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Philip MacEwan

York University, pmacewan@york.ca

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Volume 6 (2021): Abstracts of Papers and Keywords

1. Dylan MacKenzie, “A Little Shelter from the Storm: COVID-19 and the ‘Atlantic Bubble’”

Abstract: The ‘Atlantic Bubble’ (hereafter AB) is often conflated with the impressive resistance to COVID-19 outbreaks in Atlantic Canada. My paper discusses the evolution of that resistance as a way of clarifying this distinction. Understood as a political plan, AB features a response to COVID-19 which contrasts with the reaction in much of the rest of Canada. As a result, it has practical implications for future political planning in Canada, especially *vis-à-vis* epidemiological risk assessment. I conclude with a brief survey of the broader questions raised by AB, arguing that there are philosophical assumptions about the nature of community in Atlantic Canada which have been critical in its fight against COVID-19.

Keywords: accountability, applied ethics, citizenship, community, COVID-19, economy, pandemic, risk, social and political philosophy

2. Rhonda Martens, “The Pandemic, Sociability, and Citizenship”

Abstract: We have experienced social isolation in response to COVID-19. In particular, our weak ties (ties among acquaintances rather than between family and friends) have been trimmed. I argue, based on the work of Granovetter, Nussbaum, Talisse, and Lanoix, that this trimming of weak ties has consequences, not just for well-being, but also for how we practice social citizenship. I conclude with the suggestion that we make use of research on how to build resilience in individuals, in the hopes that resilient individuals will be in a better position to rebuild some of what the pandemic has destroyed.

Keywords: citizenship, COVID-19, Granovetter, Lanoix, Nussbaum, sociability, Talisse, weak ties

3. Clarisse Paron, “Evidence, Testimony, and Trust: How the COVID-19 Pandemic is Exacerbating the Crisis of Trust in Science”

Abstract: In this paper, I consider an example of fast science produced in the early stages of the pandemic and the lasting effects of the study on public safety and trust in science. Due to pressures intrinsic to contemporary science and from the pandemic to produce research on COVID quickly, studies on COVID-19 that did not meet rigorous scientific standards were used to form public health policies and recommendations. I argue that the fast science produced for COVID-19, which caused many public health policies and recommendations to change throughout the pandemic, confuses the public and erodes their trust in science.

Keywords: COVID-19 pandemic, evidence, fast science, testimony, trust in science

4. Bruce Preston, “Ethics, Justice, and the Impact of COVID-19 on the Courts in Canada”

Abstract: Canadian courts have struggled with delay for decades. The advent of the COVID-19 pandemic added to an already difficult situation. Courts were required to take swift action, which they did. Despite this, they have faced criticism concerning the approach taken. I will argue that this criticism is not warranted and has more to do with the perceptions of the courts’ past performance than it has to do with their response to the pandemic. Regardless, the systemic delay in Canadian courts has become an issue of ethics which overshadows any success they have had in the current pandemic.

Keywords: caseload management, courts in Canada, COVID-19, diligence, ethics, judicial conduct, justice