



# CoCo Seminar Series Fall 2021

## Characterizing and Comparing COVID-19 Misinformation Across Languages, Countries and Platforms

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**Wednesday September 15, 2021 11:00am-12:00pm**  
**EDT**

**Hybrid (EB-T1 & Zoom; meeting link available on**  
**<http://coco.binghamton.edu/>)**



Misinformation/disinformation about COVID-19 has been rampant on social media around the world. In this study, we investigate COVID-19 misinformation/disinformation on social media in multiple languages/countries: Chinese (Mandarin)/China, English/USA, and Farsi (Persian)/Iran; and on multiple platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, Weibo, WeChat and TikTok. Misinformation, especially about a global pandemic, is a global problem yet it is common for studies of COVID-19 misinformation on social media to focus on a single language, like English, a single country, like the USA, or a single platform, like Twitter. We utilized opportunistic sampling to compile 200 specific items of viral and yet debunked misinformation across these languages, countries and platforms emerged between January 1 and August 31. We then categorized this collection based both on the topics of the misinformation and the underlying roots of that misinformation. Our multi-cultural and multi-linguistic team observed that the nature of COVID-19 misinformation on social media varied in substantial ways across different languages/countries depending on the cultures, beliefs/religions, popularity of social media, types of platforms, freedom of speech and the power of people versus governments. We observe that politics is at the root of most of the collected misinformation across all three languages in this dataset. We further observe the different impact of government restrictions on platforms and platform restrictions on content in China, Iran, and the USA and their impact on a key question of our age: how do we control misinformation without silencing the voices we need to hold governments accountable?

Dr. Golshan Madraki is an Assistant Professor of David. D. Reh School of Business at Clarkson University. She received her Ph.D. in Industrial and System Engineering from Ohio University. She received her B.S. and M.S. in Industrial Management from Allameh Tabatabai University, Tehran, Iran. Her research interests include algorithm and data structure, graph theory, operations research, supply chain management, and mathematical modeling. For more information, contact Hiroki Sayama ([sayama@binghamton.edu](mailto:sayama@binghamton.edu)). <http://coco.binghamton.edu/>