

Examining the Media's Portrayal of Idle No More:
A Critical Discourse Analysis

by

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Table of Contents

Abstract	ii
Acknowledgments	iii
A Note from the Researcher	1
I. Introduction	2
Overview of the Problem	2
Purpose of the Study	8
Research Questions	9
Role of the Researcher	10
Significance of the Study	11
II. Literature Review	12
Mainstream Media and Aboriginal Stereotypes	12
Social Movements and the Media	15
Critical Discourse Analysis	19
Summary	21
III. Methodology	22
Research Design & Data Analysis	22
Critical Discourse Analysis	22
Interviews	24
Limitations	26
IV. Findings and Discussion	27
Media Coverage	27
Timeline	29
CDA and Interview Themes	32
V. Conclusion and Recommendation for Future Research	45

List of Abbreviations Used

CDA: Critical Discourse Analysis

G&M: The Globe and Mail

INM: Idle No More

NP: National Post

RCAP: Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples

List of Figures

Figure 1: Distribution of news articles and sources over time period of study

Figure 2: CDA themes and media headlines

Abstract

In November 2012, the Idle No More movement began as a series of teach-ins and protests in Saskatchewan, which drew attention to the continued settler-colonial relationship between the government of Canada and Indigenous peoples, as well as changes to environmental regulation. The movement gained momentum and quickly became nationally recognized. This study explores the mainstream media's portrayal of the Idle No More movement over a one-year timeline, using qualitative methods including a critical discourse analysis of media content and semi-structured interviews with journalists. The critical discourse analysis phase of this study revealed themes and patterns of coverage of the movement, while the interviews with journalists provided valuable insight into the context of the coverage. The themes of the coverage were determined to be Chief Theresa Spence's hunger strike, protests, internal politics and the relationship between the Canadian government and Aboriginal people. The findings suggest that coverage of Idle No More perpetuated colonial and stereotypical understandings of Aboriginal people as the nature of the media, such as the appeal to emotion and inability to contextualize the issues, restricts challenges to colonial thought.

Key words: Aboriginal, Indigenous, Journalists, Mainstream Media, Sustainability.

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A Note from the Researcher

In writing about issues of colonialism and Aboriginal rights, I wish to first recognize that Dalhousie University, and the city of Halifax, are both located on unceded Mi'kmaq territory. In 1726, a Peace and Friendship Agreement was signed between the British crown and the Mi'kmaq, in order to encourage cooperation between the two groups. This agreement did not sign any land over to the British (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, 2013).

Furthermore, I wish to acknowledge the power and potential political dimensions associated with choice of words. The terms Indian (non-status and status), Aboriginal, Indigenous, Native, Métis and Inuit are all terms that appear often in the media and in everyday conversation (Warry, 2007). However, these terms all have certain political orientations associated with them. For example, the term Indian is often associated with a right-of centre political orientation, although it is also a legal term. The term Aboriginal is associated with the Canadian political system and is often considered the most appropriate as it has formal status in the 1982 Constitution Act (Warry, 2007). The term Indigenous is widely used and associated with the Indigenous rights movement. The terms Aboriginal and Indigenous are often used as synonyms (Warry, 2007). For the purposes of this study, both the terms Indigenous and Aboriginal will be used.

Please note that this paper contains a very simplified and therefore incomplete summary of the complex relationship between Indigenous peoples and the Canadian state. However, I feel that for the purposes of this study, it provides enough background information for readers to begin to understand the nature of this relationship, as it exists today.

I. Introduction

Overview of the Problem

Canada's Colonial History. Prior to first contact by Europeans in the 1500s, Indigenous peoples and Europeans lived on separate continents and developed their own cultures, languages, traditions and complex systems of governments (RCAP, 1996). Following contact, Aboriginal and European cultures coexisted equally. Early settlers, whalers, and traders relied on Indigenous knowledge of the environment for their subsistence and livelihood and sometimes for their very survival (Warry, 2007). The relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples was marked by the exchange of goods, barter and trade deals, intermarriage and military and trade alliances. According to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP, 1996), during this time “For the most part, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people saw each other as separate, distinct and independent. Each was in charge of its own affairs. Each could negotiate its own military alliances, its own trade agreements, its own best deals with the others” (8).

This relationship of co-operation between Indigenous and European peoples was formalized through the treaty making process, as well as the *Royal Proclamation of 1763*. This complex legal document was issued in the name of the King, and its central messages were that Aboriginal people were not to be “molested or disturbed” on their lands. Further, transactions involving Aboriginal land were to be negotiated properly between the Crown and “assemblies of Indians”. This document maintained that Aboriginal lands were to be acquired by fair dealing, through treaty or purchase by the Crown (RCAP, 1996). The treaties were a way of recognizing independence between peoples, as well as sovereignty and a mark of mutual respect. However, the treaties did not capture the heart of the talks, and Indigenous peoples were angered to later discover that what had been discussed was not accurately recorded (RCAP, 1996).

In the 1800s, the relationship between these two peoples, founded on equality, began to transform towards one of European domination over Indigenous peoples. Various factors can be attributed to this change in the relationship including a population shift in favour of settlers, an economic shift away from the fur trade and an ideology

claiming European superiority over all other peoples of the earth (RCAP, 1996). This last factor caused colonists to consider it their duty to convert Aboriginal peoples to European and Christian ways. Assimilation became the goal, in order to “civilize” through the adoption of European customs (Warry, 2007). Assimilation took the form of relocation to reserves, compulsory education, economic adjustment programs, social and political control by federal agents, and more (Warry, 2007; RCAP, 1996). These policies and programs were consolidated into the Indian Act, 1876. Warry (2007) notes, “this doctrine become the foundation for the Indian Act and other policies that were designed-through ignorance or ill intention-to attack Aboriginal institutions and to undermine their cultural values and identity” (53). This piece of legislation continues to this day to govern the Canadian state’s relationship to Aboriginal peoples.

The goal of assimilation was enacted through practices of colonialism. Colonialism is one society seeking to conquer another and then rule over it (Woroniak and Camfield, 2013). Further, colonialism is the disconnection of Indigenous people from their land, history, identity and rights so that others can benefit (Woroniak and Camfield, 2013). The main goal of settler colonialism is not to take advantage of the labour of Indigenous peoples; rather, it is to displace Indigenous people from their lands, and to allow the settlers to establish themselves (Woroniak and Camfield, 2013). The relationship between Indigenous peoples and the Canadian state is now marked by the long history of oppressive settler-colonial policies. Indeed, the Canadian colonial capitalist state would not exist as it does today without access to Indigenous peoples’ lands.

On April 17, 1982, Queen Elizabeth II signed into law Canada’s “new” constitution, including the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. This document included sections 25.1 and 35.1, which argue that Aboriginal peoples have all the rights of other Canadians plus additional rights deriving from treaties and their historical status as First Peoples who inhabited the country prior to European arrival (Warry, 2007). Section 25.1 guarantees that other Canadian rights and freedoms “shall not be construed as to abrogate or derogate” from any Aboriginal, treaty, or other rights or freedoms that pertain to Aboriginal peoples, including any rights or freedoms that now exist or may be so

acquired (Constitution Act, 1982). Section 35 “recognizes and affirms the existing Aboriginal and Treaty rights of Aboriginal Peoples” (Constitution Act, 1982).

Although the special status of Aboriginal peoples is now entrenched in the Constitution, assimilationist thinking and policies continue to be dominant within government practices and mainstream society. Vast inequalities between Aboriginal peoples living standards and those of non-Aboriginal people continue today. According to John Borrows,

Aboriginal peoples’ lives are dramatically shorter than other Canadians and marked by more suffering as measured by considerably higher rates of poverty, injury and incarceration, and significantly lower levels of education, income and health. This did not occur in an instant; we have long passed the ‘tipping point’ in the relationship between Aboriginal peoples and others. We are in crisis mode, and there is no politically-driven prospect of salvaging the relationship; it is already broken and lies in ruins all around us (As quoted by James Tully, 2014)

The history of the relationship between Indigenous peoples and non-Indigenous people in Canada has been marked by “multiple forms of intergenerational social and ecological suffering; understanding and misunderstanding; working together and domination and subordination; through negotiations, blockages, conflicts, court cases, failed consultations and so on” (Tully, 2014). As a result, Indigenous peoples have often “forcefully articulated their rights and responsibilities in national and international arenas” in order to resist oppression (Doyle-Bedwell and Cohen, 2001, 169).

Idle No More. The recent Idle No More movement drew attention to the impacts of Canada's settler colonial history and continued assimilationist practices on Indigenous peoples. The Idle No More movement began through the initiative of four Indigenous and non-Indigenous women in the Province of Saskatchewan less than two years ago (Inman et al., 2013). Nina Wilson, Sylvia McAdam, Jessica Gordon and Sheelah McLean began holding teach-ins and rallies across the province in order to transfer as much information as possible in a short amount of time (Inman et al., 2013). These rallies and teach-ins were intended to inform ordinary citizens about an upcoming federal omnibus budget bill, known as Bill C-45, and the legislative changes it would bring. Bill C-45, and an earlier bill, Bill C-38, contained numerous amendments, which threatened to impact established and potential Aboriginal rights and environmental protections across Canada (Wotherspoon and Hansen, 2013). Many Canadian Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people were surprised by these proposed legislative changes. Aboriginal Canadians were surprised and angered at these changes, as they were not consulted in advance of the legislation's introduction (Inman et al., 2013). The many objections of Aboriginal peoples to both Bills C-38 and C-45 have a sound basis in Canadian constitutional law, as the Government of Canada is required to consult with Aboriginal peoples for the changes made in these bills (Inman et al., 2013).

Bill C-38 was an omnibus budget bill of over 400 pages that made significant changes to over 70 pieces of legislation, and fundamentally altered the environmental regulatory regime in Canada (Assembly of First Nations, 2012). Major changes were made to the Fisheries Act, the National Energy Board Act and the Species at Risk Act. As well, the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act (CEAA) was repealed and a new Act introduced in its place, the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 2012, which 'streamlined' the federal environmental assessment process (Assembly of First Nations, 2012). In particular, the changes that were made to CEAA violate the government's duty to consult with First Nations (Ecojustice, 2012).

Bill C-45 was the second omnibus budget bill that introduced far-reaching changes to environmental legislation, including the repeal of the Navigable Waters Protection Act, which was replaced with the Navigation Protection Act. In the updated legislation, the number of protected water bodies has been greatly reduced covering only

97 lakes and 62 rivers, excluding 99.7 percent of Canada's lakes and 99.9 percent of Canada's rivers from federal oversight and regulation (Ecojustice, 2012). Bill C-45 also made changes to the Indian Act, and gave more power to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, thus making the process of reserve land leasing and land transfer much easier, in favour of the federal government (Ecojustice, 2012). These changes make it much easier for large-scale industrial projects to go ahead near or on reserve lands.

The Idle No More movement gained momentum as Bill C-45 moved through the House of Commons and is now seen to have "rejuvenated Indigenous peoples all across Canada" (Woons, 2013). The movement gained momentum through the use of social media techniques such as Facebook and Twitter, similarly to the Occupy Wall Street and Arab Spring movements (Castells, 2012). When Bill C-45 was officially passed on December 5th 2012, The Idle No More National Day of Action, on December 10th, saw various protests and activities staged throughout Canada. These protests included a protest on Parliament Hill in Ottawa where the group attempted to walk onto the floor of the House of Commons to demand they be heard (Bird, 2012). Other activities included rallies in Edmonton, Vancouver, Whitehorse, Calgary, Stand Off, Saskatoon, North Battleford, Winnipeg, Thunder Bay, Toronto, and Goose Bay-Happy Valley (Idle No More, 2012).

In 2011, the Attawapiskat First Nation (located in the James Bay coast) was declared in a state of emergency as a result of a housing crisis (CTV News, 2013, November 22). Prime Minister Stephen Harper accused the band of mismanaging finances and on December 11th, 2012, Chief Theresa Spence of the Attawapiskat First Nation called a hunger strike as a separate action to Idle No More. Her main demand to end her hunger strike was for a national meeting to occur between the Governor-General, the Prime Minister and Chiefs across Canada to discuss the Crown's breaches of the treaties and the resulting poor social conditions within First Nations communities (Diabo, 2013). Eventually, Stephen Harper agreed to a meeting with Spence and Minister of Aboriginal Affairs John Duncan, but Spence declined, due to the fact that the Governor General was not included (National Post, 2013). Eventually, Chief Spence ended her hunger strike when representatives of the Assembly of First Nations, and the NDP and Liberal caucuses signed a specific letter of commitments, agreeing to continue

discussions surrounding treaty rights, the Canadian government and Aboriginal peoples (Scofield, 2013). A ceremonial meeting between Chief Spence and the Governor General was also held in January 2013 (Blanchfield & Pedwell, 2013).

The Idle No More movement has presented itself as a peaceful revolution with an aim to pressure government and industry towards greater environmental protections. It also had the aim of drawing attention to Canada's settler colonial history, and the continued impacts upon Aboriginal peoples and their lands.

Sustainability. The field of sustainability is extensive, as it spans many disciplines and involves a range of conflicting interests. Sustainability has often been considered a 'wicked' problem, as it is difficult to formulate, different stakeholders understand and formulate it in different ways, the problem changes over time and it can never be definitively solved (Farley, 2007). The Brundtland Report (1987) articulated sustainable development as that which "meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". The report from which this heavily contested definition is drawn, focuses heavily on environmental issues. The field of sustainability has been criticized for creating a division between 'social' and 'environmental' issues, and for not emphasizing the interrelated nature of our problematic social and economic systems and the pressing 'environmental' issues, which exist today (Tully, 2014). Despite the primary focus on environment within the field of sustainability, it is clear that it must also address questions of social sustainability, as these are integral to how we come to know of, and understand environmental, political and economic challenges.

It is widely acknowledged that we are currently in a time of ecological crisis. The increased pressures on the planet resulting from climate change, pollution and other environmental issues are destroying the conditions that sustain life. These, in turn, are having horrendous social effects such as mass starvation and migration, wars over resources and water, and failed states (Tully, 2014). Idle No More addressed questions of both 'social' and 'environmental' sustainability. The movement called attention to issues between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples as well as the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people (human beings in general) with the living earth

(Tully, 2014). It is also widely acknowledged that the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Canada is currently experiencing a crisis, which is unsustainable.

Many Indigenous peoples in Canada continue to depend on traditional resource-based pursuits for their livelihood (Doyle-Bedwell & Cohen, 2001). Environmental stewardship principles guide and inform relationships with the natural world, and practices of traditional ecological knowledge inform the appropriate use of animals, plants, and resources (Doyle-Bedwell & Cohen, 2001). These values and practices clash with the contemporary market economy. According to Tully (2014), “the rapid race to control the world’s resources has increased intervention and exploitation of the territories and resources of Indigenous peoples, drawing them into spiralling social and economic consequences” (10).

Idle No More calls for reconciliation both between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, as well as a reconciliation of the human relationship with the environment. On the official website of the movement, the vision states, “Idle No More will continue to pressure government and industry to protect the environment” (Idle No More, 2013). This vision aligns with the view of sustainability as comprising both ‘environmental’ and ‘social’ issues. As Tully (2014) points out, “our relationships with each other and our relationships with the living earth are far too interdependent and entangled to treat their reconciliation separately, as if they were independent”(3). My thesis pushes beyond Tully’s reconciliation argument to include sustainability.

Purpose of the Study

The mainstream media is central to how we come to know and to understand the complex nature of sustainability issues, both ‘social’ and ‘environmental’. The purpose of this research was to explore the mainstream media’s portrayal of the Idle No More movement over a one-year timeline, using qualitative methods including a critical discourse analysis of media content and semi-structured interviews with journalists concerning their experiences covering Idle No More; omission and barriers to reporting on Aboriginal issues (specifically Idle No More). The study was conducted using two national mainstream print media sources to explore their portrayal of the Idle No More movement. This research will seek to determine whether the media perpetuated

stereotypes of Aboriginal people in its coverage of the movement, as well as to determine the perceived barriers facing journalists when writing about Aboriginal issues, particularly Idle No More.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions: 1) How did two national mainstream print media sources (The Globe and Mail and National Post) portray the Idle No More Movement? and 2) what are the experiences and barriers faced by journalists when writing about Aboriginal issues, specifically Idle No More?

Role of the Researcher

As a researcher of European descent studying Indigenous issues, I wish to situate my position of privilege as it pertains to this project. The majority of my childhood and adolescence was spent in the nation's capital, and as a result this shaped my understanding of my surroundings. Challenging my personal history and absence of understanding of Indigenous issues has been a crucial process throughout the length of this study. It is a process that I must continue in order to challenge the prevalent culture that I was conditioned within in order to unlearn cultural norms that have been fostered in me.

Over the course of my undergraduate studies in the college of sustainability at Dalhousie University, I have had the privileged of being challenged to think critically about the many components of sustainability. I first became concerned with the topic of sustainability within the context of resource management, my understanding of this term and its implications has deepened over the course of my studies. My interest in the study of Aboriginal issues began following a summer job with the Senate of Canada. As part of that experience, I was able to observe the Senate Aboriginal Peoples Committee, which opened my eyes to past injustices perpetuated by European and Euro-western colonizers as well as the continued discrimination against Indigenous peoples in Canada. This experience shaped my understanding of sustainability as both a social and environmental issue, and I came to see Indigenous issues within the context of sustainability. As a result of that experience, I was able to further enrich my understanding of Indigenous issues, specifically pertaining to Mi'kmaq culture, spirituality and the policies that impact these communities through the *Indigenous Perspectives on Environment and Resources Management* Field School at Dalhousie University.

Prior to this education, I had little exposure to Indigenous cultures in my life. I was also often unaware of the role the mainstream media had on shaping my perspective of Aboriginal people. The mainstream media, as well as family and friends, were the only window I had into Aboriginal issues and this shaped some of the perspectives I had prior to the above experiences and this research project.

As a result, I struggle with this research project because I am concerned that these past perspectives might somehow influence my research. This concern is widely accepted amongst researchers conducting subjective analysis (Finlay, 2002). For that reason, I have included this personal reflection, in order to bring awareness to my perspectives as an outsider (Finlay, 2002).

I also struggle with self-doubt in how this project will be received by the Idle No More community. As I move forward with this project, I wish to acknowledge that I do not take the role of researcher lightly.

Furthermore, I recognize that I still have much to learn, confront and understand. As such, I feel it necessary to include this disclaimer. This project covers an issue with a width and breadth perhaps too large for an honours thesis. I have struggled with the limitations of an undergraduate thesis project, as the timeline is so short (from September to April) thus not allowing me to develop this research in depth.

Finally, I acknowledge that I will never fully comprehend the lived experiences of Indigenous peoples and that my Western worldview has influenced this research.

Significance of the Study

This study will hopefully contribute to the critical discourse around the mainstream media's portrayal of Indigenous peoples. The perspectives of journalists are added to the discussion, in a field where much of the work is focused on the analysis of the articles themselves. Ideally, this study will be relevant to journalists aiming to improve their coverage of Indigenous issues.

II. Literature Review

This chapter will review the literature relevant to the research question. It will start with an overview of the role of the mainstream media in the creation of Aboriginal stereotypes, followed by a discussion of the role of the media in the portrayal of social movements. This chapter will conclude with a review of the role that Critical Discourse Analysis can play in enacting, confirming, legitimating, reproducing or challenging relations of power or dominance in society (Van Dijk, 1983).

Mainstream Media and Aboriginal Stereotypes

The press has never been non-partisan or strictly objective in Canada (Anderson & Robertson, 2011). Warry (2007) notes that the media's purpose is to "help us understand the surface reality of a complex world" (69). However, all too often what constitutes news is determined by crisis, drama, and fear (Warry, 2007). According to the Media Awareness Network (2007), the portrayal of Aboriginal people by the mainstream media is often focused on coverage "of political and constitutional issues, forest fires, poverty and substance or sexual abuse".

The mainstream media in Canada has a long history of perpetuating colonial *imaginaries* of Aboriginal people and continues to do so today (Harding, 2006; Anderson and Robertson, 2011). Anderson (1991) used the term *imaginaries* to highlight that members subscribing to a nation or its identity do so based on a shared understanding of that identity. This identity, particularly in regards to national identity, has developed as a result of print capitalism as it groups members of various cultural and ethnic backgrounds as belonging to the nation. Print capitalism refers to the large-scale availability of print media as a result of industrialization and capitalism (Anderson, 1991). According to Nesbitt-Larking, "the medium of print is strongly associated with the politics of imperialism and colonialism" (2007). Coverage of Aboriginal issues reinforces Canada's national identity of a multicultural society of immigrants and ignores the "back story" of Canada's colonial history (Sloan Morgan, 2012).

It has been found that prejudice is perpetuated in the mainstream media, which often neglect to address Canada's history of colonization (Sloan Morgan, 2012). This depiction of Aboriginal people reinforces social constructions and informs societal

relations (Harding, 2006; Furniss, 2001) and contributes to the formation of national identities (Said, 1981; Nesbitt-Larking, 2007). Bhodan Szuchewycz (2000) argues that a substantial component within the discursive construction of national identities involves the articulation of difference and contrast with respect to other nations and national identities. As a result of this portrayal, Aboriginal people become the Others (Anderson and Robertson, 2011). This portrayal of Other has a key role to play in the self-perception of Canadians as the “Aboriginal serves to remind the mainstream about the value of its own behaviour, while using Aboriginals’ espied behaviour, portrayed through colonial lenses, as a means to gauge itself in positive ways” (Anderson and Robertson, 2011).

The mainstream media shaped by these connotations and dominant societal views further prejudices Indigenous peoples by using discourse as a platform to communicate societal events (Sloan Morgan, 2012). The dominant societal views are thus not value neutral, but rather part of the larger process of presenting hegemonic understanding of the world. Gramsci (1980) refers to this as the “production of consent” (Harding, 2005). The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) found that the mainstream media forges an image and identity of Aboriginal people that “all too often bear the traits of exclusion, stereotypical inclusion and misappropriation” (RCAP, 1996). It also found that the mainstream media particularly perpetuates three damaging stereotypes of Aboriginal peoples as either victims, warriors or environmentalists (Harding, 2005). The RCAP (1996) found:

The promulgation of negative stereotypes is offensive to Aboriginal people, and even apparently positive stereotypes can distort relationships. As with all stereotypes, there is a kernel of truth in the images, which assumes a dramatic profile and becomes etched in the popular consciousness. But stereotypes block out complexity of context and diversity of personality and perspective. Media images that focus predominantly on conflict and confrontation make communication more difficult and reconciliation more elusive. Too often, media treatment of Aboriginal people and issues reinforces old and deeply imbedded notions of ‘Indians’ as alien, unknowable and ultimately a threat to civil order. Exaggerated and one-dimensional images also create problems of self-identification and cohesion within Aboriginal communities.

Stereotyping is only one way that the mainstream media constructs the “common sense” that the general population uses to interpret the news. Portraying Aboriginal issues

through common sense interpretations effectively supports the status quo and discredits Aboriginal claims and conceals their complex nature and context (Harding, 2005).

The way the mainstream media tends to frame Aboriginal issues exerts a powerful and direct influence on public policy towards them and indirectly on their lives (Harding, 2005). Furthermore, the decision of the mainstream media to exclude Aboriginal issues from the media altogether is just as important in this case as the way in which it was covered. The RCAP (1996) contends that many of the persistent “myths and misconceptions” of non-Aboriginal people are “perpetuated by no communication, poor communication, or one-sided communication”. Reporting that is based on stereotypical terms closes off potential avenues of interpretation of Aboriginal issues for non-Aboriginal people and impacts Aboriginal identity and agency (Harding, 2005).

According to the Media Awareness Network, “the fundamental nature of news and news reporting depends on bad news to garner ratings, which means that tragedies, conflicts and crises get reported and success stories rarely do” (2007). Thus, coverage of Aboriginal peoples often focuses on problematic stories, without examining the complex context in which these issues occur.

Recent studies have sought to explore the media’s portrayal of Aboriginal peoples (see Anderson & Robertson, 2011; Harding, 2005; Furniss, 2001). Anderson and Robertson (2001) note

An examination of press content in Canada since the sale of Rupert’s Land in 1869 through to 2009 illustrates that, with respect to Aboriginal peoples, the colonial imaginary has thrived, even dominated, and continues to do so in mainstream English-language newspapers (3).

Oftentimes, this colonial imagery is perpetuated through misrepresentation of Aboriginal people in the media. The Media Awareness Network (2007) mentions romanticization as a common perspective of Indigenous peoples. This romantic view of Indigenous peoples includes the common stereotypes of the Indian Princess, the Native Warrior, and the Noble Savage. Representation through the use of stereotypes never engages the larger issues of colonialism or post-colonialism. Fleras and Elliot (1992) remarked that Aboriginal activism was subject to increasingly intense media publicity and that this coverage reflected the popular view of Aboriginal peoples “as a) a social problem b) having problems that cost the Canadian taxpayer and c) creating problems that threaten

Canada's social fabric" (9). The perspectives articulated by the mainstream media fail to demonstrate the capacity that is being built by Indigenous communities as well as provide an awareness of culture and history that "would cast the shadow of the blame away from Aboriginal peoples and toward the Canadian state and the public's ongoing indifference to Aboriginal poverty" (Warry, 2007, 71-72).

Social Movements and the Media

The Idle No More movement was able to garner support and momentum through various platforms, including the mainstream media. Idle No More is a social movement, defined by Gamson and Wolfsfeld (1993) as a "sustained and self-conscious challenge to authorities or cultural codes by a field of actors-organizations and advocacy networks- some of whom employ extra institutional means of influence" (114). Social movement scholars have identified several factors affecting the rise of social movements. At the macro level, movements are considered more likely to occur when broad forces of social change (such as industrialization, war, and cultural contact) upset existing power relations (Noakes and Johnston, 2005). At the micro level, there is broad agreement that mobilization is more likely when challenging groups have more resources at their disposal (Noakes and Johnston, 2005). Understanding social movement mobilization requires attention to processes and institutions of interpretation and social construction, such as the mainstream media (Noakes and Johnston, 2005).

Social movements and the media are both in the business of interpreting events, along with other actors who have a stake in them. Events do not speak for themselves but are woven into a larger story or frame and take on meaning from the frame in which they are embedded (Gamson and Wolfsfeld, 1993). Framing is defined as "the process of culling a few elements of perceived reality and assembling a narrative that highlights connections among them to promote a particular interpretation" (Entman, 2007, 164). Gitlin (1980), in his study of the media's treatment of the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) showed how the vested interests of corporate media and the social-change interests of protest movements are often in conflict. Gitlin also concluded "largely unspoken and unacknowledged, media frames organize the world both for journalists who report it and, in some important degree, for us who rely on their reports" (as quoted in Gamson et al., 1992, 384). Agenda setting is another name for successfully performing

the first function of framing; defining problems worthy of public and government action (Entman, 2007).

Social movements are generally much more dependent on the mainstream media than the reverse, as they rely on the media for three major purposes: mobilization, validation and scope enlargement (Gamson and Wolfsfeld, 1993). Although other forms of media are becoming increasingly influential (for example, internet based media, such as social media), the mainstream media remains indispensable because it continues to reach the public while offering increased validation and public sympathy for the social movement (Carroll and Hackett, 2006; Gamson and Wolfsfeld, 1993). Coverage of a social movement by the media is “often a necessary condition before targets of influence will grant a movement recognition and deal with its claims and demands” (Gamson and Wolfsfeld, 1993, 116). The fact that movements need the media more than the media need them translates into increased power for the media over the social movement. Thus, there is a fundamental ambivalence between movements and media. Movement activists tend to view the media not as autonomous and neutral actors, but as agents of dominant groups whom they are challenging (Gamson and Wolfsfeld, 1993).

Marginalized groups require opportunities to present their arguments for change, or increased understanding, to larger publics for consideration (Sobieraj, 2010; Gamson and Wolfsfeld, 1993). However, it is generally understood that the “media operate in a way that promotes apathy, cynicism, and quiescence, rather than active citizenship and participation” (Gamson et al., 1992, 373). The power and influence granted to a social movement by the mainstream media can nevertheless be negatively impacted by the content of media coverage (Gamson et al., 1992; Gamson and Wolfsfeld, 1993). Examples of content bias include the media’s image of minorities, as it often perpetuates hegemonic and racist understandings (Entman, 2007). If movements are not granted meaningful coverage, the movement’s message is lost and fails to engage mainstream audiences (Sobieraj, 2010).

It is widely acknowledged that the mainstream news media promote normative understandings of social relations (Sobieraj, 2010). As a hegemonic institution, the mainstream media articulate the perspective of the political and economic elite (Gamson et al., 1992). In regards to social movements, there is very little discussion of the

politically relevant content which led to mobilization. Newspaper articles often contain extensive details about “who was there, how they looked, what they did, and whether there were arrests” (Sobieraj, 2010, 510). Lack of discussion of the substance leaves readers with a sense that some activity is occurring outside of the convention or debate, but told little about why, and they rarely hear participants’ voices. The “why” is often omitted, as journalists are apprehensive due to objectivity concerns (Sobieraj, 2010). Activists are only depicted as legitimate political actors when stories draw on a crime story model, presenting the activity as a threat to order or as a heated conflict (Sobieraj, 2010). Examples of this type of reporting include traffic disruptions and blockades. Social movements are often depicted as outside of the mainstream and thus disruptive, this “thirst for conflict” is something that has been extensively documented and is often brought up in discussions with journalists (Sobieraj, 2010).

Both journalists and social movements treat coverage of events as outside of the routine and contingent on activist groups doing something that is perceived as newsworthy. There is a shared understanding that the burden of earning coverage falls upon the movement, and thus activists work diligently to gain the attention of journalists. Journalists, in turn, approach activists with skepticism since they are aware of their role in determining whether activists’ efforts warrant attention (Sobieraj, 2010). Events such as teach-ins or symposia become “nonevents” as they are irrelevant to what a journalist considers news (Sobieraj, 2010).

Social movements struggle to gain the attention of the mainstream media. In his classic work, Todd Gitlin (1980) demonstrated that activists become newsworthy only by submitting to the “implicit rules of news making” (As quoted by Sobieraj, 2010, 505). Sobieraj (2010), through in-depth interviews with both activists and journalists determined that activists fail to obtain coverage, not because they can’t conform to the rules of news making, but because they are following the wrong rules. Activists must earn entry, as compared to the state, which is presumed newsworthy. Rather than employing similar techniques to those of the state (such as press releases, press conferences, and spokespeople), activists must use alternative tactics to garner the attention of the mainstream media (Sobieraj, 2010). Sobieraj concludes that the path to inclusion requires two things:

- 1) Activists groups doing something that journalists will interpret as newsworthy and
- 2) then demonstrating their credibility and reliability through the use of professional caliber media work in keeping with the media work done by public relations agencies, communications departments, and spokespeople (Sobieraj, 2010, 512).

Several factors contribute to the likelihood that a story will be covered. These include the organization of news production, the routines of news work (such as deadline structures), the characteristics of “news value” of an event itself and journalists’ ability to transform events into meaningful narratives (Sobieraj, 2010).

Journalists are tasked with determining whether an event can be interpreted as newsworthy. This is accomplished through “good news judgment”, which is a reflection of professional standards as taught in journalism schools, professional organizations or through feedback in the workplace. Structural decision biases operate in the minds of individual journalists, embodied in hegemonic rules and norms that guide their processing of information and influence the framing of coverage (Gamson and Wolfsfeld, 1993). Thus the rules of access are structural, reflecting power differences between actors within larger society (Gamson et al., 1992; Sobieraj, 2010). Treatment of social movements is approached as episodic, that is a “narrow focus on events as discrete issues, rather than a focus on the wider context, history and background that may be crucial to understanding the nature and particularly the interconnectedness of issues” (Hansen, 2011, 14).

Coverage of Indigenous movements is largely episodic, although they “contest the very foundation of the Canadian state as a colonial construction while most theories of group politics and social movements take the state for granted” (Ladner, 2008, 228). Aboriginal peoples in Canada were prevented from political organization and the hiring of lawyers under the Indian Act until 1951. Discussion of Indigenous social movements often fails to mention this history, as well as the complex socio-political and economic relationship between the Canadian state and Aboriginal peoples. Further, Indigenous movements vary slightly from other social movements as they are “fundamentally grounded in and defined by issues of nationhood and (de)colonization-considerations that have been largely overlooked in the social movement literature” (Ladner, 2008, 244). While some day-to-day events are considered political for Indigenous peoples, they are

not covered in the news (Ladner, 2008). For example, the crossing of the Canada-United States border is considered a political event for some Indigenous peoples, as it does not align with traditional territories, but this type of event never receives media attention.

Critical Discourse Analysis

Discourse is the area through which knowledge and power are made operational and (re)constructed within society (Foucault, 1978). The analysis of discourse provides a means of understanding the way language perpetuates our social constructions of reality (Foucault 1984; Porter, 2006). Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is an approach that helps to understand and highlight these facets, particularly in regards to how power and knowledge operate within a societal context (Sloan Morgan, 2012). An analysis of language reveals the socio-political foundation that allows power and knowledge to exist and extrapolates the potential implications for society (van Dijk, 1983; Porter, 2006). CDA is a branch of linguistics that is concerned, broadly speaking, with highlighting the traces of cultural and ideological meaning in spoken and written texts (O'Halloran, 2003). CDA also focuses on “the ways discourse structures enact, confirm, legitimate, reproduce or challenge relations of power or dominance in society” (van Dijk, 1983).

CDA is a method within the broader field of Discourse Analysis (Titscher et al., 2000). Discourse analysis has been challenged on three grounds. The first argues that discourse analysis is void of rigorous enquiry and intent on deductively working from a conclusion (Tyrwhitt-Drake, 1999). The second states that discourse analysis is subjectively rooted in the analyzer's ideological positioning (Jones, 2007) and finally, that it provides only a partial description of a larger argument through fragmenting text (Porter, 2006). The goal of CDA, however, is to deconstruct the socio-political language, thus, it is inherently political (Szuchewycz, 2000). There is an assumption behind most discourse analysis that the mainstream media plays a role in shaping and influencing public understanding and opinion as well as political decision-making in society (Hansen, 2011).

According to Hansen, there is a clear link between lexical choice, discursive practices and the way issues are framed. These impact the “way messages and meanings are conveyed and boundaries set for public understanding and public interpretation and opinion” (2011). This is particularly the case for environmental issues, as it is often

assumed, either implicitly or explicitly, that media representation of environmental issues will play a role in shaping and influencing public understanding or opinion and political decision-making in society (Hansen, 2011). According to Hansen (2011),

The media and communications are central to how we come to know, and to know about, the environment and environmental issues, and the major communications media are a central public arena through which we become aware of environmental issues and the way in which they are addressed, contested and resolved (page 9).

Oftentimes, this coverage does not fully describe the complexity of the issue due to the 'episodic' rather than 'thematic' framing of environmental issues (Hansen, 2011). Coverage of environmental issues tends to be narrow, and they are often presented as individual or discrete issues or events, rather than a focus on the wider context, history and background that may be crucial to understanding the nature and particularly the interconnectedness of environmental issues and problems (Hansen, 2011). The same is true of Aboriginal issues, as oftentimes struggles against colonialism are forgotten in discussions of the struggles against capitalism (Woroniak and Camfield, 2013). Practices of CDA have proved helpful in uncovering the meanings of mainstream media content and other public communications about the environment (Hansen, 2011). Through the use of qualitative analysis and discussion of findings within critical social theories (Jiwani, 2006) discourse analysis can be made transparent in application and positioning. As such, the researcher's position is declared and the intent of the discourse analysis is transparent.

Summary

Coverage of Aboriginal issues in Canada reinforces Canada's colonial, Western perspective of national identity and reinforces the discourse of 'Other' in relation to Aboriginal peoples. The mainstream media's construction of Aboriginal issues serves to reinforce imaginaries through the use of social construction and stereotypes to inform societal relations. Public policy and perception is a result of the hegemonic views outlined in the mainstream media.

Social movements are largely dependent on the mainstream media for the purposes of mobilization, validation and scope enlargement. As a result, the media is able to exert power over a social movement. If movements are not granted meaningful coverage, this restricts the movements' ability to engage mainstream audiences. Journalists interpret events to determine if they are newsworthy but are structurally embedded within hegemonic institutions. Reporting of social movements is largely episodic, which limits discussion of cause.

Critical Discourse Analysis serves as a tool to deconstruct some of the hegemonic discourse so as to understand, expose and resist social inequality. While CDA has been criticized for a number of reasons, it has also been shown to provide a greater understanding of the role of the mainstream media within the social context. Understanding the context of Idle No More within the social movement literature as well as discourse analysis and the mainstream media's depiction of Aboriginal peoples helps to shape a holistic view of this movement while framing it within sustainability.

III. Methodology

Research Design & Data Analysis

The purpose of this study was to explore the mainstream media's portrayal of the Idle No More movement over a one-year timeline, using qualitative methods including a critical discourse analysis of media content and semi-structured interviews with journalists concerning their experiences covering Idle No More; omission and barriers to reporting on Aboriginal issues (specifically Idle No More). The study was guided by two research questions: 1) How did two national mainstream print media sources (The Globe and Mail and National Post) portray the Idle No More movement? and 2) what are the barriers faced by journalists when writing about Aboriginal issues, specifically Idle No More?

This study was conducted in two phases. The first phase involved a Critical Discourse Analysis of two national mainstream print media sources pertaining to Idle No More over a one-year time period. The goal of this phase was to determine whether the media perpetuated stereotypes of Aboriginal people in its coverage of the movement. Further, this phase sought to determine whether a colonial perspective was used in the media's portrayal of the Idle No More movement.

The second phase of the research involved interviews with the journalists having written the articles analyzed in the first phase of the research. The goal of this phase of the study was to determine the perceived barriers facing journalists when writing about Aboriginal issues, particularly Idle No More. In order to determine the barriers facing journalists, participants were asked questions concerning the structure of the newsroom as well as experiences writing about Aboriginal peoples.

Critical Discourse Analysis

CDA is a useful analytical tool for providing a novel and critical perspective on the underlying assumptions embedded in news reports (Sylvestre et al., 2013). Wodak et al (2001) argue that there is no consistent CDA methodology, however some practices, such as a problem oriented rather than linguistic analysis, are common to most CDA approaches. Further, Wodak et al. (2001) state

The similarity most evident is a shared interest in social processes of power, hierarchy building, exclusion and subordination. In the tradition of critical theory, CDA aims to make transparent the discursive aspects of societal disparities and inequalities. CDA in the majority of cases takes the part of the underprivileged and tries to show up the linguistic means used by the privileged to stabilize or even to intensify inequalities in society (30).

Thus, within CDA there exists the “problem of operationalizing theoretical concepts” since this method of analysis is heavily grounded in theory (Wodak et al., 2001,18).

The sample for this CDA focused on media stories pertaining to the Idle No More movement in two Canadian newspapers: 1) The Globe and Mail (GM) (a widely-read newspaper with national coverage); and 2) National Post (NP) (a second widely-read newspaper with national coverage). The national scope of the Idle No More movement informed the selection of these two newspapers owing to the national coverage the movement received during the time frame studied.

The Factiva database was used to identify sources for the first phase of the study. This database provides worldwide full text coverage of various media sources, including local and regional newspapers. A keyword search across the Factiva database for “Idle No More” in the headline in either newspaper and published within the last year was employed to determine news articles to analyze. A preliminary search of the database revealed a list of approximately 50 articles. Once these articles were edited to remove duplicate articles, reader submissions or editorial columns, a total list of 28 articles was found. The search criterion was limited to ‘news’.

Wodak et al., (2001) argue that no clear line between data analysis and data collection can be drawn in CDA. However, O’Halloran (2003) argues that there are two main stages of CDA, the description and interpretation stages. For the purpose of this analysis, an inductive¹ review of the content of the media articles was undertaken to determine categories and themes (Sloan Morgan, 2012). These themes were then further analysed through the application of three widely used CDA tools. The tools that were

¹ According to Patton (1980), “a qualitative research strategy is inductive in that the researcher attempts to make sense of the situation without imposing preexisting expectations on the research setting” (40). Thus, qualitative research begins with observations and builds towards patterns.

applied for the analysis of the news articles were 1) headline analysis 2) ‘framing’ or frame analysis; and 3) semantic strategies and lexical style (Sloan Morgan, 2012).

The first tool, headline analysis, refers to the section of the newspaper in which the article appeared. This tool is particularly concerned with headlines, as it proposes that the most important aspects of the story will be placed at the beginning of the article (Sloan Morgan, 2012; Harding, 2006; Wodak et al., 2001). The second tool, ‘framing’ or frame analysis applies to the linguistic features that are in the text as well as highlighting features that are not. In other words, this involves reading the text for absences (Van Dijk, 1983; O’Halloran, 2003). The third and final tool, semantic strategies and lexical style is concerned with word choice, exaggerations, quotes and syntax (Sloan Morgan, 2012; van Dijk, 1983).

Interviews

The second phase of this study involved one-on-one semi-structured interviews with journalists. Interviews took place over the phone and examined journalists’ perspectives of the Idle No More movement as well as the possible barriers facing journalists when writing about Aboriginal issues (specifically Idle No More).

The study population included all relevant journalists, in this case all those having written an article containing “Idle No More” in the headline within the two newspapers under evaluation (The Globe and Mail and National Post) in the last year. These journalists authored the articles studied during the first phase of the research. The data collected from the interviews was used to inform and contextualize the data from the CDA.

The estimated number of potential participants, which included all journalists having written an article containing “Idle No More” in the headline within the Globe and Mail or National Post in the last year, was 23: 17 from The Globe and Mail and 6 from the National Post. Recruitment was based on participant interest. It was understood that not all potential participants would be interested in participating in the study thus, recruitment continued until data saturation or until all contacts had been exhausted.

An initial contact email was sent to 11 potential participants, based on availability of contact information- 7 journalists at The Globe and Mail and 4 at the National Post- in order to gauge interest in participation in the study (see Appendix A: Email Regarding

Interest). The information for all 23 potential participants was not publicly available. The email regarding interest was sent in an effort to identify the population of the study. Creswell (2009) refers to questions of access and availability to potential respondents. The purpose of this email was to gain assurance that it would be possible to conduct the study, and that interest existed within the potential population. Four responses were received, which included one expression of interest in participation, one forward to a colleague, one request for more information and one expression of a lack of qualifications.

Following receipt of approval of my application to the Dalhousie Research Ethics Board to conduct this study, a second email (see Appendix B: Email Recruitment Script) was sent to all contacts to formally invite them to participate in the study. The information sheet and consent form was attached to this email (see Appendix C: Information Sheet and Consent Form). If a potential participant did not respond to the second email after 10 days, a final email was sent requesting a response within 7 days after which time, no further action was taken (see Appendix B: Email Recruitment Script). A total of 5 journalists participated in the study. Of these, four were employees of The Globe and Mail and one was an employee of PostMedia news, the company that owns the National Post.

During the interviews, participants were asked to answer a list of open-ended questions comprising three topics: 1) experiences reporting on Idle No More; 2) omission; and 3) barriers to reporting on Aboriginal issues (specifically Idle No More) (see Appendix D: Interview Guide). With participants' permission, interviews were audio-recorded using a digital recorder and transcribed verbatim. Once completed, participants had the chance to review and approve the transcripts as well how quotes were used in context, if they wished. Participants were given the option to withdraw from the study at any time up until study results had been analyzed.

Transcripts were first analyzed using open coding, to establish broad, emergent themes and then axial coding, to determine linkages between themes and transcripts. Data was then compared with information collected from both the literature review and the CDA in order to interpret the findings in relation to a larger field of study.

Limitations

There are limitations to this study that must be acknowledged. This study is limited in that it only evaluated media stories pertaining to Idle No More in two national Canadian newspapers (The Globe and Mail and National Post). Further, it is limited as it only evaluated stories containing 'Idle No More' in the headline during a one-year period. Had the search criteria been larger, for example containing news articles with the keywords 'Idle No More' anywhere in the article during the one-year period, the CDA phase of this research would have been much broader. Evaluating other sources of news, such as local newspapers or radio broadcasts, could also have extended this phase of the research.

Secondly, the restricted number of participants limits this study during the interview phase of the research. Although the estimated amount of total participants was 23, only 5 interviews were conducted. Conducting interviews with editors at the newspapers under evaluation would also have helped to shed light on the news making process.

Finally, my own experience and conditioning as a white person in Canada inevitably limits my interpretations of the findings of this study, as my own perceptions and understanding of Indigenous issues continues to develop. It must also be acknowledged that the nature of this project, given the short timeline, also acts as a limitation to the depth of the research.

IV. Findings and Discussion

The data gathered over both phases of this study highlight the complexities and issues surrounding the portrayal of Indigenous peoples in the Canadian mainstream media. The CDA phase of this study provides an examination of the recurrent themes and patterns in the coverage of Idle No More in two mainstream print media sources over a one-year time period. Data gathered during the interview phase of this study examine the association between journalists and the Idle No More movement. This chapter establishes a relationship between the findings of the CDA and the interviews with journalists. Although both phases of the study have been woven together in this chapter, recurring themes from the separate phases of this study are also discussed.

During both the CDA phase of the study and the interviews with journalists, two overall patterns emerged. The first pattern was the nature of media coverage, as this restricted discussion of Idle No More. The second was the timeline of the articles, as they revealed that coverage occurred primarily during the months of December 2012 and January 2013, at the time of Theresa Spence's hunger strike. Four themes of the coverage also emerged. These were Theresa Spence's hunger strike, protest, internal politics and the relationship between the Canadian government and Indigenous peoples. This chapter discusses journalists' responses to interview questions.

Media Coverage

The nature of media coverage limits the discussion of Indigenous issues. Treatment of Aboriginal peoples by major mainstream media is frequently focused on reporting of political issues, poverty and abuse. The nature of reporting is that bad news receives the most attention. Worry notes, "tragedies, conflicts and crises get reported; success stories rarely do" (71). This was touched on during the interviews with journalists:

We don't write stories about the lights staying on, we write stories about the lights going off. We don't write stories about First Nations communities that are living in peace and at least, modest prosperity, we write stories about when things go wrong. And so that is going to be true of First Nations as well as others. G&M journalist #4

Everybody I know that is in an industry or a sector or a community complains about the lack of media coverage for the good news stories and its part of the structural defect of the mainstream media. G&M journalist #1

The lack of coverage of ‘good news’ stories in regards to Aboriginal peoples prevents the Canadian public from “truly grasping the capacity that is being built” (Warry, 2007) and, develop an understanding of the culture and history that would cast the blame away from Aboriginal peoples and towards the Canadian state and the public’s ongoing indifference to Aboriginal issues. This type of coverage is also problematic for Aboriginal peoples because it emphasizes a crisis mentality, rather than focusing on the hard constructive work of building capacity for a self-sustaining economy and government (Warry, 2007).

Warry (2007) in his discussion of the media and Aboriginal stereotypes, discusses the issue of bias in reporting. According to Entman (2007), bias is yet to be clearly defined. However, he argues that there are three types of bias: distortion bias, content bias and decision-making bias. Distortion bias is applied to news that purportedly distorts or falsifies reality. News that favors one side rather than providing equivalent treatment to both sides in a political conflict is content bias. The motivations and mindsets of journalists in producing the biased content is decision-making bias. Warry argues that The Globe and Mail and National Post, the two sources examined in this study, both continue to perpetuate assimilationist arguments. He states,

The National Post is known for its anti-Aboriginal rights columns and pro-assimilation arguments. Its articles on Aboriginal affairs focus on government spending, the high cost of Aboriginal programs, the need for Aboriginal people to find jobs in the mainstream marketplace, and so on (72).

As for the Globe and Mail, Warry (2007) concludes that its positions are primarily integrationist, but “admit a genuine concern about the plight of Aboriginal peoples and the complexity of dismantling the Indian Act and progressing toward self-government” (74). For the purposes of this study, bias within the two newspapers was not analyzed. This is due to the fact that both news sources operate at the national level, as well as the limitations of an honours thesis.

Time and space also limits coverage of Indigenous issues. Time here relates to deadline structures, which affect the depth of reporting and openness to unconventional sources (Sobieraj, 2010). Space refers to the length of an article. Warry (2007) notes “a

number of causes for poor reporting include tight deadlines, lack of investigative time, and editors and other gatekeepers who are poorly versed in Aboriginal affairs” (71). Given the complexity of the socio-political and historical relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, it is often ignored. Time and space was discussed as a barrier to reporting on Aboriginal issues in Canada, and particularly Idle No More.

The very real constraints on time and space that the media tends to operate on; there is always fierce competition for space in newspapers and on the nightly news lineup. I would love to get stories in the paper that just aren't going to make the cut on any given day often because it is –there is only so much room. And our stories are shorter than most of us would like to write on any given day. A typical story these days, it has shrunk over time, the typical story is probably 550 words-600 words. There are limits to what you can get into a news story when it's that short. G&M journalist #4

These constraints limit the discussion of Indigenous issues and maintain “common sense” discourse and understanding. According to Gamson et al., (1992) “the compression of time leads to preoccupation with the immediacy of surface meaning and the absence of depth” (386). Of the 28 articles studied, only one provides a detailed overview of the relationship between Indigenous peoples and the settler-colonial state.

Timeline

Media coverage of the Idle No More movement during the one-year time period under study was primarily concentrated during the months of December 2012 and January 2013 (see Figure 1: Timeline of News Articles below). The timeline of the coverage is telling, as it aligns with Theresa’s Spence’s hunger strike. Theresa Spence’s hunger strike is discussed in greater detail below, as it is a recurring theme within the dataset of the CDA. Outside of the months of December and January, the National Post and the Globe and Mail each published one article containing the words “Idle No More” in the headline (April 2013 National Post and July 2013 Globe and Mail). According to Gamson et al., (1992), “public controversies also die. That which was once contested becomes naturalized” (383). Although events relating to Idle No More occurred after January 2013, these did not receive the same amount of media attention as the events of December and January because a fatigue set in on the part of both the journalists and the public.

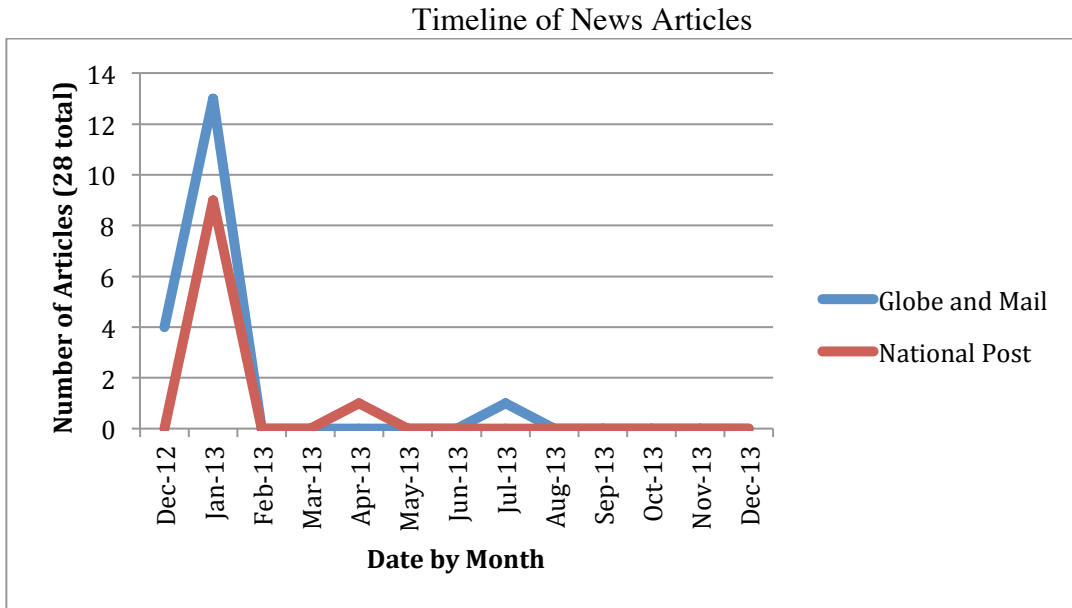


Figure 1: Distribution of news articles and sources over time-period of study

The timeline of the coverage of Idle No More provided a natural story arc. The movement gained momentum in December 2012 as Bill C-45 moved through the House of Commons and the movement gained support through social media. Media attention was also centered during the months of December and January as many protests, including the National Day of Action², occurred during this time. Reduced coverage occurred following the meeting between the government and Indigenous leaders in January 2013. This aspect of the coverage came up in many of the interviews.

I ended up covering Idle No More last year a lot, and then throughout the year though December and January quite a bit. And then when Theresa Spence ended her hunger strike INM disappeared [didn't disappear] but became less active, shall we say, when that happened. So at various times throughout the year, I have contacted Idle No More. G&M journalist #2

It was a natural storyline that came to its climax at the meeting and then... that's it. So for a number of reporters it was like ok, well listen you got what you wanted and now let's all go back to doing what we do. NP journalist #1

² The National Day of Action, which took place on December 10 2012 in over 13 Canadian cities, became the platform “through which the voice of Aboriginal peoples’ discontent over being ignored could be heard” (Inman et al., 2013, 254).

That's the one thing I remember-how quickly it blew up and became a front-page thing and blew up and how quickly it became something people were divided on. It really divided on Theresa Spence. NP journalist #1

As the majority of the coverage occurred during the months of December and January and thus during the holidays, reporters were assigned to cover Idle No More even though this was not their area of expertise. Although some of the reporters interviewed had covered Aboriginal issues in the past, most did not have much experience relating to this 'beat'. A 'beat' is a journalists' area of expertise, or the area they cover the most. When asked *can you tell me more about any articles that you wrote specific to Idle No More or Aboriginal issues?* most journalists responded by describing how they became involved in covering Idle No More.

My involvement in that story mostly came about because the INM movement grew up and gathered momentum around Christmas 2012 and into the New Year 2013. The way newspapers work, you get a lot of people who are away on holidays, taking vacation or time off during the Christmas season and so we tend to have smaller staffing at that time and everybody jumps on all kinds of different things in order to help out. We are less rigid about our beats and our assignments.
G&M journalist #3

While there are other mechanisms that social movements can employ to shape public discourse (for example, social media) the mainstream media is the only one that offers the possibility for large-scale amplification (Sobieraj, 2010). Thus, social movements, such as the Idle No More movement, are dependent on the mainstream media to amplify and spread their message to broader audiences. Gamson and Wolfsfeld (1993) argue that movements need the news media for three reasons: mobilization, validation, and scope enlargement. Limited coverage of the movement, or coverage during a limited amount of time, restricts the ability of the movement to gain traction. Two forms of news reporting exist, the "episodic" and the "thematic". According to Iyengar (1991) the episodic form, by far the most common one, "takes the form of a case study or event-oriented report and depicts issues in terms of concrete instances." (as quoted in Gamson et al., 1992, 391). In contrast, the much rarer thematic form emphasizes general outcomes, conditions, and statistical evidence. Given that the coverage of Idle No More spiked during the months of December and January and focused primarily on the events surrounding the movement, coverage was episodic rather than thematic.

CDA and Interview Themes

One of the most direct methods of communicating the themes of media articles is through headline analysis. The themes in the table (below) can be found throughout both datasets. In the pages that follow, these themes are presented and analyzed. The major purpose of the analysis was to organize results from the CDA and participant responses in such a way that overall patterns would become clear.

Table 1. 2: CDA Themes and Media Headlines

Theme	Article title	Newspaper/Section
Theresa Spence hunger strike and request to meet with government	Protests support Chief Spence; Demonstrators block rail corridor on same day opposition politicians visit hunger-striking leader	Globe and Mail, National News
Protest	Idle No More protests block transportation routes across country; one chief said the largest disruptions are yet to come	Globe and Mail, Breaking News
Internal politics	Idle No More pulls back from chiefs; rallies growing; mandate to work outside system of government	National Post, National News
Relationship between Canadian government and Indigenous peoples	Prime Minister defends status quo on native issues; Opposition, Idle No More press PM on aboriginal consultations	Globe and Mail, National News

Theme 1: Theresa Spence Hunger Strike and Request to Meet with Government

The Idle No More movement began in the fall of 2012 and gained momentum as Bill C-45 moved through the House of Commons. The actions of Idle No More included teach-ins and demonstrations throughout the country. Beginning in December 2012, Attawapiskat Chief Theresa Spence started a hunger strike, with her main demand being that a national meeting occur between the Governor-General, the Prime Minister and Chiefs across Canada to discuss the Crown's breaches of the Treaties and the resulting poor social conditions within First Nations communities (Diablo, 2013). Although the actions of Theresa Spence and Idle No More occurred at the same time, Chief Spence's hunger strike was not directly linked to the grassroots Idle No More movement. However, news coverage stated "Idle No More has been inextricably linked to a hunger strike by Attawapiskat Chief Theresa Spence."³

Coverage of events relating to Idle No More in December and January often mentioned Theresa Spence's hunger strike. As was previously stated, increased coverage occurred at the time because it presented a natural story arc for news sources to report. According to Sobieraj (2010),

Reporters preferred sources who discuss issues as individuals with stories to share, rather than as publicly minded advocates. This is primarily because the journalists were not looking to write about issues or about associations, they were looking to tell stories about individuals (520)

Chief Spence's hunger strike offered an individual case, which appealed to readers on an emotional level. Because coverage of Idle No More was episodic, rather than thematic, it engaged the story of Theresa Spence as an individual. As a result, coverage did not seriously engage the larger issues of colonialism or post-colonialism. Participants often discussed Theresa Spence's hunger strike when responding to the question *can you tell me about the articles you wrote specific to Idle No More?*

I do recall I think writing about when the story first came to my attention, I just thought it was kind of interesting that there would be a grassroots movement of that nature and then of course, when Theresa Spence had her hunger strike, although the hunger strike didn't directly prompt INM there was a lot of sort of cross-pollination between the two stories. Certainly, most of the INM protesters were expressing at that time, a lot of support for Theresa Spence. So it ended up being like kind of a double story at the same time. G&M journalist #2

³ National Post, 2 January 2013

A lot of our reporting was based out of Ottawa in that case, because of chief Theresa Spence's hunger strike as that was a real focal point for what was happening and was also where the pressure was being applied directly to the federal government to come to the table to talk and make changes. G&M journalist #3

I did some stories about her hunger strike or her (she was taking soup) so I think we stopped calling it a hunger strike, more of a food strike. I wrote about that, I wrote about what was happening to her body physically, I was writing about the meetings that were taking place, what the government was saying. NP journalist #1

Reporting based on individual actors over the political context in which they operate fragments the information provided to the public (Gamson et al., 1992). Bennett argues, "Fragmentation is then heightened by the use of dramatic formats that turn events into self-contained, isolated happenings" (as quoted by Gamson et al., 1992, 388). The public's attention was thus focused on the hunger strike, rather than the broader issues of colonialism, self-determination and changes to the environmental regulatory regime.

Theme 2: Protests

Protests and demonstrations were a central theme in the coverage of Idle No More. In particular, coverage during the months of December and January focused primarily on the actions such as, "demonstrators affiliated with the grassroots movement Idle No More rallied on the snowy plaza outside Parliament's Centre Block on Monday."⁴ The description of these actions was at times negative, for example demonstrations were referred to as "blocking streets and disrupting train service" and that "demonstrations were tying up traffic along the highway."⁵ Discourse associated with the coverage emphasized protests as disruptions by covering events like traffic frustrations and delays, "disruptions were being felt in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Ontario and New Brunswick"⁶, or "railway lines were blocked, traffic on major highways was impeded, and round dances were performed at busy city intersections on Wednesday, causing delays and frustrations for motorists."⁷

⁴ Globe and Mail, 29 January 2013

⁵ Globe and Mail, 11 January 2013

⁶ Globe and Mail, 16 January 2013

⁷ Globe and Mail, 17 January 2013

The capacity of past Indigenous movements was questioned, “this is not the first time native people have been moved to action, but never in recent years have the protests been so widespread and sustained.”⁸ The choices in actions were also at times questioned, for example one article specifically mentioned the failure of the movement to hold protests in Fort McMurray even though it is “the heart of oil sands development.”⁹ Rather than articulating the movement positively, negative language such as the language emphasized in the quote below was employed. “Demonstrations like the ones that hit communities across Canada have been *erupting* since early December under the banner of Idle No More and drive home the *potentially disruptive* power of first nations people trying to give voice to their many *complaints*” (emphasis added by author).¹⁰ In their discussion of the movement, these articles emphasized the actions themselves, rather than the cause behind them. Reference to the issues was present, but was not the primary objective of the news article.

Although non-Indigenous peoples became widely involved in protests linked to the Idle No More movement, this aspect was not emphasized. The shared sense of learning created by Idle No More between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples was also absent from the news coverage of the movement. When non-Indigenous peoples were mentioned, it was mostly as environmentalists, or people concerned with changes to the Canadian regulatory regime.

However non-Indigenous people were often quoted in articles that were mainly focused on coverage of protests relating to the Idle No More movement. Sobieraj (2010) discusses the issue of “standing” in regards to social movements. When a group has standing they are “treated as an actor with a voice, not merely as an object being discussed by others” (Sobieraj, 2010,509). Public officials and heads of large established organizations receive automatic standing in the media, unlike social movements (Gamson and Wolfsfeld, 1993). The organizations that were most commonly cited were the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), grassroots organizers or spokespeople for Idle No More, spokespeople for VIA rail, and statements of government officials such as

⁸ Globe and Mail, 20 December 2012

⁹ Globe and Mail, 16 January 2013

¹⁰ Globe and Mail, 17 January 2013

statements by the Prime Minister, the Finance Minister, and various Chiefs of Police across the country. During interviews, journalists were asked *what are your main sources of information when researching articles relating to Aboriginal peoples and specifically when researching Idle No More?* For the most part, participants responded that their primary sources of information were a combination of the various people involved in the story. However, one reporter emphasized the need for multiple stakeholders to be consulted when reporting on Aboriginal issues.

There is nobody that can speak for Aboriginals in Canada, or Aboriginals the world over. We can't look at it as though there is one monolithic voice that can speak for them. I would say I try to find a variety of people-it is helpful to talk to chiefs of larger Aboriginal groups, because they are people who have been put in a leadership position and they are people who are in touch with their own communities and sensitive to what they are hearing from their own communities. They are helpful because they are people that have their finger on the pulse. But, like I said, not everybody agrees with the leadership. So it is helpful to try to talk to people who aren't in positions of leadership-ordinary, everyday people of Aboriginal heritage-to hear what their concerns are and what they think. It is helpful to talk to people who are trying to support causes like these. In the case of INM there were a lot of people who had concerns about things to do with the federal government like its environmental policies, or like the way it appeared to be using omnibus bills to pass legislation without a lot of debate, who would stand beside people from INM, people of Aboriginal heritage and try to present a united front. It is important to talk to the political leadership in Canada because that is where the pressure is directed, what they are looking for ultimately in a lot of these cases, is change at the political level, on treaty rights, on the development of natural resources on lands that were traditionally the homesteads of Aboriginal peoples. It is important to follow what the political leadership is doing. G&M journalist #3

This type of response highlights the participants desire to grant standing to many different organizations and actors. Consultation with various actors increases the likelihood of a complete discussion of the issue.

Theme 3: Internal Politics

Internal politics and division in the movement was a recurrent theme within the 28 articles under study. Often, this was portrayed as division between the grassroots organizers and the AFN or the Chiefs. For example, “but now it appears the rapidly

growing Idle No More movement is experiencing its first real growing pains”¹¹ as the movement “appears to be splintering with the founders of Idle No More issuing a statement distancing themselves from native chiefs who claim to be acting on behalf of the campaign.”¹² Headlines such as “chiefs divided on value of protests; Negotiations with Ottawa could be complicated by disagreements among AFN leaders and those going it alone”¹³ focused the coverage on internal divisions within the movement, rather than the requests of the movement itself. Quotes also emphasized the internal struggles, “Mr. Peters, for instance, said he has not yet received any word from the AFN about what transpired at the meeting with Mr. Harper, so he and other chiefs in Ontario are moving ahead on their own.”¹⁴ Gamson and Wolfsfeld (1993) discuss this phenomena as it relates to coverage of social movements, “this means that internal movement conflicts and peccadillos will have a special fascination for journalists” (120).

Media coverage of division within the movement, rather than focusing on aspects that present a unified front, reduces any movement’s legitimacy (Gamson and Wolfsfeld, 1993). It acts as a reason for the requests and issues presented on behalf of the movement to be taken less seriously. Although this study does not discuss the internal politics within the Canadian Aboriginal community, it must be emphasized that this is an area that influenced the events leading up to the start, and rapid embracing of Idle No More.

¹¹ National Post, 2 January 2013

¹² National Post, 2 January 2013

¹³ Globe and Mail, 17 January 2013

¹⁴ Globe and Mail, 17 January 2013

Theme 4: Relationship Between Canadian Government and Indigenous Peoples

The theme of the relationship between the Canadian government and Indigenous peoples was only elaborated within the context of the events of Idle No More, rather than a discussion of the historical and socio-political factors which lead to Idle No More. This theme appeared as a discussion of negotiations between government officials and members of the Assembly of First Nations or members of the Idle No More movement. Of the 28 stories under study, only one story dealt with the history and the events leading to the causes of Idle No More. This article emphasized, “this question is at the root of the new wave of activism, centered around the Idle No More protests. The uniting factor is a desire for a new relationship between Canada and the indigenous nations within its borders”.¹⁵ Instead of articulating Idle No More within the context of colonial injustices and a need for self-determination, the majority of the news articles portrayed Idle No More as a reaction to Bills C-38 and C-45.

Discourse surrounding disruption was also articulated within the context of the relationship between Aboriginal peoples and the government, for example “finance Minister Jim Flaherty voiced concerns that aboriginal protests could hurt the Canadian economy. Noting that real GDP in Canada is only expected to grow around two percent this year, efforts should be made to avoid disruptions.”¹⁶ Such discourse allowed the federal government to defend and “support the status quo on native issues.”¹⁷

The relationship between the broader Canadian population was also portrayed in the coverage, with one article entitled “poll shows support for Idle No More waning”¹⁸ highlighting the lack of support for the movement. This type of report frames the movement as lacking support, and essentially restricts any future momentum.

Interviews:

Throughout the interview phase of the study, participants were asked to answer a list of open-ended questions comprising three topics: 1) experiences reporting on Idle No More; 2) omission; and 3) barriers to reporting on Aboriginal issues (specifically Idle No

¹⁵ Globe and Mail, 12 January 2013

¹⁶ Globe and Mail, 16 January 2013

¹⁷ Globe and Mail, 29 January 2013

¹⁸ National Post, 21 January 2013

More). In the following section, the emphasis is placed on letting participants speak for themselves. Although quotes from participants were previously discussed in the context of the news articles, the following section takes a look at participant's responses to interview questions.

Journalists were first asked if they were a staff or contract reporter as well as the differences between the two. All participants responded that they were staff reporters, thus employed full time and receiving full employee benefits. Staff reporters work with the editors to determine the stories they will cover. In contrast, a freelance or contract reporter is not an employee and is paid by the article. These reporters write an article without first discussing it with editors and offer it for purchase by the newspaper.

Journalists were then asked about their area of expertise in reporting, or their beat. Answers to this question varied greatly. However, given that the majority of respondents were based in Ottawa, the Nation's capital, a common focus was on parliamentary issues. To be noted however, was that none of the journalists interviewed specifically covered the Aboriginal affairs beat.

In discussing the topic of omission, participants were asked *in the newsroom or within the structure of your newspaper, how are stories assigned to you?* Responses did not vary significantly. Two main methods were commonly described. The first is that reporters pitch stories to the editors based on the reporters beat.

For my own particular work, the best way for stories to be assigned is for me to tell the editor that this story is happening and I should do it. Usually when I do that, they say yes, great, go do it because I know my area, know my beat, know what the paper wants and needs. G&M journalist #4

When it comes to beat reporters, beat reporters are generally pretty responsible for generating their own story ideas and then taking them to the editors and saying "this is what I think I would like to work on, this is what I think might be interesting, this is what I think might be important" and then you can have some back and forth and agree on what to pursue. G&M journalist #3

The second was for news stories to be assigned by the editors to the reporter. This method is the most likely during holidays or weekends, as the paper is understaffed.

It's not like someone is pulling my strings and saying, "today you will write about this". Although if my boss says "I need you to write –I need you to cover this for the

day” I am covering that for the day. That’s fine with me, I don’t mind doing that. NP
journalist # 1

For Idle No More in particular, I remember I was brought into it partly because I was one of a shortened staff working at that time, around the Christmas holidays. I was asked to help out, in almost a general sense. They said, “We need someone to help report on this because it’s going to take some resources to figure it out”. G&M
journalist #3

Both methods of choosing a story are at the discretion of the journalist or editor of the newspaper. Entman (2007) argues, “the media’s decision biases operate within the minds of individual journalists and within the processes of journalistic institutions, embodied in (generally unstated) rules and norms that guide their processing of information and influence the framing of media texts” (166). Since it is at the discretion of the journalist to write stories they consider of interest, there is inherent bias to what is covered by the mainstream media. Gamson and Wolfsfeld (1993) state,

Journalists play a central role in the construction of meaning; they choose a story line in reporting events, and media commentators develop arguments and images that support particular frames. News stories are put together out of raw happenings, and this necessarily means framing these happenings and giving them meaning” (118).

Given that Indigenous peoples are an inherently marginalized group, journalists may not be familiar with, or consider their issues to be worthy of coverage. Thus, it is up to Indigenous activist to garner the attention of the media through various platforms in order to increase understanding, inclusion or change (Sobieraj, 2010).

Also within the discussion of omission, participants were asked *have you ever submitted an article that was not pursued or printed? What were the parameters or reasons?* Responses to this question did not vary significantly. All participants stated that they had never had an experience where they had pitched, written and submitted a story that was not printed. However, it often occurs that stories (in general) were pitched and not pursued. Participants did not elaborate on specific instances where this had occurred. However, participants emphasized that all types of stories are at times not pursued. Reasons given for this were that there was not enough space in the newspaper on that given day, it was a busy news day, the article did not interest the editors, or more research was required.

I can't ever remember working on a story or pitching a story around Aboriginal issues that wasn't taken. G&M journalist #3

To conclude, participants were asked *have you come across any barriers to reporting about or reporting on Aboriginal issues in Canada?* Many barriers were outlined when responding to this question. The most common barriers, as determined by participants, were trust, the problem of “big ideas” or fatigue, and the nature of journalism, scale, and complexity. Each of these are explained in detail below.

Trust was a recurring barrier, and came up in more than one interview. Trust was discussed primarily in the context of Indigenous peoples with journalists.

Well, like I said-the barriers is just a trust issue. That is the biggest thing... you can't just drop in. You have to be there. NP journalist #1

Aboriginal issues or a lot of Aboriginal people feel that at times, probably the media (at large) hasn't represented their positions, their histories, their cultures, their traditions, their needs and their rights as well as they could have or as favourably as they could have. G&M journalist #3

The barriers of “big ideas”, fatigue and the nature of journalism are all interconnected. As was previously discussed, the nature of journalism is that stories are not covered for vast amounts of time, and will only be covered if they tell a “story”. If movements, such as Idle No More, cannot articulate their demands in such a way as to be understood by the media, journalists find it difficult to articulate. Sobieraj (2010) argues, “the coexistence of multiple messages was often interpreted as the absence of any message” (521). Large social-structural critiques are difficult for journalists to incorporate into their stories because they are anticipating opposition groups with more focused complaints (Sobieraj, 2010). Sobieraj also found that reporters frequently dismissed social movements if they offered critiques without proposing solutions. However, solutions for such “wicked” problems are not easy to identify, or are panned as unrealistic. Further, journalists failed to acknowledge the complexity of the problems discussed (Sobieraj, 2010). Additionally, a story has to be ever changing and evolving to be covered.

They had really big ideas-but in practice it was kind of tough to get that. That is problematic for a journalist because we always try to get past platitudes...we try to get past an idea. What does that mean in practice? Give me something practical I can touch. And that was one of my problems dealing with it [Idle No More] is that

everybody wanted something different and no matter how you wrote about it, Idle No More and the AFN for that matter, is such a diverse group that there isn't one answer. NP journalist #1

I think at a certain point there is a fatigue that sets in. As a reporter you are always asked to do something new everyday and when the same thing is happening over and over you –at a certain point you kind of get tired. NP journalist #1

The issue of scale, in regard to distance and expense associated with covering Indigenous issues was also established as a barrier. Since most Aboriginal communities are rural and remote, there is a large cost associated with travel.

Let me tell you one possible barrier. That is that as you know, certain FN especially Inuit live in very remote communities. It is expensive to get out there. It is expensive to send me to any place like that. So we have to think very long and hard if they are ever going to send a Globe and Mail person out to actually talk to people on the ground, in reserves or wherever. G&M journalist #2

Finally, the last recurring barrier, as articulated by participants, was complexity.

Complexity in this case relates to Indigenous issues generally.

I think it can be a difficult subject to write about as well. I think it is a topic that often takes time and that you have to be really careful writing about because it's complicated. There are a lot of different interests, and competing interests at work, it is politically charged because behind a lot of the conversations and public debate we have about Aboriginal peoples and the issues they face and the way they have been treated in this country are undertones of racism, of colonialism, of historical maltreatment. All of those things, even if they are not part of the issue of the day you are writing about, they come up as undercurrents and you have to treat that sensitively and you have to treat that delicately. G&M journalist #3

When discussing barriers, journalists also self-identified as non-Indigenous people. They articulated a need for increased representation of Aboriginal people within their profession. The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1996) also called for increased Indigenous representation within mainstream media, in the form of an increase in reporters of Aboriginal descent. Although Aboriginal peoples make up over 4.3 percent of the Canadian population (Statistics Canada, 2011), a 1994 study by the Diversity Committee of the Canadian Newspapers association, of the 41 mainstream papers surveyed, found that only four of 2,620 employees were Aboriginal. In 2007, there were approximately 200 Aboriginal reporters employed in various media (Warry, 2007).

I wish that there were more actual Aboriginal voices within the news media. I think that it is sort of too bad, in many ways, that it is left to a white girl from Burlington Ontario to impart Aboriginal issues in the Globe and Mail. G&M journalist #2

We are writing about people who have had an experience that I haven't experienced. I don't know what it is like to have grown up as an Aboriginal person, in an Aboriginal community, to have that be my heritage, etc. I think we all have to be really careful not to project our own experiences and our own ideas about the world and about society onto these people. You have to be really careful to listen to your sources when you are writing about these stories and do your best to present their perspective reliably, accurately and faithfully. I think if you do that, then all the other stuff about political concerns and everything becomes less difficult to deal with. G&M journalist #3

The insights provided by the journalists during this phase of the research emphasize that they are aware of their role in re-enforcing stereotypical portrayals or understandings of Indigenous peoples. However, issues such as time and space limit the discussion of Indigenous culture, history or capacity building. This reinforces stereotypical understandings of Indigenous people. Further, the mainstream media is a hegemonic institution. Gamson et al., (1993) outline this concept,

The lens through which we receive this information is not neutral but evinces the power and point of view of the political and economic elites who operate and focus it. And the special genius of this system is to make the whole process seem so normal and natural that the very art of social construction is invisible (374).

However, journalists also emphasized Indigenous issues as emerging and important.

It is a topic that I think really matters to a lot of people in this country. Not only to Aboriginal people but to non-Aboriginal people as well. It is a topic that is about both the past and the future of our country and you can't get any bigger than that in terms of significance. G&M journalist #3

I think that Canadians are coming to an awakening of, and an understanding of the relationship we have, and will have going forward, with FN in particular. And that they are not only a force to be reckoned with but they are also part of our heritage, in terms of the fact that this country was –they were here before my ancestors were and I'm Canadian and as a Canadian, they are part of my country's mosaic. But beyond that I just think that there are so many good stories in terms of how they are going to extend their culture and make it fit with the world that we now live in. I think that the whole thing, people, human kind of story G&M journalist #2

Increased coverage of Indigenous issues in the mainstream media could have repercussions on the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Canada. Increased culturally informed interpretations of Aboriginal issues and events could lead to better understanding and education relating to the complexity of Aboriginal issues. Such a dialogue could also lead to a more sustainable relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in the future.

This study sought to understand the portrayal of the Idle No More movement in two national mainstream print media sources. The findings indicate that coverage of Idle No More occurred primarily during the months of December 2012 and January 2013, as this corresponded with Theresa Spence's hunger strike. Discussion of Idle No More within the two newspapers was restricted, due to the nature of the media. Within the analysis of the news articles and interviews with journalists, four themes emerged. These were Theresa Spence's hunger strike, protests, internal politics and the relationship between the Canadian government and Indigenous peoples.

This study also sought to understand the experiences and barriers facing journalists when writing about Idle No More. Journalists discussed their involvement in the coverage of the movement, including how they were assigned to cover these stories in order to gain a better understanding of what types of stories are omitted. Participants determined barriers to be trust, the problem of "big ideas" or fatigue, the nature of journalism, scale and complexity.

The data gathered within this study highlight the complexities and issues around the portrayal of Indigenous people in the mainstream media. The nature of the media restricts coverage of positive stories about the development and capacity building of Indigenous peoples in Canada.

V. Conclusion and Recommendation for Future Research

The Idle No More movement, which was started in November of 2012, drew attention to the impacts of Canada's settler colonial history and continued assimilationist practices on Indigenous peoples. Vast inequalities in living standards continue to exist today between non-Indigenous and Indigenous peoples in Canada. This movement also drew attention to the changes to environmental legislation contained within Bills C-38 and C-45. These changes threaten established and potential Aboriginal rights and environmental protections across Canada.

The mainstream media continues to perpetuate stereotypical and colonial understandings of Indigenous people. This portrayal promotes the identity of Canada as a multicultural society, while ignoring Canada's settler-colonial history. Discourse relating to Indigenous social movements often fails to acknowledge the need for self-government and increased economic and resource rights for Indigenous peoples.

Similarly to sustainability, Aboriginal issues are "wicked" problems, as there are no clear solutions and different actors understand and formulate these problems differently. Idle No More sought to reconcile the unsustainable relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada as well as the relationship between human beings in general with the living earth.

This study explored the mainstream media's portrayal of the Idle No More movement over a one-year timeline, using qualitative methods including a critical discourse analysis of media content and semi-structured interviews with journalists concerning their experiences covering Idle No More; omission and barriers to reporting on Aboriginal issues (specifically Idle No More). The study sought to determine whether the media perpetuated stereotypes of Aboriginal people in its coverage of the movement, as well as to determine the perceived barriers facing journalists when writing about Aboriginal issues, particularly Idle No More. The study sought to answer the following questions:

1. How did two mainstream print media sources (The Globe and Mail and National Post) portray the Idle No More movement?
2. What are the experiences and barriers faced by journalists when writing about Aboriginal issues, specifically Idle No More?

The CDA phase of this study revealed the themes and patterns of the coverage of Idle No More. The themes of the coverage were determined to be Theresa Spence's hunger strike, protest, internal politics and the relationship between the Canadian government and Indigenous peoples. The analysis of the timeline of the coverage revealed that coverage was focused during the months of December 2012 and January 2013, at the time of Theresa Spence's hunger strike. This spoke to the nature of the media, in that it requires a story arc and appeal to emotion.

Interviews with journalists provided valuable insight into the context of the coverage. Common barriers were determined to be trust, the problem of "big ideas" or fatigue, scale, complexity and the nature of journalism. Journalists also spoke to how articles are assigned to them. Given that the journalist or the editor of the paper determines topics, there is an inherent bias in what is reported by the mainstream media. However, journalists also spoke to the need for greater emphasis on coverage of Aboriginal issues in the mainstream media.

While the need for change in coverage was established, no mention of what the catalyst for this change might be. The field of sustainability often questions when and where change occurs. As it relates to media coverage, do Indigenous movement such as Idle No More increase understanding of Aboriginal and environmental issues?

In moving forward, it would be interesting to examine the impact of Idle No More on the portrayal of Indigenous peoples in the mainstream media. Did this movement challenge the dominant understanding of Indigenous issues in Canada or did it reinforce some of the common misunderstandings between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples? Such a study could be undertaken through interviews with Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples to determine their perspectives on the Idle No More movement. Creating better understanding between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada can lead to increased social sustainability. The mainstream media has a role to play in nurturing and developing such a renewed relationship.

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Appendix A: Email Regarding Interest

Dear _____:

My name is Emily Caddell and I am a fourth year student at Dalhousie University, currently working on my Honours thesis project with the College of Sustainability.

The purpose of my thesis is to determine the media's portrayal of the Idle No More movement. I am writing you because you have written for The Globe and Mail/National Post on the topic within the last year. This email is to determine your interest in speaking with me on the topic of Idle No More between January and March 2014.

If you are interested in participating in this project please feel free to contact me by email or telephone at (902) 488-3054. This is only the initial contact phase prior to continuing with the research. Please be advised that this research will be processed by the Dalhousie Research Ethics Board for approval.

Thank you very much for your time.

I greatly look forward to hearing from you.

Emily Caddell

B.A Combined Honours Sustainability and International Development, minor in Political Science (Candidate)

Thesis Supervisor:

Heather Castleden

heather.castleden@dal.ca

Dalhousie College of Sustainability

Susan Tirone

susan.tirone@dal.ca

Appendix B: Email Recruitment Script

Dear _____:

I am a fourth year undergraduate student in the College of Sustainability at Dalhousie University. As part of my undergraduate thesis, I am conducting a study about the media's portrayal of Idle No More.

Your voluntary participation would involve a 60 minute phone interview with myself once you have read the detailed information sheet and signed a consent form (see attachment). During this interview there will be no right or wrong answers, as I am interested in your perspectives and experiences. This interview will consist of eight (8) questions about your experiences as a journalist covering Idle No More and Aboriginal issues. Interviews will cover three topics, (1) your experience reporting on Idle No More; (2) omission; and (3) barriers to reporting on Aboriginal issues (specifically Idle No More). With your permission, the interview will be digitally recorded with an audio-recorder.

My study, titled "Examining the media's portrayal of Idle No More: A critical discourse analysis" has been approved by the Dalhousie University Research Ethics Board.

I appreciate that you are probably very busy but I hope that you see the value in participating as the goal of this study is to explore the barriers to the media's coverage of Aboriginal issues.

I am looking forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience,

Sincere Regards,

Emily Caddell

(Candidate) B.A Combined Honours in Sustainability and International Development Studies, minor in political science

[If potential participants declines to participate, say the following by email:]

Thank you very much for responding and I appreciate your decision. I am wondering if you might be able to suggest someone else as a potential participant who fits the participant recruitment criteria: A journalist with The Globe and Mail or National Post having written on the topic of Idle No More in the past year.

Thank you for any suggestions you might be able to provide.

Sincere Regards,

Emily Caddell

(Candidate) B.A Combined Honours in Sustainability and International Development Studies, minor in political science

[If potential participant agrees to participate, say the following by email:]

That's great!

Thank you for your interest in participating. I have attached a copy of the information sheet and consent form. If you are still interested in participating once you have read the information sheet and I have answered any remaining questions, please sign the consent form and sent it back to me.

After I receive the consent form I will schedule an interview for your earliest convenience. These interviews would take place during the months of January-February.

Thank you again, I am delighted that you have agreed to participate. If you have any questions about the study, the information sheet, or consent form, you can contact me at 902.488.3054.

Sincere Regards,
Emily

[If potential participant does not respond, re-send the original email 10 days later with the following closing statement:]

If I do not hear from you by X date (7 days from time of second email), I will assume that you are not available and cease sending further correspondence about the study. But please do not hesitate to get in touch with me at any time should your schedule permit you to do so.

Sincere Regards,
Emily

Appendix C: Information Sheet and Consent Form

Research Project: Examining the media's portrayal of Idle No More: A critical discourse analysis (Working title).

Principal Investigator: Emily Caddell (Dalhousie University)
Supervisor: Dr. Heather Castleden (Dalhousie University)
College of Sustainability: Dr. Susan Tirone (Dalhousie University)

PURPOSE: The purpose of this research study is to examine the media's portrayal of Idle No More. Specifically, I would like to gather journalists' perspectives on the movement as well as the possible barriers facing journalists when writing about Aboriginal issues.

YOUR PARTICIPATION: Your voluntary participation involves a one-on-one phone interview for approximately 60 minutes at a time of mutual convenience. During this interview there are no right or wrong answers, as I am interested in your perspective and experiences. This interview will consist of eight (8) questions about your experiences as a journalist covering Idle No More and Aboriginal issues. Interviews will cover three topics, (1) your experience reporting on Idle No More; (2) omission; and (3) barriers to reporting on Aboriginal issues (specifically Idle No More). With your permission, the interview will be digitally recorded with an audio-recorder.

HOW THIS RESEARCH WILL BE USED: Direct quotes of what you say may be used in any dissemination activities including a poster presentation and a final report. Any oral or written presentations of the research findings will not have your name on them, unless you wish to be identified (and provide your written consent to do so).

BENEFITS OF THIS STUDY: There are not direct benefits to participants in this study. There are several indirect benefits. The knowledge and information gathered will help to further our understanding of journalists' perspectives as well as possible challenges and barriers to writing about and reporting on Aboriginal issues in Canada. While a large body of literature already exists on the depiction of Aboriginal people in the media, documentation of the journalists' perspectives has not been undertaken to the same extent.

RISKS: There is a slight social risk for participants in this study. Sometimes people are uncomfortable about being interviewed. Your comfort during the interview is of utmost importance to me. You have the right to leave questions unanswered, and take breaks if needed. Comments you have made during your interview can be removed from the transcript if you are uncomfortable with them, and I will omit anything you have shared at your discretion.

WITHDRAWAL FROM THE STUDY: You may refuse to participate or to later withdraw from the study without consequence up until study results have been analyzed by simply telling Emily Caddell, Heather Castleden or Susan Tirone (see contact details above). You also have the right to leave unanswered any questions you prefer not to answer. Should you wish to withdraw part way through the study, any raw data will be destroyed at your request.

CONFIDENTIALITY: Because this research is being conducted with a targeted group of journalists at a limited number of news sources—a relatively small group of individuals, it may not be possible to keep your participation and responses completely anonymous. However, your name will not be used and an anonymous identifier (i.e. codename) will

be employed to ensure confidentiality. All information shared during the one-on-one interview will be kept confidential and your identity will not be revealed unless you give your written permission and unless revealing your identity does not inadvertently reveal someone else's identity.

All data will remain with Emily Caddell in a secure location on campus (password-protected computer and locked files) and will be destroyed within one year of the study's completion. The digital recordings will only be available to the researcher.

CONSENT: Attached to this information letter is the consent form. Once you have had the opportunity to go through the information sheet and the consent form, Emily Caddell is available to answer any questions or address any concerns. You can then decide if you want to sign the consent form, thereby agreeing to participate in this study. Please scan and email the signed consent form to emilycaddell@dal.ca prior to the phone interview.

If you have any complaints or concerns about this research that you feel you cannot discuss with Emily Caddell, you can contact her thesis supervisor Dr. Heather Castleden (heather.castleden@dal.ca) or Dr. Susan Tirone (susan.tirone@dal.ca) with the College of Sustainability.

You may also contact Dr. Catherine Connors, Director of the Dalhousie University's Research Ethics Office by phone at 902.494.1462 or Email at ethics@dal.ca. This study has been reviewed by the Dalhousie University's Social Sciences and Humanities Research Ethics Board.

Research Project: Examining the Examining the media's portrayal of Idle No More: A critical discourse analysis (Working title).

Principal Investigator: Emily Caddell (Dalhousie University)

Supervisor: Dr. Heather Castleden (Dalhousie University)

College of Sustainability: Dr. Susan Tirone (Dalhousie University)

1. Do you understand that you have been asked to take part in a research study?
Yes No
2. Have you read and received a copy of the attached Information Sheet?
Yes No
3. Do you understand the benefits and risks involved in taking part in this research?
Yes No
4. Have you had an opportunity to ask questions about this study with the research team member?
Yes No
5. Do you understand that you can stop taking part in this study up until study results are analyzed?
Yes No

You do not have to say why you have decided to withdraw

6. Are you clear about the issue of confidentiality?
Yes No

I would like to have my identity attached to my information.

If No, a codename will be used in lieu of your real name.

Yes No

Do you understand who will have access to your interview data?

Yes No

7. Do you consent to being audio-recorded?
Yes No
8. Do you wish to review a copy of your transcript to check for accuracy?
Yes No
9. Would you like to be contacted once the data has undergone preliminary analysis?
Yes No
10. Would you like to see how quotes from your interview are used before report(s) are finalized?
Yes No
11. Would you like an electronic copy of the final report?
Yes No

I agree to participate in this research project.

Signature of participant

Printed name of participant

Signature of principal investigator

Date

Thank you for your participation.

Appendix D: Interview Guide

Research Project: Examining the media's portrayal of Idle No More: A critical discourse analysis (Working title).

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study on the media's portrayal of the Idle No More movement. Before I begin recording the interview, I want to tell you a little bit about how this interview will take place. The interview should take maximum one hour and our conversation will be about your experiences as a journalist covering Idle No More and Aboriginal issues generally.

I just want to remind you that during this interview I will record our conversation. There are no right or wrong answers; I am uniquely interested in what you think. If there are things you would rather not discuss, that is ok and we can move on. If you say something that you would like to not be recorded, just say so, and it can be removed, even after you have completed the interview. The only people who will hear and see the interview material will be members of the research team. All original notes, digital recordings and back-up files will be stored at Dalhousie University in a secure location and will be kept until 2015.

At the end of this project, a poster will be prepared and presented as part of the Elizabeth May Symposium. A final report will be prepared and uploaded to Dalspace. In this and any other dissemination of the research, the information you have provided will remain confidential and any comments you make will be anonymized. Do you have any questions before we get started?

I. GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. Could you tell me if you are a staff or contract reporter for The Globe and Mail or National Post? What are the differences between a staff reporter and a contract reporter?
2. Can you tell me about your specific area of expertise in reporting, if applicable?
3. Can you tell me more about any articles that you wrote specific to Idle No More or Aboriginal issues? From what angle did you write? What did you want to portray?
4. What are your main sources of information when researching articles relating to Aboriginal peoples and specifically when researching Idle No More?

II. OMISSION

1. In the newsroom or within the structure of your newspaper, how are stories assigned to you?

2. Have you ever suggested or submitted an article that was not pursued or printed? (if answered yes) What were the parameters or reasons? Can you provide some examples?

III. BARRIERS

1. What has been your experience writing about or reporting on Aboriginal issues in Canada?
2. Have you come across any barriers to writing about or reporting on Aboriginal issues in Canada? (If answered yes) Can you provide some examples? (if answered no) What types of barriers do you think may arise?

Thank you. I would like to re-emphasize that everything you have shared today will remain confidential and a pseudonym will be used in any publications or presentations. If you have any questions or concerns regarding today's interview please do not hesitate to contact me, my supervisor, the College of Sustainability, or the Dalhousie University Research Ethics Office.

If participant has checked off that he/she would like to see either transcript of preliminary analysis then say: That's all for now, but I will be in touch with a copy of your transcript for you to review and/or a copy of the preliminary analysis for your comment. Thank you so much, it was great to talk with you!

Appendix E: Ethics Form

SECTION 1. ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

[File No: _____]

Office Use

Indicate the Research Ethics Board to review this research:

Health Sciences OR Social Sciences and Humanities

Project Title: Examining the media's portrayal of Idle No More: A Critical Discourse Analysis (Working title)

1.1 Student researcher: Emily Caddell			
Department	Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences		
Degree program	Combined Honours in Environment, Sustainability and Society and International Development Studies, minor in Political Science		
Email	emilycaddell@dal.ca	Phone	(902) 488-3054
I agree to conduct this research following the principles of the Tri-Council Policy Statement <i>Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans</i> and consistent with the University <i>Policy on the Ethical Conduct of Research Involving Humans</i> .			
Student signature:			

1.2 Supervisor Name: Heather Castleden			
Department	School for Resource and Environmental Studies		
Email:	heather.castleden@dal.ca	Phone	(902) 494-2966
I have reviewed the attached ethics application prior to its submission for ethics review, including the scientific/scholarly methods of the research project which is described in the ethics application, and believe it is sound and appropriate. I will ensure this research will be conducted following the principles of the Tri-Council Policy Statement <i>Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans</i> and consistent with the University <i>Policy on the Ethical Conduct of Research Involving Humans</i> .			
Supervisor signature:			

1.3 Department/unit ethics review (if applicable). Minimal risk research only.
This submission has been reviewed and approved by the research ethics committee.
Authorizing name and signature:
Date of approval:

SECTION 2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

2.1 LAY SUMMARY [500 words]

In lay language, briefly describe the rationale, purpose, study population and methods.

The media in Canada has a long history of perpetuating colonial stereotypes of Aboriginal people and continues to do so today (Harding, 2006; Anderson and Robertson, 2011). It has been found that prejudice is perpetuated by the media as they often neglect to address Canada's history of colonization (Sloan Morgan, 2012). Numerous studies, and observations from daily life, readily demonstrate this (Anderson and Robertson, 2011). This depiction of Aboriginal people reinforces social constructions and informs societal relations (Harding, 2006; Furniss, 2011) and contributes to the formation of national identities (Said, 1981; Nesbitt-Larking, 2007). This research builds on the already existing literature, which analyzes the discourse used by the media when reporting on Aboriginal issues. This study will examine the media's portrayal of the Idle No More movement, a grassroots Aboriginal movement that began in 2012.

The Idle No More movement began in November 2012 and was initiated in Saskatchewan by activists Nina Wilson, Sheelah McLean, Sylvia McAdam and Jessica Gordon. The movement began as a series of teach-ins throughout Saskatchewan to protest the omnibus parliamentary budget bills, C-38 and C-45, that will impact Indigenous sovereignty and environmental protections in Canada. In the time since, Idle No More has become one of the largest Indigenous mass movements in Canadian history and has changed the social and political landscape (Idle No More, n.d.). The movement garnered a considerable amount of local and national media attention.

This study will build on critical discourse analyses of the depiction of Aboriginal people in the media. The purpose of this research will be to determine the media's portrayal of the Idle No More movement over a one-year timeline, using qualitative methods including critical discourse analysis and semi-structured interviews.

The first phase of this study will be conducted using two national mainstream print media sources to explore the portrayal of the Idle No More movement. This will be done using articles containing "Idle No More" in the headline and written in the last year. This research will seek to determine whether the media perpetuated stereotypes of Aboriginal people in its coverage.

The second phase of this study will examine journalists' perspective on the movement as well as the possible barriers facing journalists when writing about Aboriginal issues. The study population includes all relevant journalists, in this case all those having written an article containing "Idle No More" in the headline within the two newspapers under evaluation (The Globe and Mail & National Post) in the last year.

References

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2.2 RESEARCH QUESTION

State the hypotheses, the research questions or research objectives.

This exploratory study is guided by the following research questions: (1) How did the mainstream media portray the Idle No More movement?; and (2) What are the barriers faced by journalists when writing about Aboriginal issues, specifically Idle No More?

2.3 RECRUITMENT

2.3.1 Describe how many participants are needed and how this was determined.

The study population includes a sample of targeted journalists that have written an article including “Idle No More” in the headline published in either The Globe and Mail or the National Post newspapers in 2012 and 2013. The study population was identified from the preceding research phase – a critical discourse analysis of approximately 50 news articles, as determined through a keyword search of the Factiva database for articles containing “Idle No More” in the headline within the last year. The estimated number of participants is 23 - 17 from The Globe and Mail and 6 from the National Post. Of this sample of participants, it has been confirmed that 11 journalists are front-line staff members. Recruitment will be based on participant interest. It is understood that not all potential participants will be interested in participating in the study thus, recruitment will continue until data saturation or until all contacts have been exhausted.

2.3.2 Describe recruitment plans and append recruitment instruments. Describe who will be doing the recruitment and what actions they will take, including any screening procedures. Describe any inclusion / exclusion criteria.

The Principal Investigator (Emily Caddell) has contacted potential participants by email (journalists at The Globe and Mail and National Post) to gauge interest in participating in this study (see Appendix A: Email Regarding Interest). This email outlined general information concerning the study.

A second email (See Appendix B: Email Recruitment Script) will be sent to all contacts to formally invite them to participate in the study. The information sheet and consent form will be attached to this email (see Appendix C: Information Sheet and Consent Form). If a potential participant does not respond to the second email after 10 days, a final email will be sent requesting a response within 7 days after which time, no

further action will be taken (see Appendix B: Email Recruitment Script)

Inclusion criteria include those who have written an article including the phrase “Idle No More” in the headline for either The Globe and Mail or National Post in 2013. Based on a scoping review of news articles, the Principal Investigator identified 23 journalists of whom 17 wrote for The Globe and Mail and 6 for the National Post. Eleven (11) front-line staff have been identified, however, the study will extend recruitment to contract staff (12) until data saturation has been met or until all contacts have been exhausted.

2.4 METHODS AND ANALYSIS

2.4.1 Discuss where the research will be conducted, what participants will be asked to do and the time commitment, what data will be recorded using what research instruments (append copies). Discuss any blinding or randomization measures. Discuss how participants will be given the opportunity to withdraw.

One-on-one semi-structured interviews will be conducted over the phone. Interview participants will be asked to answer a list of open-ended questions comprising three topics: (1) experiences reporting on Idle No More; (2) omission; and (3) barriers to reporting on Aboriginal issues (specifically Idle No More) (see Appendix D: Interview Guide). Interviews will take approximately 60 minutes. With participants’ permission, interviews will be audio-recorded using a digital recorder and transcribed verbatim. Blinding and randomization measures are not applicable.

Participation is completely voluntary and participants will be given the opportunity to withdraw without negative consequences up until study results are analyzed. If a participant chooses to withdraw their data part way through the study, all raw data will be destroyed at their request. Participants will also have the option to review a copy of their transcript to check for accuracy and to see how the quotes from their interview are used before report(s) are finalized. This will be made clear in the written consent form, information letter, and reiterated before and after the interview (see Appendix C: Information Letter and Consent Form).

2.4.2 Describe your role in this research and any special qualifications you have that are relevant to this study (e.g. professional experience, methods courses, fieldwork experience).

The Principal Investigator on this study (Emily Caddell) will be responsible for recruiting participants, conducting interviews by phone, collecting, transcribing, and analyzing the data, and preparing the final report and poster presentation for dissemination of results.

Emily is a fourth year undergraduate student with the College of Sustainability pursuing a Combined Honours in Sustainability and International Development, with a minor in Political Science. The interdisciplinary aspect of her degree will allow her to understand the various factors at play within the issues under study. Her primary research interest is inequality and environmental justice.

Last year, Emily completed SUST 3502, The Campus as a Living Lab, a research methods course. She has also completed the TCPS 2 tutorial. Other experiences that are relevant to this study include a summer position with the Senate of Canada, which included an opportunity to observe the Aboriginal Peoples Committee. The experience sparked her interest in Aboriginal issues and as a result, Emily pursued the Indigenous Perspectives on Environment and Resource Management course last fall.

2.4.3 Describe plans for data analysis in relation to the hypotheses/questions/objectives.
Transcripts will be returned for accuracy and member-checking. Once this data is collected, they will either be coded using NVivo or coded by hand and thematically analyzed using a constant comparative method.
2.4.4 Describe and justify any use of deception or nondisclosure and explain how participants will be debriefed.
<p>Deception and nondisclosure does not apply.</p> <p>Participants will be provided with the contact information for Emily Caddell should they wish to debrief about the study.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not applicable</p>
2.4.5 Describe any compensation, reimbursement or incentives that will be given to participants (including those who withdraw).
<p>Participants will be sent a thank you card after the interview has been completed.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not applicable</p>

<p>2.5 INFORMED CONSENT PROCESS</p> <p>Describe the informed consent process (i.e. how and when the research will be described to the prospective participant and by whom, how the researcher will ensure the prospective participant is fully informed of what they will be asked to do). If non-written consent is proposed, describe why and the process. If a waiver of informed consent is sought, address the criteria in the guidance document and TCPS articles 3.7 and/or 5.5. Address how any third party consent (with or without assent) will be managed. Describe any plans for ongoing consent, and/or community consent. Discuss how participants will be given the opportunity to withdraw (their participation and/or their data, and any limitations on this).</p> <p>Append copies of all consent forms or any oral consent script.</p> <p>An information letter and written consent form will be attached to the recruitment email so that participants have the chance to consider their participation, ask questions, and address their concerns well in advance of the interview. The information letter will explain the purpose of the study, methods and procedure, tasks and activities in which the participant will be involved, risks and benefits, and inform them of their rights to participation (see Appendix C: Information Letter and Consent Form).</p> <p>The Information Letter and Consent Form will be provided in English. Participants will be asked to email/scan or fax the signed consent form to the Principal Investigator (Emily Caddell) in advance of the scheduled interview. The information letter and written consent form will also be reviewed with the participant prior to the start of the interview so that they have a chance to reconsider their participation.</p> <p>Prospective participants will be invited to contact the Principal Investigator (Emily Caddell), her supervisor (Heather Castleden), or the committee member at the College of Sustainability (Susan Tirone) if they have any questions about the study. This communication will be used to clarify any of the written materials or</p>
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address any of the concerns of participants, should they arise.

Participation is completed voluntary and participants will be given the opportunity to withdraw without negative consequences up until study results are analyzed. If a participant chooses to withdraw their data part way through the study, all raw data will be destroyed at their request. Participants will also have the option to review a copy of their transcript to check for accuracy and to see how the quotes from their interview are used before report(s) are finalized. This will be made clear in the written consent form, information letter, and reiterated before and after the interview (see Appendix C: Information Letter and Consent Form).

Oral consent is not desired.

A waiver of informed consent is not applicable.

Third party and community consent is not applicable.

2.6 PRIVACY & CONFIDENTIALITY

2.6.1 Describe how data will be stored and handled in a secure manner, how long data will be retained and where, and plans for its destruction.

With participants' permission, interview data will be audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. The transcripts and audio files will only be accessible by the research team members, *and will be kept in the research space (School for Resource and Environmental Studies) within the university in steel cabinets under lock and key*. Data stored on computer will be password-protected.

Raw data will be kept on site in the secure location described above for 1 year and then destroyed (paper shredding; electronic erasure) according to Dalhousie policy.

2.6.2 Address any limits on confidentiality, such as a duty to disclose abuse or neglect of a child or adult in need of protection, and how these will be handled. Such limits should be described in consent documents.

Anonymity will not be possible as the study population (targeted group of journalists from The Globe and Mail and National Post) will be purposively sampled. However, confidentiality will be ensured by providing the option of using an anonymous identifier (i.e. codename) to be associated with quotations (see Appendix C: Information Sheet and Consent Form). Identifying information in association with the quotations will also be avoided as much as possible.

It is very unlikely that the interview questions will result in the disclosure of abuse or neglect. However, if it should occur, the participant will be informed of the interviewer's obligation to report the abuse or neglect to the appropriate authority.

Not applicable

2.6.3 Does your use of any survey company or software to help you collect, manage, store, or analyze data mean that personally identifiable information is accessible from outside of Canada?

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes. If yes, describe your use of the company or software and describe how you comply with the <i>University Policy for the Protection of Personal Information from Access Outside Canada</i> .
<p>2.6.4 Describe the measures to be undertaken for dissemination of research results and whether participants will be identified (either directly by name or indirectly). If participants will be quoted in reports from the data, address consent for this, including whether quotes will be identifiable or attributed. Describe how participants will be informed of results that may indicate they may be at risk (in screening or data collection), if applicable.</p>
<p>Participants will have the opportunity to indicate on the written consent form whether they would like to review a copy of their transcript to check for accuracy. The transcript will be circulated by email. Participants will also be provided the opportunity to review how quotes from their interview are used before the report is finalized. They may indicate their preference on the written consent form (See Appendix C: Information Letter and Consent Form).</p> <p>Quotations may be used in final reports, publications and presentations (e.g. poster). Unless otherwise directed (in writing) by individual participants, all personal identifiers will be removed and will be replaced with an anonymous identifier (i.e. codename). Permission to use quotation will be addressed through the consent form.</p> <p>Quotations will not be attributed to an individual unless otherwise directed (in writing) by individual participants. Identifiers will be removed from all quotations. How participants will be given the chance to see how the quotes are used is addressed above.</p>

<p>2.7 RISK & BENEFIT ANALYSIS</p>
<p>2.7.1 Discuss what risks or discomforts are anticipated for participants, how likely risks are and how risks will be mitigated.</p>
<p>There are possible risks for feelings of embarrassment or discomfort when asking journalists to discuss their experiences and relations with Aboriginal peoples or issues. However, the estimated probability of these risks is low.</p> <p>In order to mitigate these risks, the researcher (Emily Caddell) will attempt to put participants at ease by reminding them that there are no right or wrong answers and that she is uniquely interested in their perspectives. If participants become distraught or uncomfortable, a break from the interview will be suggested in order to allow the participant a moment to themselves. If necessary, it will be offered to reschedule and a reminder will be provided regarding their right to strike a comment from the record and/or withdraw without negative consequence up until the results are analyzed.</p>
<p>2.7.2 Identify any direct benefits of participation to participants (other than compensation), and the indirect benefits of the study (e.g. contribution to new knowledge)</p>
<p>The results of this research are meant to benefit participants in that they will provide insight into some of the barriers facing journalists when covering Aboriginal issues. This will benefit them going forward as they will be better able to provide coverage of these issues.</p>

The indirect benefits of the study will be contributing to existing literature regarding the media and Aboriginal peoples. While an extensive body of literature on the topic already exists, to my knowledge, journalists have not been interviewed.

2.8 CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Describe whether any conflict of interest exists for any member of the research team in relation to potential research participants (e.g., TA, fellow students), and/or study sponsors, and how this will be handled.

Not applicable

SECTION 3. APPENDICES

3.1 Appendices Checklist. Append all relevant material to this application. This may include:

- Recruitment Documents (posters, verbal scripts, online postings, any invitations to participate, etc.)
- Screening Documents
- Consent Forms (see section 3.2 below)
- Research Instruments (questionnaires, surveys, interview or focus group questions, etc.)
- Debriefing Forms
- Permission Letters (Aboriginal Band Council, School Board, Director of a long-term care facility)