Ideology No More: a discourse of othering in Canadian mainstream newspaper representations of the Idle No More movement

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ABSTRACT

In November 2012 a social movement in Canada called Idle No More emerged with non-violent protests across the country by Aboriginal activists seeking to engage the federal government on issues of treaty rights, sovereignty, land use, and the environment. Idle No More was the focus of substantial media coverage; however, many reactions in Canadian mainstream newspapers used representational techniques that attempted to delegitimise and dehistoricise the movement and its goals by portraying Aboriginal peoples as the 'other' in relation to a Euro-Canadian majority identity. The primary concern of this study is that these representations are ideological (Eagleton, 1991: 5), working to legitimise the abusive treatment of Aboriginal peoples in Canada, naturalise Euro-Canadians' position of dominance, and exclude opposing points of view such as those offered by activists taking part in the Idle No More movement.

Guided by Baumann's (2004) concept of 'grammars' of othering, a combined methodological approach was used to study a sample (n=198) of Canadian mainstream newspaper opinion pieces to determine the extent to which there was an identifiable discourse of othering, using discourse in Foucault's (1972) sense of a social theory in which representations both reflect and constitute a social reality. Content analysis was used to identify nationwide trends in representation across the sample, and critical discourse analysis (CDA) was applied to extracts where othering appeared to identify representational phenomena at work within texts. The study's findings identify evidence of a discourse of othering in which representations essentialise Aboriginal peoples, silence or mitigate abuses against Aboriginal people by Euro-Canadians, and semantically reverse blame for socio-economic inequality onto Aboriginal people, particularly by suggesting widespread corruption among First Nations leaders. Despite the attempted political exclusion inherent in this discourse of othering, the findings also provide evidence that activist agency may successfully promote counter-discourses in mainstream Canadian newspapers, taking advantage of a 'media opportunity structure' (Cammaerts, 2012) through the national

attention garnered for the Idle No More movement and its goals. Future research may wish to focus on how audiences are interpreting or resisting the discourse of othering identified in this study, and the findings provide evidence on which to base future interviews with media professionals in order to better understand the motivations that influence the production of such representations.

Key words: othering, discourse, representation, ideology, Idle No More, Aboriginal peoples, Canada

INTRODUCTION

'We have never admitted to ourselves that we were, and still are, a colonial power.'
— Paul Martin, Former Canadian Prime Minister (Kennedy, 2012: para. 8)

In November 2012, Aboriginal[1] activists began leading protests across Canada in what was known as the Idle No More movement, seeking to engage the Canadian government on issues of treaty rights, land use, sovereignty, and the environment (Idle No More, n.d.). The movement quickly gained popularity and non-violent protests were staged across the country. In January 2013, an Ipsos Reid poll of 1023 Canadians—commissioned by the media companies National Post/Postmedia News and Global Television to gauge the Canadian public's reaction to the issues raised by the movement—found that 60% of respondents agreed with the statement, 'Most of the problems of native peoples are brought on by themselves.' This was a marked increase from 35% of respondents agreeing to the same statement in 1989 (Ipsos, 2013: para. 6). And while 63% of respondents agreed that the federal government of Canada should 'act now to raise the quality of life for Aboriginal peoples,' 64% agreed 'Canada's Aboriginal peoples receive too much support from Canadian taxpayers' (Ipsos, 2013: para. 2-4). As this study seeks to understand how mainstream Canadian newspapers represent Aboriginal peoples in relation to the country's Euro-Canadian majority, this introduction will attempt to briefly answer the questions: What is the historical context of these majority attitudes towards Canada's minority Aboriginal

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[1] I use the term 'Aboriginal peoples' to refer to Canada's diverse First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples following its use in the 1996 Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 1996a: para. 5). However, it should be noted that this is still a problematic term due to its 'colonial origins' (LaRocque, 2010:

peoples? How has colonialism influenced Canadian society and how, as former Prime Minister Paul Martin suggests above, does it persist in its influence today?

Prior to colonisation by European settlers in the sixteenth century, the population of indigenous groups in what is today Canada is estimated to have been 500,000[2] (O'Donnell, 2008: 285). European colonisation brought about the deaths of the majority of North America's indigenous population on account of 'rampant infectious diseases such as small pox and measles and armed conflicts and starvation' (O'Donnell, 2008: 285). While the amount of deaths differed in different Aboriginal nations—with some nations estimated to have lost up to 93% of their population (Dickason, 1992: 27)—an 1871 census found the Aboriginal population to be 102,000 (Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 1996b: para. 11).

In addition to the decimation of the indigenous population, European colonisation also led to wide-scale dispossession of Aboriginal peoples from the land where they had previously lived. Today, reserves[3] for First Nations[4] people in Canada generally constitute 1% of a First Nations group's pre-colonisation land base, the rest of the land being ceded through treaty agreements in which land was exchanged for money, goods, and certain privileges (Usher, 2003: 368). Fanon (1963: 40) writes that the 'colonial world is a Manichean world' that conceives of the world in binary terms, and that colonialism's violent aim is the 'destruction of native social forms' (1963: 39). The Euro-Canadian majority's attempt to systematically destroy Aboriginal social forms in Canada can be seen in the aggressive assimilation policies put into practice to 'civilise' Aboriginal populations, formalised by legislation such as the pre-confederation Civilisation of Indian Tribes Act of 1857 and the post-confederation Indian Act of 1876 (Armitage, 1995). Bartlett (1977: 585) writes that the latter 'demanded "civilization" and responsibility from the Indian population while denying them control over the forces affecting their lives'.

Assimilation continued to be vigorously pursued in the twentieth century through practices such as the residential school system in which over 100,000 Aboriginal people were enrolled between the 1870s and 1980s (Milloy, 1999: xvi). The school system's design represented an institutional mechanism to destroy Aboriginal social forms, as is reflected in statements

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6-8). The term 'Indian' is often considered derogatory, though still retains a legal use as First Nations people can have 'Indian status' under the Indian Act.

[2] This is the estimate accepted by the 1996 Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, which the authors qualify as a 'conservative estimate' (Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 1996b: para. 8).

[3] A reserve is 'a tract of land set aside under the Indian Act and treaty agreements for the exclusive use of an Indian band … Reserve lands are not strictly "owned" by bands but are held in trust for bands by the Crown' ('Reserves,' 2009: para. 2).

[4] First Nations refers to the over 600 individual bands with diverse identities and histories in Canada.

made in 1920 by Duncan Campbell Scott, then-deputy superintendent of the Department of Indian Affairs, in reference to an amendment to the Indian Act that made it necessary for 7-15 year-old Aboriginal children to attend residential schools:

> I want to get rid of the Indian problem … Our objective is to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic and there is no Indian question, and no Indian Department, that is the whole object of this Bill. (quoted in Weis, 1986: 32)

Physical, sexual, and emotional abuse were commonplace in residential schools (Llewellyn, 2002: 257) and at least 3,000 student deaths on account of disease, malnutrition, or fires have been confirmed (CBC News, 2013: para. 1). Aggressive assimilation also took place through various child welfare programs between the 1960s and 1980s, since termed the 'Sixties Scoop' (Johnston, 1983) that involved the apprehension of Aboriginal children from their families. Sinclair (2007: 66) writes, 'By the 1970s, one in three Aboriginal children were separated from their families by adoption or fostering' in Canada, with the vast majority being placed in non-Aboriginal care. In the province of British Columbia, reviews of the child welfare program in both 1972 and 1980-81 found that 'status Indian children were eight times as likely as non-Indian children to be in some form of substitute care' (McKenzie & Hudson, 1985: 126).

In 2008, Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper officially apologised for the abuses of the residential school system, admitting the Canadian government's responsibility for the attempt to systematically—as the Prime Minister quoted from Campbell Scott—'kill the Indian in the child' (CBC News, 2008: para. 5). But despite this official recognition of abuses, the Ipsos Reid poll data above indicates that a majority of Canadians do not see the socio-economic situation of Aboriginal peoples in Canada today as being linked to colonial abuses and assimilation policies, instead agreeing that 'most of the problems of native peoples are brought on by themselves.' And what are the 'problems of native peoples'? There is a high degree of inequality in contemporary Canadian society: 40% of Aboriginal children live in poverty compared to a 17% poverty rate for all children in Canada (MacDonald & Wilson, 2013: 6). The poverty rate is 50% for First Nations children living on Canada's over 600 reserves (MacDonald & Wilson, 2013: p. 6), where nearly half of Canada's First Nations people with 'registered Indian status' live (Statistics Canada, 2011). A 2010 study found Aboriginal peoples' median income to be 30% lower than the median income for all other Canadians (Wilson & Macdonald, 2010: 3).

In part as a response to this inequality, Canada has recently seen a surge in political activism by Aboriginal peoples, a new chapter in what is a long history of resistance to colonial practices and capture of land and resources. Some notable historical examples of resistance include Pontiac's rebellion in 1763, in which indigenous groups coordinated attacks on British settlements to, as historian Richard White argues, 'reassert the terms of alliance in the region' (qtd. in Erikson, 2013: para. 5). Another key moment of resistance was the Red River Rebellion in 1869, in which Métis people opposed the British colonial government as it attempted to impose its rule after buying the land from the Hudson's Bay Company (Ens, 1996). Activism against the child welfare practices since termed the Sixties Scoop led to courts ordering a moratorium on the practices in some provinces (Sinclair, 2007: 68) and activists continue to pressure the Canadian government to make amends for the abuses of the residential school system (Al Jazeera, 2013). Protests related to land claim disputes by Aboriginal groups are common across Canada and while these protests are typically non-violent, there have been several deaths. Wilkes and Ricard (2007: 243) write that the 'first contemporary First Nation-Canadian state conflict that involved violence (death)' was when police officer Marcel Lemay was shot to death during a land claim protest in Oka, Quebec, in 1990. Five years later, unarmed Aboriginal protester Dudley George was shot to death by police during a land claim protest in Ipperwash, Ontario, in 1995 (Wilkes & Ricard, 2007: 248).

Beginning in November 2012, Idle No More succeeded in mobilising national non-violent protests to engage the Canadian government on issues affecting Aboriginal peoples, drawing mainstream media attention to these issues. Though the movement does not represent all Aboriginal activists in Canada, Idle No More did become a highly popular slogan adopted by many in the country, with social media being used extensively to organise protests and encourage discussion of issues of treaty rights, land use, and the environment (Full Duplex, 2013). Chief Theresa Spence of the Attawapiskat First Nation began a hunger strike in December 2012 to petition for a meeting with the Prime Minister and Governor General. Though Spence was often positioned by media as an Idle No More leader and her protest did contribute to the result of a January 11 meeting attended by the leadership of the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) and some chiefs (though not Spence herself), the founders of the Idle No More movement issued a statement asserting the movement to be leaderless, attempting to emphasise it as separate and distinct from the AFN and other existing Aboriginal governing bodies (Curtis, 2013: para. 4). This study will focus on the mainstream media's reaction to the Idle No More movement in order to explore the attitudes expressed about Aboriginal people and the issues protesters attempted to bring into national conversation; the study's goal is to measure the constraints and opportunities that mainstream newspaper

representation presents to Aboriginal activists in Canada who challenge status quo power relationships. The following section will outline a theoretical framework with which to approach this analysis of the mainstream media's representation of the Idle No More movement.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

To approach Canadian power relationships and the attitudes underpinning the past abuse and dispossession of Aboriginal peoples in Canada, this study will use Foucault's (1972: 49) social theory of 'discourse', which he defines as 'groups of signs' that constitute 'practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak'. Foucault theorises that discourses are simultaneously descriptive and prescriptive, representing "a social construction of reality, a form of knowledge" (Fairclough, 1992: 18). Power is exercised socially through discourse, and Foucault (1979: 101) explains that 'discourse transmits and produces power' at the same time as it 'undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it'. Discourses are closely tied to the 'structure of institutions' (Parker, 1992: 17) in a society and individual subjectivities are shaped in relation to a society's dominant discourses.

A central debate about discourse as a social theory is in specifying its distinction from the term 'ideology'. While the Marxist tradition has explored ideology in order to determine how 'relations of domination or subordination are reproduced with only minimal resort to direct coercion' by dominant groups (Purvis & Hunt, 1993: 474), Foucault is critical of Marx's theory of ideology due to Marx's suggestion that objectively true knowledge is accessible if 'false consciousness' is overcome (Foucault, 1984: 60). However, Eagleton (1991: 5, emphasis in original) defines ideology as the way in which "a dominant power may legitimate itself by *promoting* beliefs and values that are congenial to it, *naturalizing* and *universalizing* such beliefs" while it denigrates opposition, excludes "rival forms of thought," and obscures social realities. This definition usefully focuses on power without requiring an objective ontological position from which to critique ideology. If we take discourse to represent 'specific linguistic or semiotic vehicles' used to order social relations by shaping 'thinking, understanding and experiencing' (Purvis & Hunt, 1993: 476), Eagleton's definition allows us to examine the way in which ideology operates through a dominant discourse to legitimate and naturalise a powerful group's position of dominance. In the Canadian context, the focus here will be an ideological discourse in mainstream

newspapers used to legitimate the dominant status of Euro-Canadians over Aboriginal peoples.

Grammars of 'othering'

Discourse operates through vehicles that represent the social reality it aspires to bring about, and one key representational phenomenon that has been observed is 'othering'[5]. Baumann (2004: 18-19) theorises that 'othering' is the way in which 'collective or individual' identities are defined through the assertion of another's difference or 'alterity'. For Baumann, othering is inextricably linked to the process of *selfing*. While a number of theorists have approached studying how 'otherness' is articulated (e.g., Hall (1997) outlines approaches such as Saussure's linguistic approach, Bahktin's theory of the 'Other' in being produced socially, Lévi-Strauss' anthropological approach as a form of cultural classification, and psychoanalytic approaches that see the 'Other's' role in forming subjectivity and sexuality).

However, for this study of how the 'other' is constructed through discourse, Baumann's theoretical approach that othering takes place through three 'grammars' (2004: 18) is useful as a metaphor of structure that reflects the way in which representational strategies employ hierarchical classification to order the world. As Kress and Van Leeuwen (2002: 343-344) note in discussing grammars of visual representation, grammars create 'culturally produced regularities' (e.g., the colour red on signage indicating danger). Baumann's (2004: 20) first grammar is 'orientalism', referring to Said's (1978: 3) theory that the Western discourse of orientalism was a 'corporate institution for dealing with the Orient' through representations of the Oriental other as ontologically and epistemologically distinct from those in the Occident. This grammar operates through binary representations that are both negative and positive, and 'constitutes self and other by negative mirror imaging: "What is good in us is lacking in them" ... [but also] a subordinate reversal: "What is lacking in us is (still) present in them" ' (Baumann & Gingrich, 2004: x).

The second grammar of othering that Baumann (2004: 21) identifies is 'segmentation', drawing on E.E. Evans-Pritchard's 1940 anthropological term for how identities are tiered and individuals' identities often involve contradictions at different levels (e.g., familial, community, national, ethnic). For example, in Evans-Pritchard's study of Nuer people, he noted that long-standing internal feuds were set aside in order to resist the British colonial

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[5] This term, following Baumann, is used in lowercase as opposed to the Lacanian use of the uppercase 'Other' to denote a more powerful figure or group that shapes one's conception of self (Gingrich, 2004). I've retained uppercase usage when quoting authors who use it in the uppercase.

invasion of Nuerland. The segmentary grammar importantly recognises that identity and othering are highly contextual (Baumann, 2004: 23). Baumann's third grammar of othering is 'encompassment' (2004: 25), defined as 'a hierarchized sub-inclusion of others who are thought, from a higher level of abstraction, to be "really part of us" ' (Baumann & Gingrich, 2004: x). Encompassment involves including some members of a group that is being othered—though 'never all' (Baumann, 2004: x)—and downplays the difference of those chosen for inclusion.

Baumann's grammars of othering provide important insights about the structural logic that can be used in an ideological discourse to create hierarchical divisions between groups of people. However, such structuration—which Anthony Giddens (1984: 131) explains as 'enduring cycles of reproduced relations' in social systems—is often resisted and challenged through agency, defined as the way that people 'intentionally make things happen by their actions' (Bandura, 2001: 2). Resistant agency can potentially be used for the creative appropriation of the segmentary grammar of othering.

Discussing Indigenous activism in Bolivia through the theoretical lens of Baumann's grammars, Sergio Huarcaya (2011: 210) suggests activists use the segmentary grammar to challenge the dominance of a certain identity being represented as superior or the 'apex', which in the Bolivian struggle is 'blanco superiority and indio inferiority'. He writes that the segmentary grammar 'makes possible claims for equality' because 'belonging and exclusion are not absolute but contextual' (2011: 52). Like the Nuer setting aside internal feuds in order to unite in resistance to British colonisation of Nuerland, Huarcuya suggests Bolivian Indigenous activists used the segmentary grammar to represent a unified Indigenous identity that minimises internal differences and divisions in order to contest 'blanco superiority'.

In Canada, cooperation between Canada's First Nations, Métis, and Inuit activists in the Idle No More movement's challenge of Euro-Canadian dominance can similarly be seen as using the segmentary grammar of othering to defy a Euro-Canadian identity being presented as superior or the 'apex' of identity in Canada. This segmentary positioning reflects what Spivak (2012: 3) calls the 'strategic use of a positivist essentialism in a scrupulously visible political interest'. However, though this strategy may have the benefit of unifying voices for Aboriginal groups' resistance, it does carry the risk of leading to what Dirlik (1996: 104) refers to as 'self-orientalization' in which members of a group participate in a discourse that reinforces their domination through their portraying an essentialised identity (Yan & Santos, 2009: 287-88). Considering that essentialising stereotypes that attempt to reduce 'people to

a few, simple, essential characteristics, which are represented as fixed by Nature' (Hall, 1997: 257) are characteristic of an ideological discourse, this is a significant risk of self-representation through the appropriation of the segmentary grammar.

Mainstream media and the Propaganda Model

In terms of self-representation, the Idle No More movement has made extensive use of social media—over 143,000 Twitter users wrote more than 1,200,000 tweets using the #IdleNoMore hashtag in its first six months (Full Duplex, 2013: 5). But despite the new communicative opportunities presented by social media, mainstream media remains key sites of discourses in Canada. In this context, it is useful to be precise about what is meant by 'mainstream media.' Carpentier, Lie, and Servaes (2003: 56, emphasis added) write that mainstream media's defining characteristics are that they are often:

- large scale and geared towards large, homogeneous (segments of) audiences;
- state-owned organizations or commercial companies;
- vertically structured organizations staffed by professionals;
- carriers of *dominant discourses and representations*.

Mainstream media's corporate structure and its large audience-base allow for discourses' representations to be spread widely in a highly uniform and repetitive way. In Canada, nearly 36,000,000 paid and free newspapers circulate nationally every week (Newspapers Canada, 2013a: para. 1) in a country of approximately 34,000,000 people. Nick Couldry (2000: 4) defines 'media power' as 'the concentration in media institutions of the symbolic power of "constructing reality" (both factual representations and credible fictions)'. Despite the rapid growth in use of social media in Canada, mainstream institutions retain significant media power over discourses that represent and shape Canadian society.

In studying the media power of mainstream media in the United States, Chomsky and Herman (2010[1988]: 1) theorise that mainstream media messaging is effectively 'systematic propaganda' used to divert attention from 'a world of concentrated wealth and major conflicts of class interest'. They propose that this takes place through a number of deliberate and non-deliberate factors. The authors propose a 'Propaganda Model' (2010[1988]: xi), suggesting mainstream media are "culturally and politically conservative" (2010[1988]: 17) and resistant voices are limited because of a combination of five factors: corporate ownership, advertisers' influence, an over-reliance on members of the elite as sources of information, anti-communist ideology, and flak (that is, negative responses 'that

include complaints, threats, letters, and articles ... designed to harass, intimidate, discipline and generally keep the media from straying too far from acceptable elite viewpoints' (Reese, 1990: 404)). To apply the Propaganda Model to the Canadian mainstream media, such factors might be used to explain the limitation of counter-discourses that condemn the country's colonial past, challenge a government's failure to uphold treaty agreements, or challenge a dominant discourse that portrays Aboriginal peoples as 'other' to naturalise Euro-Canadian dominance.

The Propaganda Model has received criticism from both conservative and liberal critics. Eli Lehrer (2004) argues that the model is flawed because media owners' politics are spread further across the political spectrum than the socially and politically conservative niche Chomsky and Herman accuse them of occupying, that stockholders' profit from investing in media companies means that not just the wealthy elite benefit from media profits, and that there is much 'support for left-wing politics' from figures in pop culture (2004: 78). Lehrer asserts that media stories critical of companies and elite individuals are 'the kind of journalism that makes reputations and wins awards' (2004: 76) and have led to law-suits against companies and CEOs losing their jobs.

Critiquing the Propaganda Model from a different perspective, Charlotte Ryan (1999: 15-17) suggests the theoretical model is guilty of 'over determination' because it problematically 'makes structural domination appear insurmountable and thus opposition action appear futile'. As Lehrer's and Ryan's criticisms suggest, Chomsky and Herman's model overemphasises structuration and insufficiently addresses the role of the dissenting viewpoints that do appear in mainstream media to promote counter-discourses. Bart Cammaerts (2012: 119) writes that activists can take advantage of a 'media opportunity structure'—part of a larger 'mediation opportunity structure'—that refers to how activists can encourage mainstream media representation 'by producing spectacle through a show of numbers, through inflicting damage, or through bearing witness to injustice' (2012: 122). If mainstream media is open to activist engagement, mainstream media coverage has the potential benefits of helping a movement gain validation and legitimacy among the public, spreading protesters' messaging about their goals to a broad audience, and can potentially mobilise more people to join a movement (Gamson & Wolfsfeld, 1993: 116).

Patrick McCurdy (2010: 44) suggests that because of these potential benefits, activists should take a 'pragmatic media perspective' and approach mainstream media "as sites of social struggle' in order to create 'counter-spin'. One way to improve the Propaganda Model's problematic overemphasis on structuration is to acknowledge the media

opportunity structure that is present through activist agency. However, the presence of counter-discourses in mainstream media does not necessarily mean that they will repeal a dominant ideological discourse that is culturally and politically conservative. This study will attempt to measure the extent to which representation of the Idle No More movement in Canadian mainstream media's discussion of Aboriginal issues aligns with such dominant discourse or counter-discourses.

A discourse of othering as political exclusion

The political danger of a discourse of othering in mainstream media is that such representation works to justify a majority group's dictation of a minority group's interests for them and justify political exclusion, a particularly serious risk in Canada given the history of abuse of Aboriginal peoples in the country. Addressing the question of why minority groups continue to be the target of anger from majority groups in contemporary nations around the world, Appadurai (2006: 3) theorises that because the notion that 'national sovereignty is built on some sort of ethnic genius' persists, minorities are frequently persecuted as 'small numbers represent an obstacle between majority and totality or total purity' (2006: 53). In Baumann's terms, othering and the essentialisation of a minority are part of nationalist efforts of 'selfing', an attempt to portray a national identity based on what Appadurai calls the nation-state's 'fiction of its ethnos' (2006: 23). In mainstream media, this reflects Couldry's (2000: 4) definition of media power as the ability to create 'factual representations and credible fictions', naturalising a minority's status as other and thus political exclusion.

However, in looking for a way in which to address this exclusion, it is useful to briefly address theoretical debate about the media's ability to support broadly inclusive democratic debate. While Habermas (1991[1962]: xvii) has proposed the normative ideal of media as a 'public sphere'—a discursive space in which civil society seeks rational consensus on political matters—this concept has been criticised for flaws such as its being male-dominated (Benhabib, 1995; Fraser, 1995), its overlooking the important role of emotions and 'passions' in politics (Carpentier & Cammaerts, 2006: 973), and its under emphasis of the importance of class in exclusion (Curran, 1997).

Mouffe (1999: 752) suggests that the public sphere's goal of consensus is inherently exclusionary because of the 'ineradicability of power, of antagonism', writing that consensus is simply 'a stabilization of power and that always entails some form of exclusion' (1999:

756). Mouffe proposes an alternative normative concept of 'agonistic pluralism' (1999: 745), a model in which plural groups in conflict because of opposing interests should seek out agonistic compromises—that is, compromises that allow a temporary cessation of hostilities—rather than attempting to antagonise those of opposing views into agreement, as is necessary in consensus. Agonistic pluralism improves on the public sphere theory in attempting to provide a radically democratic model, but has also received criticism. While Kapoor (2002: 103) praises agonistic pluralism for being 'open-ended and anti-authoritarian', he questions the premise that agonistic groups are necessarily internally democratic: 'Mouffe appears satisfied that social movements and protest groups will by themselves discover and practise democratic citizenship, in spite of evidence … to the contrary' (2002: 109). Agonistic pluralism addresses the reality of conflict and passions in politics and offers a model for how decision-making may normatively take place within conflict. However, if a dominant ideological discourse is prevalent in mainstream media, it will work to pre-empt agonistic compromise with a minority group—in the case of Idle No More, by suggesting that Aboriginal peoples' problems are due to their unwillingness to assimilate into Euro-Canadian society and because of the failings of Aboriginal leadership. If this is the case, while agonistic pluralism is an appealing ideal, media discourse as described by the Propaganda Model (despite the opportunities of a media opportunity structure) suggests that mainstream media practice may fall well short of the ideal, requiring antagonistic action through protest.

Colonial genre

This study will focus on identifying an exclusionary discourse of othering in Canadian mainstream print media, which Anderson and Robertson (2011: 8) argue to have historically been a 'colonial genre':

> In the Canadian case, if Chomsky and Hall and Said are correct, one might expect newspaper content to promote and defend Canadian colonialism because it provides the fabric upon which Canadian culture has been embroidered and because the economic system upon which Canadian colonialism was and remains predicated benefited an elite that itself effectively directed editorial policy in the national press. In this way the press operates as a sort of colonial genre.

Effectively, the authors ask whether the Propaganda Model uses othering representations of colonised Aboriginal people to promote an ideology that legitimates Euro-Canadian dominance? Anderson and Robertson identify themes in historical Canadian newspaper reporting that are typical of Baumann's orientalising grammar of othering, including

representations of 'moral depravity', essentialisation of Aboriginal groups as 'mired in an unprogressive and non-evolving past', and accusations of 'racial inferiority' (e.g., describing Aboriginal people as "childish, irresponsible, and frequently irrational … [with] proclivities for wanton violence, violent crime, viciousness, and a general tendency toward mayhem") (p.7). LaRocque (2010: 6) offers the view that while 'Native-positive White constructions' have existed as counter-discourses in Canada, they have never been the dominant discourse. Like the themes Anderson and Cronlund note, van Dijk (2003: 362) describes several features of a discourse of othering:

> Semantically and lexically, the Others are thus associated not simply with difference, but rather with deviance ("illegitimacy") and threat (violence, attacks). Argumentative assertions of the depravity of black culture are combined with denials of white deficiencies (racism), with rhetorical mitigation and euphemization of its crimes (colonialism, slavery), and with semantic reversals of blame (blaming the victim).

This study will take particular focus on the mitigation and euphemising of colonialism in Canadian newspapers as a rhetorical strategy that, by eliding the historical context of the abuse of Aboriginal peoples, allows for the semantic reversal of blame, positioning socio-economic inequality to be caused by some problem inherent in the Aboriginal other. In order to study these attitudes, van Dijk (1995: para. 2) recommends that it is useful to focus on editorials and op-eds—the '*Op*posite of an *ed*itorial' written normally by one or two identified authors—because of their role 'in the expression and construction of public opinion' as well as because they are where journalists and other professionals 'exhibit their shared social representations, and participate … in intergroup interaction and institutional reproduction', making them key texts for the examination of discourse .

Conceptual framework

The concepts used in this study are drawn from the theoretical literature in the previous section, shaping the analysis of Canadian mainstream opinion pieces through content analysis and critical discourse analysis (CDA). Canadian newspaper opinion pieces' representations will be examined to determine if there is an identifiable discourse of othering, looking for evidence of the processes of 'selfing' and 'othering' described by Baumann's (2004) grammars that are central to the construction of social realities through representation in discourse. I will attempt to identify if this discourse is ideological using Eagleton's (1991) definition of ideology as a way to promote, naturalise, and legitimate domination while excluding oppositional points of view, supporting the continuation of

inequality and marginalisation of Aboriginal peoples in Canada through linguistic representations.

Eagleton's definition of ideology resonates with Chomsky and Herman's (2010[1988]) Propaganda Model of mainstream media in which elite political viewpoints dominate mainstream media messaging and oppositional viewpoints are excluded, playing a central role in constructing a society's dominant discourses. The Propaganda Model has been rightfully criticised for overlooking the role of agency and under-theorising the role of counter-discourses that appear in mainstream media, as well as the opportunities of activist engagement through what Cammaerts (2012) calls the media opportunity structure. Bearing in mind Lehrer's (2004: 79) critique of the Propaganda Model, which he accuses of failing 'to see if the facts fit the model', I will approach the question using quantitative and qualitative methods to identify evidence of such structuration and draw on Anderson and Robertson's notion of Canadian mainstream newspapers as a 'colonial genre' that is deeply implicated in legitimating Euro-Canadian dominance over Aboriginal peoples. However, in light of the recognition of a media opportunity structure, another key concept will be activist *agency* in promoting counter-discourses that challenge ideological Euro-Canadian dominance.

In attempting to identify whether mainstream Canadian newspapers continue to promote an ideological discourse in which Aboriginal peoples are represented as 'other', this study's normative ideal is for a media landscape that is democratically inclusive of counter-discourses, and while Mouffe's (1999) 'agonistic pluralism' provides one model for such democratic inclusiveness, this study will also be reflexively aware of ideological attempts to exclude agonistic compromises.

RESEARCH QUESTION AND OBJECTIVES

This research project will attempt to provide evidence to address the following question:

To what extent does an identifiable discourse of othering take place in mainstream Canadian newspaper opinion pieces about the Idle No More movement?

In order to answer this question, the research is designed to address the following concerns:
- Do authors mitigate, euphemise, or omit the colonisation of Aboriginal peoples in Canada?

- How do mainstream newspaper authors engage in 'selfing' in their representation of mainstream Canadian identity?
- Do authors' representations of Aboriginal peoples employ Baumann's grammars of othering?
- To what extent do Canadian mainstream opinion pieces semantically reverse blame for socio-economic inequality to Aboriginal peoples?

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The research question was operationalised through a combination of two methodologies: content analysis and critical discourse analysis (CDA). Combining qualitative and quantitative methods allows for 'analytical enrichment' (Deacon, Pickering, Golding, & Murdock, 2007: 135; see also Creswell, 1994: 17-18) with one method addressing the other method's weaknesses. Content analysis and discourse analysis are often combined (Fierke, 2004: 36) as content analysis' quantitative approach allows analysis of a breadth of articles across a given period of time, while discourse analysis' qualitative approach allows an in-depth examination of ideology and power relationships within specific texts (Deacon, *et al.*, 2007: 117).

Sample

A sample (n=198) of opinion pieces was collected from 12 Canadian mainstream English-language newspapers. Newspapers were selected to reflect geographical distribution (seven of Canada's ten provinces are represented, and two newspapers are distributed nationally), a range of ownership (seven newspapers are owned by Canada's largest ownership group Postmedia and five newspapers are from different ownership groups), and popularity (based on daily distribution rates from 2012, all are within the highest 28 distributed English-language newspapers in Canada). Papers across the political spectrum were sampled: while the editorial pages are predominantly centre or centre-right, exceptions were the 'right-wing, highbrow broadsheet' *National Post*; the 'right-wing, tabloid' *Toronto Sun*; the left-leaning 'social-liberal editorial stance' of the *Toronto Star* (Greenberg, 2000: 523); and the *StarPhoenix,* whose in-house columnist Doug Cuthand identified himself as part of the Idle No More movement and authored six of the 17 *StarPhoenix* articles in the sample.

I chose to focus on the first two months of coverage of the Idle No More movement in order to gauge the initial reaction to the movement's call for change, searching for articles that

appeared between December 1, 2012 and January 31, 2013. While focusing on a short time span has the drawback of being unable to show how attitudes may have changed over time, the strength of this approach is that it allows the measurement of the spectrum of opinions about a specific series of events. I drew the sample articles from both the Nexis database—searching for the key term 'Idle No More' under *Anywhere* with the Duplicate option set to *On - High similarity* and with *Newswires* and *Non-business news* options deselected—as well newspapers' websites, on which I searched for 'Idle No More' in quotation marks and recorded all results in the date range. Opinion pieces that appeared in syndication in multiple Postmedia papers were coded only once (as opposed to each time they appeared in syndication in a different Postmedia paper), and false hits were excluded. As there is no standardised sampling method for CDA, nine extracts containing othering were selected based on the patterns of representation identified in the content analysis.

Table 1. Canadian mainstream English-language newspapers in sample.

Ownership group	Newspaper	Daily Readership
Torstar Corp.	Toronto Star	357612
CTVGlobemedia Inc.	The Globe and Mail (National)	302,190
Postmedia Network Inc.	National Post (National)	169,566
	The Gazette (Montreal)	113,888
	Ottawa Citizen	110,019
	The StarPhoenix (Saskatoon)	48,107
	Calgary Herald	127,147
	Vancouver Sun	164,507
	Edmonton Journal	101,950
Quebecor / Sun Media	Toronto Sun	169,219
FP Canadian Newspapers Inc.	Winnipeg Free Press	113,251
Halifax Herald Ltd.	The Chronicle-Herald (Halifax)	109,210

Source: Newspapers Canada. (2013a; 2013b).

Content analysis

Content analysis is well-suited for examining a large amount of text (Krippendorff, 2004: 6), making it useful to analyse nationwide trends in representation in order to gauge the extent of the discourse of othering. Despite limitations of the sample's coverage, which is not comprehensive, analysis was conducted with the methodological assumption that 'sampling units are replaceable by each other' (Bauer, 2000: 137). The coding framework was piloted with an intercoder as part of a LSE Methodology course, but was substantially revised to focus variables after inconsistent intercoder reliability (ICR) results and re-piloted with a second intercoder—neither of the intercoders was from North America or had any familiarity with the Idle No More movement prior to coding the pilot. The finalised codebook (see Appendix 1) is comprised of 18 codes that are mutually exclusive (Bauer, 2000: 139-40) and that contain options that are mutually exclusive and exhaustive (US General Accounting Office, 1989: 12). Nominal variables accounted for descriptive information such as author name, newspaper, and article word count. Variables to determine patterns of othering (e.g., characterisations of Aboriginal people as violent, accusations of nationwide poor governance by Aboriginal leadership) were included, as well as other variables to determine context (e.g., mentions of past abuses by Euro-Canadians or, specifically, residential schools).

The codebook was tested for intercoder reliability (ICR) using 'percent agreement' (Lombard, Snyder-Duch, & Bracken, 2002: 590) with the formula:

$$Coefficient = agreed / (agreed + disagreed)$$

Thirty articles from the sample were selected at random for ICR testing, as suggested by Lacy and Riffe (1996). The ICR was 0.9 or above for all variables except for two which were 0.83—Neuendorf (2002: 145) writes that ICR coefficients .80 and above are valid, with ICR coefficients of 0.70 suggested to be low. The ICR coefficient results show that the content analysis conducted is replicable using the same codebook (Hansen, 1998: 95). Analysis of the data was carried out by running a Chi-square test on crosstabs in SPSS looking for relationships that were statistically significant at the strict 1% significance level.

Critical discourse analysis

The interdisciplinary qualitative method CDA was used for close analysis of the discursive strategies at work within texts from the sample. CDA's methodological approach is premised on power relationships being discursive, grounded in ideology and history, and constituted through social action such as texts and everyday talk (Yan & Santos, 2009: 300; van Dijk,

1995). Though there are multiple approaches to CDA, Fairclough's (1993: 136) three-dimensional approach was chosen to as it extends beyond just textual interpretation to analyse texts at the textual, discursive, and societal levels. This was carried out through description, '*interpretation* of the relationship of the text and interaction', and '*explanation* of the relationship between interaction and social context' (Fairclough, 2001: 91; emphasis in original). CDA was used to understand the power dynamics at work in discourse, and to determine the way in which the power relationships in texts are 'both socially *constituted* and socially *constitutive*' (Bishop & Jaworski, 2003), with attention to 'ideological assumptions' (Fairclough, 1995: 54). As van Dijk (1988: 11) argues, 'media are not a neutral, common-sensed, or rational mediator of social events, but essentially help reproduce preformulated ideologies' and thus CDA is useful in investigating an ideological discourse of othering in Canadian newspapers.

Discourse analysis has been criticised for being overly subjective (Deacon, *et al.*, 2007: 138) and CDA's interdisciplinarity has led to accusations that it is 'unsystematic or eclectic' (Henderson, 2005: 8). In order to address these issues, I have used the findings of representational trends from the content analysis to guide the analysis of the chosen extracts. This section of the analysis is influenced by my subjective position, or 'interpretative tendencies' (Fairclough, 1992: 35). In the interests of reflexivity—a critical awareness of one's own subjective position that Spivak says allows us to be 'vigilant about our practices' (qtd. in Pillow, 2003: 177)—I offer the disclaimer that I am a Canadian of non-Aboriginal descent who is assuming a critical stance towards power relationships in Canada I believe need to be interrogated. Lynn and Lea (2003: 431) write that they approach discourse analysis from a political standpoint 'to contribute to the challenge to dominant (and often oppressive) discourses – thereby opening up spaces for resistance', and I will hope to at least identify some of the characteristics of a dominant discourse.

Operationalising Fairclough's three-dimensional model, the textual level of analysis will focus on the terms being used and constructions of 'us' and 'them' — CDA is particularly useful in investigating a discourse of Othering as media texts have 'the power to classify the world into categories of "us" and "them" and to orient (or not) the viewers towards those others' (Chouliaraki, 2008: 691). The discursive level of analysis will focus on how authors draw upon different 'orders of discourse' that 'embody particular ideologies' (Fairclough, 2001: 23). The third stage, which focusing on the interaction and the social context, will investigate how the discourses being used to represent the Idle No More movement work to 'sustain and legitimize existing relations of power' (Fairclough, 2001: 33) in a way described by Eagleton's definition of ideology.
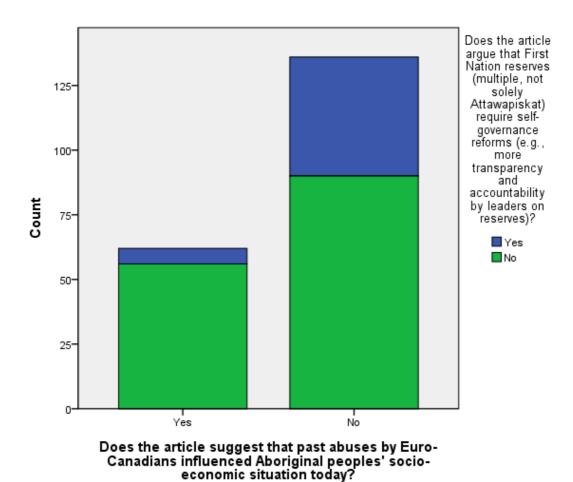
FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

This section presents the combined methodology's findings of evidence of the extent of a discourse of othering in Canadian newspaper opinion pieces.

Content analysis

The Idle No More movement involves activists from First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples; however, only 18.2% (36) of the articles in the sample (n=198) made any reference to Métis people and only 13.6% (27) made reference the Inuit. This pattern of representation reflects that Baumann's grammar of segmentation, with a lack of attention to the distinct identities of Aboriginal protesters. A clearly identifiable trend was that 67.7% (134) of the articles in the sample characterised the living conditions of Aboriginal peoples as generally negative[6] (including if the author referred only to First Nations reserves to characterise living conditions without reference to Métis or Inuit peoples, as was often this case). The context of this negative characterisation is vital. This analysis found that only 31.3% (62) of the articles in the population made any suggestion that past abuses by Euro-Canadians influenced the socio-economic situation of Aboriginal peoples today and that only 10.1% (20) made any reference to the residential school system, the abuses of which the current Prime Minister acknowledged and apologised for in 2008. In contrast, 26.3% (52) articles suggested that First Nations reserves nationwide require governance reforms (e.g., that they currently lack accountability and transparency), speaking to what Maslin (2002: 47) observed as the 'stereotype of corruption of Aboriginal Peoples' in her study of newspaper coverage in the province of Saskatchewan. A crosstab analysis (Chi-square=12.821, p < 0.001) showed that of the 52 articles that suggested that First Nations governance needs reform, only 6 suggested that past abuses by Euro-Canadians influenced the socio-economic situation of Aboriginal peoples today (see Table 2). This finding supports the claim that the charges of corruption among First Nations leadership are part of an ideological use of the grammar of orientalisation.

Table 2. Representation of First Nations governance and Euro-Canadian abuses.

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[6] It should be noted that 31.8% (63) made no reference to living conditions, not that they characterised them as generally positive.

Regarding Anderson and Cronlund's (2011) observation that Canadian newspapers consistently orientalise Aboriginal peoples as violent, content analysis showed that 10.1% (20) of the articles referred to Aboriginal people using the term 'violence', suggesting that the trend is present though not prevalent in the sample.

In attempting to investigate a possible political or economic motive for the patterns of representation, the content analysis also tested mentions of natural resource development on Aboriginal lands. As Idle No More concerns treaty and land rights and there are currently '$600 billion of proposed economic development projects currently planned in or near First Nation territories' (Assembly of First Nations, 2013: para. 2), this is a key concern if the Propaganda Model is correct in arguing that mainstream representation aligns with the interests of a country's economic elite. In light of this economic concern, 19.7% (39) of the articles suggested that natural resource exploitation is needed to end Aboriginal poverty in Canada. This is a contentious issue given the historic dispossession of Aboriginal peoples from their lands in Canada, and democratic consultation about the use of land so that Aboriginal peoples' wishes are respected should be a priority.

Regarding consultation, 60.6% (120) of the articles did suggest that Canada's federal government should engage in at least some form of consultation with Aboriginal peoples about issues that relate to them. As the Idle No More protests elicited a strong response from mainstream media who discussed this need for consultation, this could be seen as one area of openness in the mainstream media as part of a media opportunity structure. However, taken as a whole, the findings indicate that an identifiable discourse of othering is taking place, attempting to normalise and legitimate the domination of Aboriginal peoples in Canada and working to position protesters' political interests as illegitimate. The following section will take an in-depth look at some of the discursive strategies within certain extracts of the sample.

Critical discourse analysis

Nine extracts that adhere to the patterns of representation identified in the content analysis and that feature aspects othering were selected for CDA. The first extract examined is from the *Toronto Sun*, owned by Quebecor/Sun Media. The ideological perspective of this paper is suggested in the content analysis findings that 0% of the 28 *Toronto Sun* articles in the sample suggested that past abuses by Euro-Canadians influenced Aboriginal peoples' socio-economic situation today, only 14.3% (4) suggested that the federal government of Canada should consult Aboriginal peoples about issues that relate to them, and 53.6% (15) suggested First Nation reserves require self-governance reforms (e.g., that chiefs lack accountability or transparency). The following excerpt discusses a housing crisis on the Attawapiskat First Nation, appearing in an article below an image of an Idle No More protest:

Extract 1

> While Canadians shake their heads over how $90 million in government funding to Attawapiskat over the last five years still has children living in frigid tents as winter grips the Far North, a true look at the money trail makes it all too clear where the money is lost. In 2010, for example, some $34 million was pumped into the squalid Cree community of Attawapiskat, but not much went to improve the lives of the reserve's children through housing assistance to their parents. Instead, $11.2 million — 32% of the reserve's total grants, and 36% of its entire expenses — went to the salaries and benefits of band leaders, all while their peoples' children were left in frozen Third World squalor. Check the books. And start the conversation about more effective ways to spend those millions of taxpayer dollars. Perhaps it's time pack up [sic] both Attawapiskat and Kashechewan, and raze both

communities on the way out. And welcome them with open arms to the First World. (Editorial, *Toronto Sun,* December 25, 2012)

At the textual level, the editors position Canadians as part of the 'First World' in relation to the 'squalid Cree community' they position as living in 'Third World squalor'. At the discursive level, this positioning of 'us' and 'them' uses the Cold War terminology of First/Second/Third World in which Western nations aligned with the United States were members of the 'First World'. While Canada is a 'First World' country, the editors suggest that the Cree communities of Attawapiskat and Kashechewan have the living conditions of a Third World country. Stam and Spence (1983: 4) write that the term 'Third World' is often used to refer to 'the colonised, neo-colonised or de-colonised nations of the world whose economic and political structures have been shaped and deformed within the colonial process'. This characterisation can be seen as drawing on the discourse of people in 'Third World' countries being represented in Western media as agency-less and poverty-stricken, with 'traditional' practices being the cause of this poverty (Escobar, 2011: 14) rather than inegalitarian power relations. 'Canadians' are portrayed favourably as sympathetic through metaphors of physical action such as 'shaking their heads' in response to child poverty and welcoming those living in poverty with 'open arms' into their society.

As Fairclough (2001: 100) writes, 'different metaphors have different ideological attachments'—the metaphorical representation of sympathetic Canadians with 'open arms' jars with what may be read as an aggressively militaristic metaphor to 'raze both communities', the violence of which speaks to Fanon's observation of the colonialist mindset seeking to destroy the native other's social forms. Taken together, the metaphors portray the destruction of the Cree communities, but done through the good will of sympathetic Canadians who wish to end Aboriginal poverty through assimilation. Poverty is blamed on band leaders, who have brought about 'squalor' by using federal funds for their salaries and benefits. At the societal level, the metaphors of destroying communities while welcoming 'squalid' Aboriginals to the First World can be read as a legitimation and naturalisation of assimilation practices and policies, despite evidence of the destructiveness of such policies.

While the above is an example of extreme rhetoric, similar trends that textually position Aboriginal peoples as other can be observed in both of Canada's nationally distributed newspapers.

Extract 2

> If the Indian people had to rely only on the chiefs they would be in trouble. Fortunately they can also rely upon a deep well of sympathy and concern among Canadians generally, which could be the key to eventual progress. (*Globe & Mail*, January 13, 2013)

Extract 3

> The roots of aboriginal plight are not lack of goodwill on the part of Canadians, or even of political will on the part of the federal government. That plight is the legacy of failed policies past, and of resistance from native leaders to changes in accountability, transparency, education and property rights that would inevitably undermine their own power.
> (*National Post,* January 4, 2013)

As with the extract from the *Toronto Sun*, these extracts represent Canadians as sympathetic towards socio-economic problems in Aboriginal communities, a favourable portrayal of the dominant group in what might be seen as what Baumann describes as 'selfing'. In these excerpts, 'newsreaders [are] embraced in a consensual ("us") relationship, by taking a particular stance in relation to the persons ("them") and topics referred to' (Fowler, 1991: 221).

Extract 2 uses the pejorative 'Indian', who are the objects of 'sympathy and concern' for 'Canadians generally'. The author uses the singular 'the Indian people', demonstrating a lack of understanding of First Nations as distinct nations and omitting mention of Métis or Inuit. As one of the 68.7% (136) of articles in the sample that made no suggestion of abuses by Euro-Canadians influencing the socio-economic condition of Aboriginal people in Canada, Extract 2 instead faults 'the chiefs' who are deemed incapable of leading their people to 'progress', drawing on the orientalising discourse of Aboriginal corruption.

In Extract 3, the author makes use of euphemism—which Fairclough (2001: 97-98) defines as 'a word which is substituted for a more conventional or familiar one as a way of avoiding negative values'—in referring generally to 'the legacy of failed policies past' rather than specific abuses such as the residential school system or the Sixties Scoop. In Extract 3, 'Canadians' and the current government are distanced (lacking neither 'goodwill' nor 'political will') from these 'failed policies' that are relegated to history as 'policies past'. After making this 'apparent concession' (van Dijk, *et al.*, 1997: 170) through the euphemism of 'failed policies past', this author also draws on the orientalising discourse of Aboriginal corruption, elaborating on the faults of Aboriginal leadership who resist changes that would address their 'plight' because the changes would 'undermine their power', with no mention of the way in which non-Aboriginal Canadian politicians may exercise power. On the societal level, the ideological effect of these discursive strategies is to normalise the idea that

Canadians and Canadian government leaders do not have culpability for the socio-economic situation of Aboriginal peoples, whose origin lies primarily in the alleged defects of Aboriginal leadership.

Extract 4

> Canadians hold a deep sympathy for natives subjected to historic abuses, but they are likely unwilling to be held to ransom by the most radical elements of that community.
> (*National Post*, January 16)

This extract continues the pattern of positioning the majority Euro-Canadians as sympathetic towards Aboriginal people, but demonstrates another pattern: the portrayal of Aboriginal protesters as radicals. Making the apparent concession that Canadians are sympathetic for members of 'that community' (conflating First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples as a single community, reflecting the segmentary grammar of othering) because of abuses that are relegated to history as above, the author then uses the metaphor of these same sympathetic Canadians as being 'held to ransom' by protest actions such as blockades of highways and rail lines. 'Deep sympathy' does not imply the need to change, and 'being held to ransom' provides a rationale for not changing.

The characterisation of such protest actions as 'radical' aligns with the discourse that Wetherell and Potter (1992: 151) observe to characterise protests by the minority indigenous Māori in New Zealand, where othering is used to 'discredit groups described as "activists", "stirrers", "protestors", "militants" and "hard-liners" ' through a discourse to 'denigrate their influence' and 'argue for the desirability of the status quo'. Wetherell and Potter call this type of discursive strategy an 'ideological trick' in which members of a majority group 'become inactive but legitimate, their power invisible but normative, while Māori groups become active and visibly energetic but, simultaneously, deviant' (1992: 152). Thus by characterising the goals of the Idle No More movement as deviant behaviour (the rest of the community being 'held ransom') by radicals, the protesters' goals are invalidated, the protests positioned as illegitimate, and majority Canadians' lack of action to change the status quo is implied to be reasonable despite their 'deep sympathy'.

Scare-quoting colonialism.

In the following excerpt, the strategy of positioning Aboriginal activists as radicals is used in combination with another strategy, placing the word 'colonialism' in scare-quotes, which may be seen as an attempt at what van Dijk (2003: 362) calls 'rhetorical mitigation and euphemization of [a white society's] crimes (colonialism, slavery)'. This strategy is notable given the content analysis finding that 68.7% (136) of articles did not suggest that Euro-Canadian abuses influenced the socio-economic situation of Aboriginals today.

Extract 5

> Going all radical, hitting the racial/racist buttons and constant invocations of empty pseudo-academic framings of "colonialist, settler, imperialist" mentalities do nothing but burn time, waste energy and alienate a large section of the public. (*National Post*, January 12)

Fairclough (2001: 74) writes that scare-quoting is often used to 'make it clear that [these expressions] belong to someone else: the writer's and "assumed readers'" political opponents'. Here, the term 'pseudo-academic' is used to de-legitimise the knowledge on which counter-discourses are based. The accusation that colonial mentalities persist in Canadian society is deemed to be 'radical' and such arguments 'waste energy', reflecting Wetherell and Potter's (1992: 159) description of Māori being positioned as active and radical in comparison to the 'inactive but legitimate' majority group which, in this excerpt, is the 'large section of the public' who are alienated by such arguments. The mitigation of colonialism through scare-quoting is also evident in the following two op-eds:

Extract 6

> If First Nations people want to break the bonds of oppression, either from a "colonial" white society and government or even from their band leaders, isn't a well-paying job the means to achieve that independence? (*StarPhoenix*, January 12)

Extract 7

> Treaty negotiations across the country are stalled. On-reserve poverty reigns in spite of immense public expenditures. Cries of "genocide" and "colonialism" rive the air. And to top it all, a federal judge has issued a ruling effectively doubling the number of legally recognized Indians in Canada ... The judge's creation of about 600,000 new Indians will, of course, be appealed for years. In the end, even if jurisdiction is confirmed, it need not be exercised. After all, thanks to not being Indians, Métis have done much better.
> (*Globe & Mail*, January 13)

In these extracts, the use of scare-quoting 'dissociates the writer' (Fairclough, 2001: 74) from the idea that colonial power relations persist. In Extract 6, following the dismissal of

colonialism's influence through scare-quotes, the author then semantically reverses blame to 'First Nations people' by focusing on unemployment in First Nations communities. White society is placed in a list of possible oppressors that uses parataxis to suggest that 'band leaders' might be seen as a source of oppression as much as white society. In Extract 7, the author mentions "immense public expenditure" in a sentence before scare-quoting the word 'colonialism' to suggest the invalidity of the claim that colonial influence persists. Having dismissed accusations of colonialism, this author also semantically reverses blame; using 'Indian' in its legal sense, the author then makes the suggestion 'being Indians' is the cause of socio-economic problems. Ideologically, scare-quoting the word 'colonialism' is used to legitimate and naturalise the domination of Euro-Canadians over Aboriginal peoples, who are blamed for the socio-economic situation that is denied having been influenced through abuses by Euro-Canadians.

Reflecting the content analysis finding that 10.1% of the articles in the sample referred to Aboriginal peoples using the term 'violence', two extracts final will be examined.

Extract 8

On too many First Nations, sexual abuse, profound dysfunction and physical violence are the stuff of daily life ... It is tempting to see the action [Chief Theresa Spence's hunger strike for a meeting with the Prime Minister and Governor General] as one of intimidation, if not terrorism: She is, after all, holding the state hostage to vaguely articulated demands. (*National Post*, December 27, 2013)

Extract 9

The militant tendency within the native movement is vowing a day of action Wednesday that could block roads, bridges and rail lines in Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and elsewhere. There are other protests planned for Jan. 28, when Parliament resumes ... The wild card are anarchy. If the chiefs opposing Mr. Atleo and the Idle No More activists escalate their demonstrations to the point where there is risk of violence or serious economic disruption, then the federal government will have to be firm in enforcing the rule of law. But that is exactly the moment at which events can spiral out of control: Oka; the Dudley George shooting. Then no one can predict what will happen. (*Globe & Mail*, January 14, 2013)

In Extract 8, the author's representations of First Nations communities as prone to abuse, dysfunction, and violence as the 'stuff of daily life' can be read as an orientalist essentialisation, particularly when seen in the context of the subsequent claim that Chief Spence's hunger strike may constitute 'terrorism'. Drawing on the discourse of terrorism and the 'War on Terror' undertaken by the United States, this author uses an ideological

metaphor in representing 'the state' as 'held hostage' by the First Nation chief, similar to the Extract 4's 'held ransom' — a rhetorical turn to characterise protest as deviance. This accusation of terrorism takes part in what Appadurai (2005: 13) calls 'the rapid-fire spread in the discourse of terrorism as a name for any variety of anti-state activity'. If we use Appadurai's alternative definition of terrorism as 'violent action against public spaces and civilian populations in the name of antistate politics', the hunger strike clearly does not constitute an act of terrorism.

However, as this author essentialises First Nations communities as violent, the accusation of terrorism serves to suggest that the Canadian state in generally is under threat from inherently violent First Nations peoples. In Extract 9, we see the use of 'violence' as a potential risk of the protest movement; despite the Idle No More protests being consistently non-violent, the author justifies this accusation of risk with instances of violence in past Aboriginal protests and with his warning of the 'militant tendency' within current protests, which is then justified by references to violent protests at Oka (where a police officer was killed), and refers by name to Dudley George, the unarmed protester shot dead by police during the 1995 Ipperwash Crisis. In this context, the author's phrase 'firm in enforcing the rule of law' includes the possibility of police being within their rights to shoot a protester. However, he does not refer explicitly to the 'risk of violence' by police officers, and the need for the federal government to be 'firm in enforcing the rule of law' is positioned as a likely outcome, placing dissenting chiefs and 'Idle No More activists' at fault for potential violence.

In this way, the author positions the protesters as active and deviant—particularly the 'militant tendency'—against an inactive but legitimate dominant group, despite suggesting the possibility of police officers using deadly force if ordered to act by the federal government. This rhetorical approach positions the author as sympathetic, suggesting that the protests should be dispersed for the protesters own good, reflecting the characterisations seen earlier of positioning Canadians generally as sympathetic, though with a paternalistic attitude that infantilises protesters (as does the phrase 'will have to be firm'). This strategy legitimises the status quo by arguing for the suppression of a non-violent protest movement, which is illegitimate because of its reckless potential for violence and the 'militant tendency' within it.

Discussion

The findings of the content analysis and CDA indicate that there is an identifiable discourse of othering in representations of the Idle No More movement in Canadian mainstream newspapers taking place to a significant extent. While there is an acknowledgement that socio-economic conditions are worse for many Aboriginal people compared to others in Canada, the cause of this inequality is often not being linked to political marginalisation or systematic attempts to dispossess and assimilate Aboriginal peoples over the course of Canada's history from colonial settlement onwards. While 68.7% (136) of the articles in the sample are silent on the issue of past abuses of Aboriginal people by the Euro-Canadian majority, there is an identifiable discourse in which the cause of inequality is placed on Aboriginal groups' leadership or as some inherent quality in Aboriginal people such as violence. CDA analysis of certain texts identifies that Canadian newspaper opinion pieces contain the ideological tendencies that led Anderson and Cronlund to term Canadian newspapers a 'colonial genre', representing a positive Canadian 'self' and mitigating the crimes of the dominant society while semantically reversing the blame of inequality onto Aboriginal people.

However, this is not to say that a discourse of othering is the only discourse present in mainstream Canadian newspapers. While the sample used in this study is not comprehensive, the Idle No More movement's success in garnering mainstream media attention can be broadly inferred from sampling methods finding 23 opinion pieces in December and 175 pieces in January in the 12 newspapers sampled (as explained above, this number counts syndicated articles only once). There were many articles that presented counter-discourses that deviated from the ideological culturally and politically conservative discourse of othering that, for instance, explained the background of treaty agreements, provided the historical context of colonialism and residential schools, or that called for the political interests being put forward by Aboriginal activists to be acted upon by the federal government—as noted, 60.6% (120) of the sample articles did advocate at least some form of consultation of Aboriginal groups by the federal government. There is thus also evidence that activist agency is encouraging mainstream representations through protest and taking advantage of a media opportunity structure to provide counter-discourses.

CONCLUSION

In an op-ed in the *Calgary Herald* from July 2013 titled 'Don't blame "colonialism" for aboriginal tragedies', the author writes:

> To First Nations communities: I may be 'white', but I know what we did in the Sixties Scoop. We loved your kids. Parenting is a primal instinct for most cultures; doing it badly is not the fault of colonialism or social workers. It's time to take some responsibility. (Klassen, 2013: para. 10)

This excerpt justifying the apprehension of Aboriginal children in the Sixties Scoop is characteristic of a number of the patterns identified above: the use of scare-quotes in the title to mitigate colonialism, the essentialising of First Nations people as lacking some 'primal instinct', the reversal of blame, and the ideological naturalisation of Euro-Canadian dominance, as well as the scare-quoting of the word *white* despite positioning the pronoun 'we' in opposition to 'First Nations communities'. Responding to this article and mainstream media reaction to Idle No More, Métis blogger Chelsea Vowel (2013: para. 16) writes that people in Canada need to be exposed to counter-narratives and to reject the 'lies, half-truths and fantasies intended to create a cohesive national identity'. Speaking to a similar point in her book *When The Other is Me,* LaRocque (2010: 11) writes that 'mainstream Canadians will not comprehend our decolonising discourse unless they can identify the colonial ground from and against which we talk back'. Vital to this is the acknowledgement of the documented abuses of Aboriginal peoples by Euro-Canadians over the course of Canada's history, which this study shows is often being silenced or rhetorically mitigated in Canadian mainstream newspapers.

This study's methodology cannot provide insight into how the discourse of othering in mainstream newspapers is being interpreted and understood by audiences; future research is needed to investigate how audiences are reacting to, accepting, or resisting the representations of Aboriginal people as other by Canadian media. Interviews with the journalists involved in producing these representations could also provide insight into the factors influencing representation to further test the robustness of Chomsky and Herman's theoretical Propaganda Model in the Canadian media landscape. Social media may also be presenting new opportunities for agency, the creation of counter-discourses, and resistant representations. For example, in January 2013 the hashtag #Ottawapiskat was used to satirise and subvert the othering discourse by talking about the Canadian federal government in Ottawa in the language being used to represent Attawapiskat Chief Spence and other Aboriginal leaders (e.g., '#Ottawapiskat Hub of Canadian corruption and financial

incompetence' (@SettlerColonial, 2013)). Counter-discourses to what Anderson and Cronlund (2011: 3) call 'the colonial imaginary' that they argue 'has thrived, even dominated, and continues to do so in mainstream English-language newspapers' can and are resisting Canadian society being constituted in ways that align with a discourse of othering where Euro-Canadian domination of Aboriginal peoples is naturalised and legitimised. But if discourses are constitutive of societies, a crucial part of addressing socio-economic inequalities in Canada will be addressing the discourse in mainstream Canadian newspapers that represents Aboriginal peoples as the other, which will continue to reinforce political marginalisation and harmful power structures that have shaped that socio-economic inequality. And while political organisations such as the AFN, the Métis National Council, and the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami play a critical role in representing Aboriginal peoples' political interests in Canada, protests like those by Idle No More activists remain an important way to challenge the unequal power structures represented and perpetuated by a discourse of othering.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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APPENDIX 1: CONTENT ANALYSIS CODING FRAMEWORK

V1 IDNO
Unique identification number allocated to each article

V2 CODER
Person who content-coded the article
01 Christian Ledwell
02 Intercoder

V3 ARTDATE (dd/mm/yy)
Date of article

V4 PAPER
English language daily newspaper in which the article appeared
01 National Post
02 The Globe & Mail
03 Star Phoenix (Saskatoon)
04 Montreal Gazette
05 Vancouver Sun
06 Toronto Sun
07 Toronto Star
08 Calgary Herald
09 Winnipeg Free Press
10 Ottawa Citizen
11 Edmonton Journal
12 Chronicle Herald (Halifax)

V5 DAILYCIRC
Average daily circulation in 2012 according to Newspapers Canada.

V6 ARTTITLE
Title of the article

V7 ARTSIZE
Size of article (number of words)

V8 AUTHNAME
Author's name

V9 LIVING
How does the article characterise living conditions of Aboriginal peoples (First Nations, Métis and/or Inuit) in Canada in general? (Note: this variable should be coded even if the article discusses First Nations only, without reference to Métis or Inuit).
01 Living conditions characterised as negative
02 Living conditions characterised as positive
03 Makes no reference to living conditions
04 Makes reference to living conditions, but can't determine whether it is positive or negative

V10 RESOURCE
Does the article suggest natural resource exploitation is needed to end Aboriginal poverty in Canada?
01 Yes
02 No
03 Can't determine (please only use this option if there is confusion over the author's meaning. If no reference is made to resource development, please select '02 No')

V11 ENCOMPASS
Does the article offer any examples of reserves that have embraced natural resource exploitation have improved their living conditions?
01 Yes
02 No
03 Can't determine (please only use this option if there is confusion over the author's meaning. If no reference is made to violence, please select '02 No')

V12 VIOLENCE
Does the article refer to Aboriginal people committing "violence"? (Note: this should be coded as 'No' when calling protests non-violent or discussing violence against Indigenous women)
01 Yes
02 No
03 Can't determine (please only use this option if there is confusion over the author's meaning. If no reference is made to violence, please select '02 No')

V13 SLFGOV
Does the article argue that First Nation reserves (multiple, not solely Attawapiskat) require self-governance reforms (e.g., more transparency and accountability by leaders on reserves)?
01 Yes
02 No
03 Can't determine (please only use this option if there is confusion over the author's meaning. If no reference is made to self-governance on reserves, please select '02 No')

V14 COLONIAL
Does the article suggest that past abuses by Euro-Canadians influenced Aboriginal peoples' socio-economic situation today?
01 Yes
02 No
03 Can't determine (please only use this option if there is confusion over the author's meaning. If no reference is made to colonialism, please select '02 No')

V15 RESIDENTIAL
Does the article make any reference to the residential school system?
01 Yes
02 No
03 Can't determine

16 FEDGOV
Does the article suggest that the federal government should consult Aboriginal peoples about issues that relate to them?
01 Yes
02 No
03 Can't determine (please only use this option if there is confusion over the author's meaning. If no reference is made to federal government, please select '02 No')

V17 MÉTIS
Does the article make any reference to Métis people?
01 Yes
02 No
03 Can't determine (please only use this option if there is confusion over the author's meaning. If no reference is made to Métis, please select '02 No')

V18 INUIT
Does the article make any reference to the Inuit? (Also include reference to 'Inuk', singular but 'Innu' are a First Nations group).
01 Yes
02 No
03 Can't determine (please only use this option if there is confusion over the author's meaning. If no reference is made to Inuit, please select '02 No')

APPENDIX 2. CDA CODING FRAMEWORK.

Extract	Textual level	Interaction with discourse	Social theme
While Canadians shake their heads over how $90 million in government funding to Attawapiskat over the last five years still has children living in frigid tents as winter grips the Far North, a true look at the money trail makes it all too clear where the money is lost. In 2010, for example, some $34 million was pumped into the squalid Cree community of Attawapiskat, but not much went to improve the lives of the reserve's children through housing assistance to their parents. Instead, $11.2 million — 32% of the reserve's total grants, and 36% of its entire expenses -- went to the salaries and benefits of band leaders, all while their peoples' children were left in frozen Third World squalor. Check the books. And start the conversation about more effective ways to spend those millions of taxpayer dollars. Perhaps it's time pack up [sic] both Attawapiskat and Kashechewan, and raze both communities on the way out. And welcome them with open arms to the First World. (*Toronto Sun,* December 25, 2012)	Sympathetic Canadians / "squalid Cree community"	First World / Third World discourse	Assimilation
If the Indian people had to rely only on the chiefs they would be in trouble. Fortunately they can also rely upon a deep well of sympathy and concern among Canadians generally, which could be the key to eventual progress. (*Globe & Mail,* January 13, 2012)	"Canadians generally" / "Indian people"	Orientalist: Aboriginal corruption	Aboriginal leadership to blame for socio-economic problems
The roots of aboriginal plight are not lack of goodwill on the part of Canadians, or even of political will on the part of the federal government. That plight is the legacy of failed policies past, and of resistance from native leaders to changes in accountability, transparency, education and property rights that would inevitably undermine their own power. (*National Post,* January 4)	Goodwilled Canadians / native leaders resistant to change	Orientalist: Aboriginal corruption	Aboriginal leadership to blame for socio-economic problems
Canadians hold a deep sympathy for natives subjected to historic abuses, but they are likely unwilling to be held to ransom by the most radical elements of that community. (*National Post*, January 16)	Sympathetic Canadians / "radical elements" of the 'native' community	Radicalism and deviance	Protest's illegitimacy
Extract	**Textual level**	**Interaction with discourse**	**Social theme**

If First Nations people want to break the bonds of oppression, either from a "colonial" white society and government or even from their band leaders, isn't a well-paying job the means to achieve that independence? (*StarPhoenix*, January 12)	White society / First Nations people (singular)	Unemployment	Mitigating colonialism
Treaty negotiations across the country are stalled. On-reserve poverty reigns in spite of immense public expenditures. Cries of "genocide" and "colonialism" rive the air. And to top it all, a federal judge has issued a ruling effectively doubling the number of legally recognized Indians in Canada … The judge's creation of about 600,000 new Indians will, of course, be appealed for years. In the end, even if jurisdiction is confirmed, it need not be exercised. After all, thanks to not being Indians, Métis have done much better. (*Globe & Mail*, January 13)	Indians	Orientalist: Aboriginal corruption	Mitigating colonialism
On too many First Nations, sexual abuse, profound dysfunction and physical violence are the stuff of daily life … It is tempting to see the action [Chief Theresa Spence's hunger strike for a meeting with the Prime Minister and Governor General] as one of intimidation, if not terrorism: She is, after all, holding the state hostage to vaguely articulated demands. (*National Post*, December 27, 2013)	State / physically violent First Nations	Terrorism / violence	Protest's illegitimacy
The militant tendency within the native movement is vowing a day of action Wednesday that could block roads, bridges and rail lines in Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and elsewhere. There are other protests planned for Jan. 28, when Parliament resumes … The wild card is anarchy. If the chiefs opposing Mr. Atleo and the Idle No More activists escalate their demonstrations to the point where there is risk of violence or serious economic disruption, then the federal government will have to be firm in enforcing the rule of law. But that is exactly the moment at which events can spiral out of control: Oka; the Dudley George shooting. Then no one can predict what will happen. (*Globe & Mail*, January 14, 2013)	Federal government / "militant tendency within the native movement"	Violence	Protest's illegitimacy

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