

> Thursday, November 16th, 2023

14:00 – 15:30

> ICOR

**RESEARCH
SEMINAR**



EMPOWERING CHANGEMAKERS FOR A BETTER SOCIETY

“THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA AFFORDANCES IN ORGANIZATIONAL STIGMA EVENTS”

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ABSTRACT

In this qualitative study, we explored the role of social media affordances in organizational stigma events. We focused on three online viral cases where organizations have been associated with racism. Online audiences pressured these organizations to respond on social media in multiple rounds, using the persistence and visibility of platforms' content to build a case of stigma. We label this strategy as “excavation”, meaning the collation of past events afforded by social media to build a stronger case of stigma. We found excavation manifests in different ways that, as a result, might lead to a standby stigma. In that case, social media affordances allow users to revive stigmatizing events in niche conversations, highlighting how the persistence of online content expands the timeline of such events. Our study contributes to organizational stigma studies by showing how social media affordances allow audiences to move from highly relevant and time-bounded stigmatizing events to a bricolage of (unrelated) past and current episodes. A second contribution stems from standby stigma as a shape of stigma that evinces the persistence of traces of stigmatizing events.