hasn't made any endorsements on its website this year.

One of its founding directors is Yali Trost, sister in law of Brad Trost, who ran unsuccessfully for leader of the Conservative Party in 2017 and lost a nomination challenge for the riding he held in Saskatchewan last year. He is not running this year and told Star Vancouver he has no knowledge of or participation in his sister in law's activities. Most of the association's directors have donated to Trost's political campaigns in the past, according to Elections Canada information.

The association's main page features a link to a petition opposing the Vancouver suburb of Richmond's plan to install a rainbow crosswalk, an initiative undertaken by many cities to support the LGBTQ community. Other articles praise Donald Trump, champion religious freedom and question the legitimacy of refugees.

Their electoral recommendations in the past have included evangelical Christian radio show host and People's Party of Canada candidate Laura-Lynn Tyler Thompson, as well as Heather Leung, who was dropped as a candidate by the Conservatives earlier this month when a 2011 video of her making statements against the LGBTQ community resurfaced.

In the video, Leung says homosexuals are "perverted" and trying to "recruit" children because they cannot procreate.

In early September, according to her website, Leung went door knocking in her riding with Lindsay Shepherd, a controversial figure and free speech advocate criticized in the past for arranging an appearance by Faith Goldy, the white nationalist who ran for mayor of Toronto, at Laurier University.

Leung is still running as an independent and her campaign manager is Travis Trost, Yali Trost's husband and Brad Trost's brother.

Leung did not respond to Star Vancouver's attempts to contact her, including a letter outlining what the interview would be about delivered to her home, outside of the Burnaby North-Seymour riding.

Star Vancouver requested the financial details of the Let's Vote Association in accordance with the B.C. Societies Act.

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As per the official process, Star Vancouver filed a request to the B.C. corporate registry asking that they compel the Let's Vote Association to release the information. In a letter to Star Vancouver through the registry, the society said it would not release the information because it had not yet completed its accounting.

"Many immigrants to Canada and especially Chinese Canadians are reluctant to involve themselves in the political process in Canada because of bad experiences they have had overseas," reads the letter, which goes on to accuse Star Vancouver of making them fearful.

But last October Yali Trost, a Vancouver resident according to Let's Vote's society information, involved herself in the political process physically when she got into an altercation with Burnaby School Board trustee candidate Larry Hayes after an all-candidates debate in a school gymnasium. According to Vancouver radio station News1130, Trost said she was confronting Hayes for calling another candidate an "idiot."

A video posted to Laura Lynn Tyler Thompson's Facebook page shows Hayes trying to push past Trost as she stands in front of him while holding a baby when he tries to leave the venue before she shoves him back. The police were called. The debate itself was shut down due to yelling from attendees protesting the province's Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity program in public schools.

Attempts to contact Yali Trost through the Let's Vote Association were unsuccessful.

As Canada barrels toward its election Monday the affect the push by the far right could have on the Chinese community isn't yet known, but observers are concerned what a sustained campaign could mean down the road.

Huang said politicians don't make enough of an effort to conduct meaningful engagement with Canada's Chinese communities. It seems politicians are only interested in stopping by for Lunar New Year banquets, he said, leaving a void that is filled by the far right.

The responsibility rests not just with Chinese people to speak up, Huang said, but with politicians who need to take the trend of misinformation seriously.

"Don't treat our community as if we're just being ruled by fear," he said. "Lead us. Show us that we want to vote for you because you believe in the same values I do."

Jeremy Nuttall is the lead investigative reporter for Star Vancouver. Follow him on Twitter: @Nuttallreports

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