The Third World First Nations Reserve: Framing Crises on First Nations Reserves In Canadian Newspaper Coverage

Harry Chandler

A Thesis

In

The Department

Of

Journalism

Presented in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts (Journalism Studies) at Concordia University Montreal, Quebec, Canada

June, 2014

CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY
School of Graduate Studies

This is to certify that the thesis prepared

By: Harry Chandler

Entitled: The Third World First Nations Reserve: Framing Crises on First Nations Reserves In Canadian Newspaper Coverage

and submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

complies with the regulations of the University and meets the accepted standards with

respect to originality and quality.

Signed by the final examining committee:

_____Dr. David Secko_____ Chair

_____Dr. Gavin Taylor_____ Examiner

_____Prof. Linda Kay_____ Examiner

_____Dr. Brian Gabrial_____ Supervisor

Approved by _____

Chair of Department or Graduate Program Director

_____

Dean of Faculty

Date _____June 23rd, 2014_____

Abstract:

The Third World First Nations Reserve: Framing Crises on First Nations Reserves In Canadian Newspaper Coverage by Harry Chandler

This study is an examination of recent Canadian newspaper coverage of First Nations reserves, specifically focusing on whether this coverage marginalizes Aboriginals through the use of ethnocentric language, stereotypes and news frames that conform to a larger historical-colonial discourse of Aboriginal peoples in Canada. Using a combined methodology of critical discourse analysis and frame analysis, this research examined the press coverage of the water crisis of 2005 on the Cree First Nation reserve of Kashechewan and the housing crisis on the neighboring reserve of Attawapiskat in 2011. Both of these incidents warranted significant press coverage and drew national attention to the conditions of Canada's First Nations reserves. Examining selected newspaper coverage of these events in *The Globe and Mail* and *The National Post*, this study determined that the newspapers framed these reserves in such a way that emphasized their poverty and hopelessness, equating them with Third World nations, thereby serving to further marginalize Aboriginal people. A comparative analysis of the coverage using the Aboriginal newspaper *The Wawatay News* established a counter frame to those of Canada's mainstream newspapers.

Acknowledgments

I would like to first thank my supervisor, Brian Gabrial, for his infinite patience, guidance and encouragement in seeing me through this.

I also wish to thank the faculty and administration of the Journalism Studies department.

My parents and sister for all their support and especially my extended family in Montreal, who were always there in times of need.

And last of all I want to thank my fellow Journalism Studies students for their friendship and encouraging words.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1

1.1 Introduction

This thesis concerns national press coverage of the 2005 water crisis on the First Nations reserve of Kashechewan and the 2011 housing crisis on the Attawapiskat reserve. For many Canadians not living near the reserves, they learned of these crises from news media including newspapers, radio and television reports. The focus of this thesis is on newspaper coverage of the events. The selection of the case studies is important in that both events generated significant newspaper coverage, informing a large, non-Aboriginal, mainstream Canadian audience about what was happening on two reserves. Briefly, the Kashechewan crisis occurred when testing discovered Escherichia coli (E. coli) bacteria in the reserve's water supply, resulting in the mass evacuation of residents to other Ontario communities. In 2011, inadequate housing on the Attawapiskat reserve forced leaders to declare a state of emergency because residents faced homelessness at a time when winter weather was approaching. Initial headlines concerning the events in *The National Post* and *The Globe and Mail* indicated a very serious situation developing: "Reserve may be unlivable; Residents angry,"[1] "Federal help headed for troubled first-nations village,"[2] and "Polluted reserve to be evacuated." [3] Later headlines included the following: "Communities too sad to

---

[1] Mallen, Sean."Reserve may be unlivable: Residents angry" *National Post* [Don Mills, Ont] 27 Oct 2005: A10.

[2] Galloway, Gloria. "Federal help headed for troubled first-nations village" *The Globe and Mail* , [Toronto, Ont] 26 Nov 2011: A.8.

[3] Howlett, Karen; Curry, Bill. "Polluted reserve to be evacuated" *The Globe and Mail* [Toronto, Ont] 26 Oct 2005: A.1.

survive"[4] and "The place without a future." [5] The text of these headlines alone could be interpreted as showing how dire living conditions on these reserves had become. In this study, a deeper reading of the text that followed the headlines also created a sense of emergency and fed into an existing frame about what life on the reserve meant.

1.2 Troubled Media Relations

Hugh Shewell has noted that First Nations reserves have entered the Canadian public consciousness as places of poverty and despair. [6] Years earlier, the *Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* (RCAP) similarly observed in its final 1996 report that the news coverage of the country's Aboriginal peoples focused on poor living conditions on the reserves, stating, "Media reports had given Canadians new reasons to be disturbed about the facts of life in many Aboriginal communities: high rates of poverty, ill health, family break-down and suicide."[7] This negative focus on Aboriginal life is similar to what journalist Geoffrey York observed about the Canadian public, saying it had little familiarity with problems in Aboriginal communities except when the occasional crisis made news. [8] For example, *The Toronto Star* published a series of articles on First Nations reserves, titled *Broken*

---

[4] "Communities too sad to survive" *National Post* [Don Mills, Ont] 01 Dec 2011: A.16.

[5] Wente, Margaret. "The place without a future" *The Globe and Mail* [Toronto, Ont] 01 Nov 2005: A.21.

[6] Shewell, Hugh. *"Enough to Keep Them Alive": Indian Welfare in Canada, 1873-1965*. Toronto: University of Toronto, 2004 p.341.

[7] ARCHIVED - Highlights from the Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples." *Government of Canada; Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada; Communications Branch;*. N.p., n.d. Web.

[8] York, Geoffrey. *The Dispossessed: Life and Death in Native Canada*. Toronto: Lester & Orpen Dennys, 1989 p.xiii.

People, Broken Policy.[9] This series highlighted the negative aspects of living in an Aboriginal community and focused on poor living conditions caused by unsanitary drinking water or toxic materials used in the construction of houses. The series also reported on epidemics of alcoholism or drug abuse. [10]

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine how the news media uses language in stories about Aboriginal communities in crisis. The thesis explores how mainstream Canadian newspaper coverage creates news frames, which delimit and define for readers what is happening on the reserves. However, they can also reinforce preconceived ideas that readers may come to understand or even expect about Aboriginal living conditions on the reserves. Of particular importance to this thesis is the frame identified as the *Third World First Nations Reserve*. This frame is identified in the use of language that evokes imagery linking reserve life to life in a developing, impoverished nation. The use of this frame results in an objectification of these communities, ignoring the individual stories and posing an "us versus them" scenario (i.e., Canadian versus *not* Canadian). Such objectification leads to the creation of Aboriginals as "The Other."

This thesis contends that news frames feed into and help constitute a media discourse. Embedded within these frames are stereotypes that have a history and use that individuals come to understand, even expect. Taken together, these frames and stereotypes form the larger discourse about Aboriginals that makes sense to primarily white Canadian readers. As noted, many Canadians learned about the two crises from their newspapers. Therefore, this research adds to the body of existing

---

[9] "Broken People, Broken Policy." *Toronto Star* [Toronto] 31 Oct. 2010, A 9 sec.: n. pag. Print.
[10] Ibid.

scholarship about Canadian media treatment of Aboriginal peoples as it identifies a news frame called *The Third World First Nations Reserve*. This frame adds to a discourse about Aboriginal peoples that is often negative, patronizing, and one-dimensional.

This news frame taps into an older colonial discourse, to be explored further in Chapter 2, that described Aboriginal peoples as inferior to white mainstream culture (i.e., a white settler population of European extraction).[11] This post-colonial discourse, appearing in Canadian newspapers, employs negative stereotypes that have misrepresented Canada's Aboriginal peoples in newspapers and have persisted into the 20th and 21st centuries.[12]

Specifically, this thesis examines newspaper coverage in *The National Post* and *The Globe and Mail* of the Kashechewan and Attawapiskat crises. The newspaper coverage includes headlines, news items, and editorials. To analyze the coverage and to identify the *Third World First Nations Reserve* frame, the thesis will provide a contextualization for the frame by linking it to Canada's long, often poor relationship with its Aboriginal peoples as well their treatment over time by the Canadian press. In addition, this thesis adds another critical component that may serve as a counterpoise to the *Third World First Nations Reserve* frame as it examines news coverage of the two crises found in *The Wawatay News*, an Aboriginal newspaper. Therefore, the following research questions guide this thesis:

---

[11] Anderson, Mark Cronlund, and Carmen Robertson. *Seeing Red: A History of Natives in Canadian Newspapers*. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba, 2011 p.7.

[12] For example, one common stereotype concerning Aboriginals is that of them as substance abusers. Another stereotype is that of Aboriginals as corrupt financial managers; see Fleras, Augie. *The Media Gaze: Representations of Diversities in Canada*. Vancouver: UBC, 2011 p.219.

1. Is there evidence of a 'Third World First Nations Reserve" frame in Canadian national newspaper coverage of the crises affecting Kashechewan and Attawapiskat? How might this frame be identified?
2. Does this frame contribute to the larger, post-colonial discourse of Aboriginals as "The Other"?

The following research question guided the examination of *The Wawatay News*:

3. As a critique of the two selected mainstream newspapers, did the reporting found in the selected Aboriginal newspaper ignore or refute this frame? If so, how are positive counter frames illustrated?

Given the significant media attention to the Attawapiskat housing crisis and the Kashechewan water crisis, this analysis of newspaper coverage of First Nations reserves contributes to a greater and significant understanding of how Canadian newspapers report on these communities and how they may contribute to a historically grounded but negative discourse that continues to inform non-Aboriginal readers about Aboriginals and their reserves.

1.3 Expected Contribution of Research

The First Nations reserve system represents a lasting legacy of Canadian colonialism, and the nation's mainstream press often ignores these areas unless a crisis occurs. Unfortunately, this creates a situation in which any coverage of a reserve will likely be negative; this was the case with the events occurring on the Kashechewan and Attawapiskat reserves. For many Canadians, news stories that emphasize such problematic narratives – that all Aboriginal communities are troubled and, by extension, all Aboriginal peoples are troubled – become the

dominant information originating from Aboriginal communities. While significant research has examined Aboriginals in Canada and how Canadian news media (e.g., television and radio news coverage) have covered them, this research offers a fresh addition to this literature in that it provides a comparative analysis of mainstream, non-Aboriginal press coverage with Aboriginal press coverage of these two events. How do they compare? Does the Aboriginal press offer positive counter-frames to the *Third World First Nations Reserve* frame?

The remainder of this chapter concerns important definitions of the terms being used in this thesis. In addition, the following sections will provide a brief history of the Cree reserves in Canada and of the two crises highlighted in this study. Finally, it will clarify the use of the term "Third World" and provide the layout for the remaining chapters.

1.4 Defining Aboriginal Peoples and First Nations

In a study of Canada's diverse Aboriginal communities and the media, correct and consistent terminology is necessary. The *Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* defines "Aboriginal peoples" as

> Organic political and cultural entities that stem historically from the original peoples of North America, rather than collections of individuals united by so-called 'racial' characteristics. The term includes the First Nations, Inuit and Métis people of Canada (see section 35(2) of the Constitution Act, 1982).[13]

Singularly, an Aboriginal person means an individual belonging to the political and cultural entities known as "Aboriginal peoples." The Commission states that the use of the term Aboriginal peoples will "refer to the indigenous inhabitants of Canada

---

[13] Canada. *Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples*. By Georges Erasmus and René Dussault. Vol. 3. Ottawa: Commission, 1996. Print. Gathering Strength. A Note About Terminology.

when we want to refer in a general manner to Inuit and to First Nations and Métis people, without regard to their separate origins and identities."[14]

As defined by Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, First Nations means "the Indian peoples in Canada, both Status and Non-Status. Some Indian peoples have also adopted the term 'First Nation' to replace the word 'band' in the name of their community." First Nations typically refer to Aboriginal people who are neither Inuit nor Metis, but who have been historically referred to as Indians.[15]

Although this thesis is examining the case studies of the Cree First Nations of Kashechewan and Attawapiskat, it does so within the broader context of how all Aboriginal people in Canada have been portrayed by the press; as such, it will use the term *Aboriginal people* when referring to them in a general sense and *First Nations* when referring to reserves and/or inhabitants of reserves.

1.5 Third World Versus Fourth World

In a discussion of a *Third World First Nations Reserve* frame, it becomes necessary to define the problematic term "Third World," which is considered an archaic, Cold War term used to describe nations that were *neither* First World (e.g., Western European or North American nations considered democratic and economically developed) *nor* Second World (e.g., Eastern European or Asian nations considered totalitarian or communist nations). It persists and has evolved into a

---

[14] Canada. *Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples*. By Georges Erasmus and René Dussault. Vol. 3. Ottawa: Commission, 1996. Print. Gathering Strength. A Note About Terminology.

[15] "First Nations." *Government of Canada; Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada; Communications Branch;*. N.p., n.d. Web.

euphemism for geographic areas enduring poverty and, to some extent, political corruption and economic mismanagement.[16] In Canada, some members of First Nations use the term to draw attention to problems on their reserves.[17] One alternative term proposed by Canadian Aboriginal leader and activist Chief George Manuel is "Fourth World," a sub-population existing within the First World that maintains traditional ways of life but is politically and socially marginalized by the broader First World culture and society.[18] However, since this study's key focus is on "First World" media and its use of the frame *Third World First Nations Reserve*, the term Third World will be used.

1.6 The Attawapiskat and Kashechewan Cree Reserves

The word Cree, like the term Indian, is a European invention. Cree derives from the French word Kristinaux, a term used by early French explorers to designate the Aboriginal people who shared this common language; English speakers would later shorten this term to Cree.[19] The traditional lands of the Cree were concentrated around the James Bay area and extended into the interior of Quebec, which had been settled for at least a thousand years before contact with Europeans.[20] Prior to European contact, the Cree were a nomadic people, travelling by birch canoe in the summer or by sled and snowshoes in the winter. Their skills as

---

[16] Tomlinson, B.R. "What Was the Third World?" Journal of Contemporary History 38.2 (2003): p.307-21.

[17] 'The Reality for First Nations in Canada', *Assembly of First Nations,* N.p., n.d. Web.

[18] Manuel, George, and Michael Posluns. *The Fourth World: An Indian Reality*. Don Mills, Ont.: Collier-Macmillan Canada, 1974.

[19] McMillan, Alan D., and Eldon Yellowhorn. *First Peoples in Canada*. Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2004 p.116-118.

[20] Lytwyn, Victor P. *Muskekowuck Athinuwick: Original People of the Great Swampy Land*. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba, 2002 p.28.

hunters facilitated their entry into the fur trade. Contact with Europeans came relatively early due to extensive trade networks with other tribes and the advent of the Hudson's Bay Company, which started trading with the James Bay Cree as early as 1670.[21] Hunting was (and still is) an integral part of Cree life, providing not only subsistence but also the framework around which cultural and religious traditions were structured. Family and political structures consisted of three social units: the nuclear family, the hunting group, and the community (or regional band).[22]

Attawapiskat can be roughly translated as "the opening in the rocks" and is one of seven communities that form the region known to the indigenous Cree as Mushkegowukaski. The reserve was created between 1929 and 1930 under Treaty No. 9 at its current location on the Ekwan River in Northern Ontario.[23] The on-reserve population is approximately 1900 people. The people of Attawapiskat still derive a large part of their livelihood from the land and continue to hunt, fish and make crafts. The local economy consists mainly of on-reserve services and employment by the local band council. Despite close proximity to a De Beers diamond mine, the reserve derives little economic benefit from the mine due to a controversial Impact Benefit Agreement (IBA) negotiated with the provincial government in 2005.[24] Along with the reported housing troubles, the reserve

---

[21] Lytwyn, Victor P. *Muskekowuck Athinuwick: Original People of the Great Swampy Land*. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba, 2002 p.27.
[22] McMillan, Alan D., and Eldon Yellowhorn. *First Peoples in Canada*. Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2004 p.116-118.
[23] Cummins, Bryan D. *"Only God Can Own the Land": The Attawapiskat Cree*. Toronto: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2004 p.12.
[24] Long, John. *Treaty No. 9: Making the Agreement to Share the Land in Far Northern Ontario in 1905*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's UP, 2010, p.100.

struggles with low employment and educational problems due to a lack of schools in the area.

Kashechewan, whose name translates to "where the water flows fast," is a neighbouring Cree community of roughly 1500 residents located on the Albany River in Northern Ontario, roughly 10 kilometers upstream from James Bay.[25] Since its construction, the community has contended with persistent spring flooding due to its location on the flood plain. The community also suffers from housing and infrastructure problems, along with inadequate healthcare. Like Kashechewan, a large part of the local economy still relies on trapping, hunting, and craftmaking. Other local employment consists primarily of government services (mainly band council jobs) and some small private enterprises. Like Attawapiskat, the reserve struggles with high unemployment and inadequate housing and community services.[26]

1.7 The Crises

Kashechewan

In Kashechewan, a fax sent on October 14, 2005 alerted federal authorities in Ottawa that E. Coli had been found in the reserve's water supply. The contamination occurred as a result of flooding, which causes the reserve's sewage lagoon to back up into the water intake pipe, located directly downstream from the lagoon. In order to ensure that the reserve got the assistance it needed, faxes, emails and letters were

---

[25] Pope, Alan. "Report on the Kashechewan First Nation and Its People." *www.collectionscanada.gc.ca*. Aboriginal Affars Canada, 31 Oct. 2006. Web.
[26] Ibid Web.

sent by reserve officials to both the federal government and the media.[27] As a result of these efforts, the crisis drew considerable media coverage, drawing attention to the living conditions not only of Kashechewan, but of many First Nations reserves across Canada. In the ensuing days, arguments flared between the Federal and Provincial governments over who had jurisdiction over the reserve. The federal government contended that it was the province's responsibility because the province is responsible for public health and water safety.[28] On October 25, 2005, Premier Dalton McGuinty announced that approximately 1000 of the reserve's residents would be evacuated to communities around Ontario. A subsequent report on the crisis by Special Federal Representative Alan Pope issued a number of recommendations to improve living conditions of the community, including moving the reserve from its current site or relocating the residents to Timmins, Ontario.[29] The federal government entered into an agreement with the reserve to upgrade the current site in 2007.[30]

Attawapiskat

The Attawapiskat housing crisis first came to public attention on October 28, 2011, after Attawapiskat First Nations Chief Theresa Spence declared a state of emergency. Inadequate housing had become a problem in the community after a sewage backup in 2009 left many residents homeless, forcing them to live in tents

---

[27] TOXIC WATER: THE KASHECHEWAN STORY." *Newsinreview.cbclearning.ca*. CBC, Dec. 2005. Web.
[28] Ibid Web.
[29] Pope, Alan. "Report on the Kashechewan First Nation and Its People." *www.collectionscanada.gc.ca*. Aboriginal Affars Canada, 31 Oct. 2006. Web.
[30] "Minister Duncan Announces Support for Kashechewan First Nation Housing." *Government of Canada; Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada;*. N.p., n.d. Web. 11 Dec. 2011.

and sheds just as winter weather was approaching.[31] Claiming ignorance of the situation, the Federal government placed the reserve under Third Party management, asserting that this was the best way to administer emergency funds designated to help with the crisis.[32] This resulted in backlash from the reserve's chief, Theresa Spence, who accused the government of blaming the reserve's management instead of focusing on the crisis.[33] The Third Party management was removed on April 19, 2012.[34] A financial audit was conducted to ascertain how the reserve's government allocated funds that had been spent; the report concluded that some financial irregularities had occurred, noting that Attawapiskat's due diligence was lacking in managing the funding provided by Aboriginal Affairs. Specifically, the audit found that many files lacked supporting documentation for the reason of payment.[35]

1.8 Chapter Layout

This thesis is laid out in five chapters. As this chapter introduced the problem and thesis, defining important terms, the subsequent chapters will do the following:

Chapter 2 examines the historical relationship between Aboriginals and Non-Aboriginals in Canada, looking at key government documents such as the Indian Act

---

[31] Spence, Richard. "Attawapiskat's Housing Crisis: A Ground-level Perspective - Aboriginal - CBC." CBCnews. CBC/Radio Canada, 12 Dec. 2013. Web.

[32] News, CBC. "Feds Aware of Attawapiskat Crisis for Years." *CBCnews*. CBC/Radio Canada, 03 Dec. 2011. Web.

[33] Ibid Web.

[34] News, CBC. "Attawapiskat's 3rd-party Manager to Be Withdrawn." CBCnews. CBC/Radio Canada, 06 Apr. 2012. Web.

[35] "Audit of the AANDC and Attawapiskat First Nation (AFN) Management Control Framework." *Government of Canada; Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada;*. N.p., 28 Sept. 2012. Web. News, CBC. "Attawapiskat Chief Slams Audit Leak as 'distraction'" *CBCnews*. CBC/Radio Canada, 08 Jan. 2013. Web.

of 1876 that defined the government's long colonial relationship with Aboriginals and Treaty Number 9, which established the reserves of Kashechewan and Attawapiskat. The second part of the chapter will examine the literature on how the mainstream Canadian media (with a focus on newspapers) has covered Aboriginals, elaborating on the concept of "The Other" and identifying the news frames and stereotypes that have persisted throughout the historical relationship between Aboriginals and the press.

Chapter 3 lays out the theoretical framework underpinning this thesis, explaining the concepts of discourse, post-colonial discourse, and the use of stereotypes in relation to Aboriginal peoples in Canada. The second part of the chapter lays out the research methodology, explaining framing analysis and how frames connect to discourse and critical discourse analysis. This section establishes the parameters of the study.

Chapter 4 provides the findings of the study and a comparative analysis of these findings relative to those found in the Aboriginal newspaper, *The Wawatay News*.

Chapter 5 synthesizes and reiterates the findings to determine whether they satisfactorily answered the proposed research questions and provides recommendations for further studies in this area.

Chapter 2: Canada and Aboriginal Peoples: A Troubled Past

To understand how mainstream Canadian media report on Aboriginal issues it is necessary to understand the long, troubled past of these people and Canada. This chapter explores that history and how Aboriginals have become seen as distinct from Canadian society. In other words, they have become "The Other." The chapter is divided into two sections. The first section provides a brief historical overview of important moments in the relationship between Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals in Canada. The second section examines the concept of "The Other" and how Aboriginals in Canada have been conceptualized as such in non-Aboriginal society and media. This section will also present a review of the literature that has explored Aboriginal representations in the Canadian mainstream press and the North American press in general.

Part I: Aboriginal People and Canadian History

The stories reflecting Canadian history have long held an ethnocentric/Eurocentric point of view, wherein many Canadian historians considered Aboriginal histories to be of little consequence to the foundation and social fabric of the country.[36] The historian's focus primarily concerned European settlement and colonization and consigned Aboriginal people to the domain of Anthropology, which was long considered a discipline for the study of extinct or vanishing peoples.[37] As anthropologist Bruce Trigger puts it, these ethnocentric views propagated by historians and anthropologists served to "justify ignoring the

---

[36] Trigger, Bruce G. *Natives and Newcomers: Canada's "Heroic Age" Reconsidered*. Kingston: McGill-Queen's UP, 1985 p.4-5.
[37] Ibid p.4-5.

political and economic developments that explain why, for over 150 years, native peoples have suffered from impoverishment, social discrimination, and a White tutelage that was often simultaneously neglectful and oppressive."[38] Such selective history found its way into Canadian journalism and the reporting of Aboriginal peoples as well.[39] Because the current study is primarily concerned with how a Eurocentric, white-dominated press has covered Aboriginal peoples throughout their shared history, this overview concerns only those periods of contact during which government legislation came to oversee Aboriginal lives.

2.1 Contact, Cooperation and Conquest

Almost from their first contact, the relationship between Aboriginal peoples and European settlers has been complex, but as the *Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* noted, it did not begin as an exploitative relationship.[40] It would, however, become one. Although Europeans had been venturing to North American shores as early as 1000 CE, European exploration and settlement of North America did not began in earnest until, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Europeans sought out new mineral wealth and an expedient route to China.[41] Early European explorers soon realized the potential of a valuable enterprise in fur trading with North America's indigenous populations. Further exploration could not be

---

[38] Trigger, Bruce G. *Natives and Newcomers: Canada's "Heroic Age" Reconsidered*. Kingston: McGill-Queen's UP, 1985 p.3.
[39] Anderson, Mark Cronlund, and Carmen Robertson. *Seeing Red: A History of Natives in Canadian Newspapers*. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba, 2011 p.3-18.
[40] Canada. *Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples*. By Georges Erasmus and René Dussault. Vol. 1. Ottawa: Commission, 1996. Looking Forward Looking Back. Part One: The Relationship in Historical Perspective.
[41] Ibid.

accomplished without the close cooperation of Aboriginal peoples.[42] French expeditions led by Jacques Cartier and Samuel de Champlain made early contact with various Aboriginal groups and established small settlements, limited to the eastern coastal regions. Initially, these trading partnerships were mutually beneficial, with the Aboriginals trading for metal and glass items and the Europeans for furs.[43] At first, these early European traders were at the mercy of the Aboriginals, relying on their knowledge of the land when it came to surviving the harsh winters. But once these trade relations became secure, settlers from France and England began to consider further expansion into Aboriginal lands, viewing these peoples as obstacles.[44]

Christianity also played a part in the expansion of European empire in North America, as the Europeans were determined to convert the so-called heathen populations. The non-Christian state of these people provided a strong rationale supporting a European view that Aboriginals were inferior.[45] In the words of Bruce Trigger,

> Christianity gave Europeans a strong and rarely questioned sense of superiority over peoples who did not share their religious faith… While all non-Christian societies were viewed as morally and technologically inferior to

---

[42] Canada. *Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples*. By Georges Erasmus and René Dussault. Vol. 1. Ottawa: Commission, 1996. Looking Forward Looking Back. Part One: The Relationship in Historical Perspective.

[43] Ibid.

[44] *ARCHIVED - Highlights from the Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples*." Government of Canada; Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada; Communications Branch;. N.p., n.d. Web.

[45] Berkhofer, Robert F. *The White Man's Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present*. New York: Knopf, 1978 p.116. Canada. *Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples*. By Georges Erasmus and René Dussault. Vol. 1. Ottawa: Commission, 1996. Looking Forward Looking Back. Part One: The Relationship in Historical Perspective.

> European ones, tribal societies were also viewed as politically inferior. With such societies there was no thought of equal dealing.[46]

This persistent belief determined how later relations between Aboriginals and Non-Aboriginals would develop.

2.2 The Indian Act (1876)

The relationship between Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals in North America would continue to deteriorate, despite assurances from the British government – which controlled these areas – that Aboriginals were not to be "molested or disturbed" on their lands and were to be treated as autonomous political entities (as outlined in the *Royal Proclamation of 1763*). Preparations for further European settlement were underway.[47]

By the nineteenth and twentieth centuries the relationship between Aboriginal peoples and non-Aboriginals disintegrated, as the newly formed Canadian government embarked on a period of territorial expansion that removed Aboriginal peoples from land deemed valuable. To facilitate this, the government initiated a number of treaties and acts that aided in colonial expansion and expulsion of Aboriginals.[48]

Of critical importance is the Indian Act (1876). The Act is the central piece of legislation by which the Canadian federal government asserted control over nearly

---

[46] Trigger, Bruce G. *Natives and Newcomers: Canada's "Heroic Age" Reconsidered*. Kingston: McGill-Queen's UP, 1985 p.121.

[47] *ARCHIVED - Highlights from the Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples*." Government of Canada; Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada; Communications Branch;. N.p., n.d. Web.

[48] Canada. *Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples*. By Georges Erasmus and René Dussault. Vol. 1. Ottawa: Commission, 1996. Looking Forward Looking Back. Part One: The Relationship in Historical Perspective.

all facets of Aboriginal life, from land and resource use to education and band administration. It also defined who would qualify as a status Indian. The Act gave powers to Indian Affairs (now known as Aboriginal Affairs) to determine who would be entitled to a wide range of programs and services offered by federal agencies and provincial governments.[49] The Act was meant to protect Aboriginal people and lands from further colonial expansion, but it became a codified assimilationist document that served to micromanage every aspect of Aboriginal life and strip them of their identity, autonomy, and land.[50] Over time, the Act has been described by both Aboriginal people and scholars as racist, paternalistic and patriarchal.[51] The Indian Act also established residential schools in Canada, which served to "kill the Indian" in Aboriginal children by forcible assimilation.[52] The results proved disastrous for generations of Aboriginal children.[53]

The Act established Canada's Indian reserve system, removing Aboriginals from land deemed economically valuable and segregating them from the non-Aboriginal population. During the resultant relocation, many Aboriginal people struggled to reconcile their previously nomadic lifestyles with the controlled

---

[49] "Indian Status." Government of Canada; Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada; Communications Branch;. N.p., n.d. Web.

[50] Long, David Alan, and Olive Patricia Dickason. *Visions of the Heart: Canadian Aboriginal Issues*. Toronto: Harcourt Brace & Canada, 1996 p.156. Fleras, Augie, and Jean Leonard. Elliott. *The "nations Within": Aboriginal-state Relations in Canada, the United States, and New Zealand*. Toronto: Oxford UP, 1992 p.41-42.

[51] Cannon, Martin John, and Lina Sunseri. *Racism, Colonialism, and Indigeneity in Canada: A Reader*. Don Mills, Ont.: OUP, 2011. Henry, Frances, and Carol Tator. *The Colour of Democracy: Racism in Canadian Society*. 3rd ed. Toronto: Nelson Canada, 2006 p.115. McMillan, Alan D., and Eldon Yellowhorn. *First Peoples in Canada*. Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2004 p.321-326.

[52] ARCHIVED - *Highlights from the Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples*." Government of Canada; Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada; Communications Branch;. N.p., n.d. Web.

[53] Henry, Frances, and Carol Tator. *The Colour of Democracy: Racism in Canadian Society*. 3rd ed. Toronto: Nelson Canada, 2006 p.100.

existence of reserve life.[54] Not only did the reserve system create a physical barrier between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, it created a number of social and economic barriers as well. Inevitably, this system that created the poor living conditions found on many reserves marred Canada's international image as a progressive and enlightened country.[55] It established a paternalistic system that damaged the Aboriginal way of life while giving the federal government absolute power over vast reserves of Aboriginal land. As Section 18 of the Indian Act stipulates:

> Subject to this Act, reserves are held by Her Majesty for the use and benefit of the respective bands for which they were set apart, and subject to this Act and to the terms of any treaty or surrender, the Governor in Council may determine whether any purpose for which lands in a reserve are used or are to be used is for the use and benefit of the band.[56]

Section 20 established that First Nations people may not own reserve land, stating,

> No Indian is lawfully in possession of land in a reserve unless, with the approval of the Minister, possession of the land has been allotted to him by the council of the band.[57]

Despite efforts to change or abolish the Indian Act over the years, it remains an integral part of Aboriginal life and is the central framework around which the relationship between the federal government and Aboriginal people is built in Canada.[58]

2.3 Treaty Number 9

---

[54] McMillan, Alan D., and Eldon Yellowhorn. *First Peoples in Canada*. Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2004 p.321-326.

[55] Ibid p.321-326.

[56] Indian Act (R.S.C., 1985, c. I-6, s. 18.)

[57] Indian Act (R.S.C., 1985, c. I-6, s.20)

[58] McMillan, Alan D., and Eldon Yellowhorn. *First Peoples in Canada*. Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2004 p.321-326. Henry, Frances, and Carol Tator. *The Colour of Democracy: Racism in Canadian Society*. 3rd ed. Toronto: Nelson Canada, 2006 p.115-116.

Throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Aboriginals and Europeans made and broke treaties that were originally meant to foster trade and military ties between the two groups.[59] Yet with Canadian Confederation in 1867, treaties came to serve the newly formed Canadian government as it began to secure Aboriginal land. A series of "numbered treaties" systematically gave the Canadian government power to claim the Aboriginal territory that would become part of Canada.[60]

The James Bay Treaty (officially known as Treaty No. 9) was created as a result of requests for governmental assistance by Aboriginal peoples living in the area.[61] The construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway in northern Ontario impacted the local Aboriginal population's traditional way of life, bringing with it an increased level of contact with white people never before experienced. Overhunting caused by the influx of white trappers caused starvation in many parts of the Ojibwe and Cree lands.[62] The introduction of contagious diseases such as influenza and tuberculosis left the peoples in this area in a weakened state with their leaders looking to Ottawa for help.[63] Unlike preceding treaties, Treaty No. 9 sought the participation of the Provincial government along with the Federal government. Together, the federal and provincial governments created the treaty in 1905 – with

---

[59] Canada. *Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples*. By Georges Erasmus and René Dussault. Vol. 1. Ottawa: Commission, 1996. Looking Forward Looking Back. Part One: The Relationship in Historical Perspective.

[60] Canada. *Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples*. By Georges Erasmus and René Dussault. Vol. 1. Ottawa: Commission, 1996. Looking Forward Looking Back. Part One: The Relationship in Historical Perspective.

[61] "Treaty Research Report - Treaty No. 9 (1905-1906)." Government of Canada; Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada; Communications Branch;. Government of Canada, n.d. Web.

[62] Ibid.

[63] Ibid.

further additions made in 1929-1930 that created the reserve of Attawapiskat, among others.[64] The treaty established control over almost two-thirds of Northern Ontario. In exchange for giving away title to their land, the Cree and Ojibwe peoples of Northern Ontario were promised certain things, including hunting and fishing rights, some monetary compensation, and redistribution of reserve lands.[65]

2.4 *Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples*

In the years between early European contact and present day, Aboriginal life changed drastically; the colonial policies enacted by the Canadian government proved disastrous for many generations of Aboriginal peoples.[66] To address these grievances, a 1991 Commission was established by the federal government to examine the issues facing Aboriginal people in Canada – particularly the contentious relationships between Aboriginal people, the government, and the non-Aboriginal populace. At the time of the Commission's formation, tensions between these groups were heightened due to events such as the Oka Crisis and the Meech Lake Accord. Comprised of Aboriginals from both government and academia, the Commission took five years to report its findings and recommendations.[67]

An expansive document that covered a wide range of issues facing Aboriginals in Canada, the final four-thousand-page report outlined a number of recommendations to improve the relationship between Aboriginal people and

---

[64] Long, John. *Treaty No. 9: Making the Agreement to Share the Land in Far Northern Ontario in 1905*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's UP, 2010 p.86.
[65] McMillan, Alan D., and Eldon Yellowhorn. *First Peoples in Canada*. Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2004 p.320.
[66] *ARCHIVED - Highlights from the Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples.*" Government of Canada; Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada; Communications Branch;. N.p., n.d. Web.
[67] Ibid.

government, including the recognition of Aboriginal self-government, expanded Aboriginal lands and resources, and initiatives to address social, education, health and housing needs in Aboriginal communities.[68]

After reviewing the more than five hundred years of shared history between Aboriginal people and European settlers, the Commission summarized the Canadian government's relationship with Aboriginal people as dysfunctional, citing repeated government attempts to assimilate Aboriginal people. Stating that Aboriginal peoples are nations with distinct cultures and political systems, the Commission proposed greater autonomy for Aboriginal nations, clarifying that they were not seeking independence but should be able to govern their own affairs in partnership with Canada.[69]

Part II: The Media, "The Other" and Aboriginals

The second part of this chapter explores Aboriginal representations in the Canadian mainstream press, both past and present, and illustrates how the press continued to situate Aboriginal peoples outside the range of the mainstream discourse – depicting them as "The Other" by employing stereotypes in news frames. These stereotypes – rooted in the concept of "The Other," which this chapter also examines – serve to demarcate the differences between two groups by emphasizing the perceived strengths of one group (i.e., non-Aboriginals) over the weaknesses of another (i.e., Aboriginals). This chapter also examines the broader

---

[68] *ARCHIVED - Highlights from the Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples.*" Government of Canada; Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada; Communications Branch;. N.p., n.d. Web.
[69] Ibid.

idea of how Aboriginals have been conceptualized in non-Aboriginal society and how these conceptions filter down into press depictions, often conflating descriptions and ideas about them into a single homogenous entity.

2.5 "The Other"

"The Other" is a term closely associated with discourse; Michel Foucault argued that discourse produces, through practices of representation such as journalism, a knowledge of "The Other" that is deeply implicated in the operations of power (e.g., colonialism).[70] As defined by Stuart Hall, "The Other" denotes those who are deemed different from the majority.[71] As such, they often tend to be depicted in very binary terms, such as good/bad, civilized/uncivilized or, in the case of Aboriginals, the good Indian versus the bad Indian. As Edward Said explains, "The Other" not only defines the minority but defines the majority: "The construction of identity – for identity, whether of Orient or Occident, France or Britain … involves the construction of opposites and 'Others' whose actuality is always subject to the continuous interpretation and re-interpretation of their differences from 'us."[72] In David Spurr's words, "The colonizer's traditional insistence on difference from the colonized establishes a notion of the savage as other, the antithesis of civilized value."[73]

Creating "The Other," or "Othering," is an essential aspect of ethnocentrism that classifies people according to the norms of one's own culture and defines

---

[70] Hall, Stuart, *Representation : cultural representations and signifying practices*, London ; Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage in association with the Open University, 1997 p.260.
[71] Ibid p. 225.
[72] Said, Edward, *Orientalism*, New York, NY, Vintage Books, 1978. p.332.
[73]Spurr, David, *The rhetoric of empire: colonial discourse in journalism, travel writing, and imperial administration*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, c1993 p.7.

anyone outside these norms as 'Other.'[74] In Canada, Aboriginal people have functioned as a type of 'Other.' Within Canada there exists an ethnocentric bias that favours a Euro-Canadian culture and becomes a primary source of alienation and disempowerment among Aboriginal people.[75]

2.6 The Indian as Representing "The Other"

In *The Newspaper Indian*, John Coward asserts that "newspapers were a significant force in the creation and promotion of a powerful set of Indian representations that dominated the nineteenth-century imagination and endure in popular culture today."[76] While Coward's words describe the United States, they also apply to how Canadian newspapers represented Aboriginals. These representations reflect a colonial rhetoric of the nineteenth century that has persisted in contemporary times; they stress difference. As David Spurr notes, "The colonizer's traditional insistence on difference from the colonized establishes a notion of the savage as *other*, the antithesis of civilized value."[77] This is how a white nineteenth-century population might view the Aboriginal peoples, which collectively became the "Indian." The *Indian*, as defined by Robert Berkhoffer, is a distinctly white invention – a stereotyped image functioning as a type of 'Other.'[78] The *Indian* essentially allowed the white colonizers to conflate all Aboriginal

---

74 Hall, Stuart, *Representation : cultural representations and signifying practices*, London ; Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage in association with the Open University, 1997 p.260.

75 Ponting, J. Rick, *First Nations in Canada : perspectives on opportunity, empowerment, and self-determination*, Whitby, Ont.: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1997 p. 156.

76 Coward, John M. *The Newspaper Indian: Native American Identity in the Press, 1820-90*. Urbana: University of Illinois, 1999 p.6.

77 Spurr, David. *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration*. Durham: Duke UP, 1993 p.7.

78 Berkhofer, Robert F. *The White Man's Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present*. New York: Knopf, 1978 p.25-28.

peoples into one homogenous group, neglecting social, cultural, and linguistic differences among the various tribes. The term was useful in another way, in that it made the Indian into an object that could be ignored or destroyed. Berkhoffer observed three persistent themes that have emerged over time concerning the concept of the *Indian*: 1) generalizing from one tribe's society and culture to all Indians; 2) conceiving of Indians in terms of their deficiencies according to White ideals rather than in terms of their own various cultures; 3) using moral evaluation as description of Indians.[79] For white North Americans, the Indian became "The Other." Within a Canadian context, authors Mark Anderson and Carmen Robertson observe that ideas of Aboriginal inferiority had become so entrenched in the minds of the Canadian public (via the press) that they created a uniform Indian stereotype:

> It is not far off the mark to say that newspapers have created the Aboriginal Canadians know and they have done so nominally on Canada's behalf. And in the same way as with the Western, the imagined Native need not be reinvented every time one is deployed.[80]

2.7 Aboriginals and the Canadian Press of the Past: Colonialism at Work

Elizabeth Furniss describes Canada's colonial discourse with regards to Aboriginals as "not merely the presence of racist discourses but also the intense energy devoted to contemplating Aboriginal/Non-Aboriginal relations either

---

[79] Berkhofer, Robert F. *The White Man's Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present*. New York: Knopf, 1978 p.25-26.

[80] Anderson, Mark Cronlund, and Carmen Robertson. *Seeing Red: A History of Natives in Canadian Newspapers*. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba, 2011 p.270.

through the assignation of difference – negative, neutral, or positive – or through the denial of difference (assimilation)."[81] Historically, Canadian newspaper coverage reflected a colonial discourse that considered Aboriginal peoples different from and inferior to white peoples. As a result, Canadian journalists and editors have knowingly or unknowingly perpetuated the cultural values of the dominant white class and have tended to support a status quo that includes government and dominant power structures.[82]

Indeed, this post-colonial discourse supported the official policy of the Canadian government (from approximately the time of Confederation until the mid- to late twentieth century) that sought to assimilate Aboriginals into Canadian society.[83] This discourse wove its way into official policy such as the Indian Act of 1876 and through the establishment of residential schools and the reserve system. Canadian newspaper editors and journalists played a fundamental role in supporting these policies via articles that supported the interests of white property owners and the government, who sought to remove Aboriginal peoples from valuable tracts of land.[84] Trumpeting Eurocentric values such as private property, Robert Harding explains that the Canadian press

---

[81] Furniss, Elizabeth, *The Burden of History: Colonialism and the Frontier Myth in a Rural Canadian Community*, p.13.

[82] Anderson, Mark Cronlund, and Carmen Robertson. *Seeing Red: A History of Natives in Canadian Newspapers*. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba, 2011. Alia, Valerie, and Simone Bull. *Media and Ethnic Minorities*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2005, p.267.

[83] Shewell, Hugh. *"Enough to Keep Them Alive": Indian Welfare in Canada, 1873-1965*. Toronto: University of Toronto, 2004, p. 324. *ARCHIVED - Highlights from the Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples*." Government of Canada; Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada; Communications Branch;. N.p., n.d. Web.

[84] Harding, Robert. *"The Media, Aboriginal People and Common Sense." The Canadian Journal of Native Studies Xxv.1* (2005): p. 311-35. Harding, R. *"Historical Representations of Aboriginal People in the Canadian News Media."* Discourse & Society 17.2 (2006): p.205-35.

> …reflected settler ideology and were furthered entrenched in the public imagination through official government policy. Notions of aboriginal people as primitive, child-like and inferior were consistent with ideas about European superiority that had religious, political and scientific origins. Europeans saw aboriginal people as subservient to nature since they did not harness it for economic gain.[85]

Such paternalistic ideas came to dominate non-Aboriginal Canadian thought in newspapers. Mark Cronlund Anderson and Carmen Robertson put it this way:

> One might expect newspaper content to promote and defend Canadian colonialism because it provides the fabric upon which Canadian culture has been embroidered and because the economic system upon which Canadian colonialism was and remains predicated benefitted an elite that itself effectively directed editorial policy in the national press.[86]

Certainly, Canadian newspapers of the past embraced the state's colonial policy of assimilation and routinely presented Aboriginal people as problems, using overtly racist language and tone that would likely shock today's newspaper readers.[87] This language denoted the Aboriginal as "The Other." While such language is hardly used in contemporary newspapers, the underlying message in the discourse remains: the Aboriginal is a problem that must be controlled in a paternalistic fashion.[88]

Harding's study of historical Canadian press representations of Aboriginals focuses on two case studies in newspaper reporting.[89] His examination of the *British Columbian's* coverage of Canada's first residential schools in 1863 identifies three

---

[85] Harding, R. *"Historical Representations of Aboriginal People in the Canadian News Media."* Discourse & Society 17.2 (2006): p.226.

[86] Anderson, Mark Cronlund, and Carmen Robertson. *Seeing Red: A History of Natives in Canadian Newspapers*. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba, 2011 p. 16.

[87] Henry, Frances, and Carol Tator. *Discourses of Domination: Racial Bias in the Canadian English-language Press*. Toronto: University of Toronto, 2002, p.12. Dickason, Olive Patricia, and David Alan Long. *Visions of the Heart: Canadian Aboriginal Issues*. Toronto [u.a.: Harcourt Canada, 2011, p. 190.]

[88] Fleras, Augie. *The Media Gaze: Representations of Diversities in Canada*. Vancouver: UBC, 2011, p.217 Shewell, Hugh. *"Enough to Keep Them Alive": Indian Welfare in Canada, 1873-1965*. Toronto: University of Toronto, 2004, p. 219.

[89] Harding, R. *"Historical Representations of Aboriginal People in the Canadian News Media."* Discourse & Society 17.2 (2006): p. 205-235.

salient frames: Aboriginal people as 1) primitive, 2) childlike, and 3) inferior.[90] Harding observes that such news frames were culturally appropriate for news coverage of the time, employing paternalistic terms to describe Aboriginals as childlike and naïve or using explicitly racist terms such as "savage wretches."[91] Harding notes that there was a distinct *us versus them* categorization used, one that portrayed white men as civilized and Natives as uncivilized. By portraying Aboriginal peoples as uncivilized, the settler press rationalized the "re-education" of Aboriginals through the use of residential schools, claiming a moral obligation.[92] Harding identifies this as another frame – "the heroic white man saving primitive aboriginal people."[93]

Anderson and Robertson note that colonial discourse is very much present in Canada's English language newspapers.[94] In their analysis of the press content of Canadian newspapers from the nineteenth century to the present day, they argue that colonial discourse became integral to creating the imagined community that is Canada.[95] They observe that binary press treatments of Aboriginals as "The Other" have helped to define what it means to be Canadian (namely, white and non-Aboriginal). Anderson and Robertson suggest that three sets of characteristics have emerged from newspaper coverage about Aboriginals: depravity, innate inferiority

---

[90] Harding, R. *"Historical Representations of Aboriginal People in the Canadian News Media."* Discourse & Society 17.2 (2006): p.226.
[91] Ibid p.214.
[92] Ibid p.208.
[93] Ibid p.210.
[94] Anderson, Mark Cronlund, and Carmen Robertson. *Seeing Red: A History of Natives in Canadian Newspapers*. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba, 2011. p.9.
[95] Ibid p.21.

and a stubborn resistance to progress.[96] In their case studies that examined press coverage of the purchase of Rupert's land in 1869 and the Ojibway Nation's signing of Treaty 3 with the Canadian government in 1873, Anderson and Robertson note that newspaper stories enthusiastically touted such acts as an exercise of nation-building.[97] These stories also suggested that Aboriginals were treated in a civil manner because they were offered treaties instead of being forced to cede the land (as was the custom in the U.S.).[98] Anderson and Robertson suggest that Canadian newspaper stories, by implying that the government treated Aboriginals fairly, created the myth that Canada treated its Aboriginal people better than did the United States.[99] This perception, which Valerie Alia and Simone Bull term "Oppression Ranking," has served to allow Canadian newspapers to continue to portray Indians as "The Other" without fear of being rebuked for the nation's colonial past.[100] As Elizabeth Furniss notes, it is merely another colonial discourse espoused by Canada; Furniss has called it "conquest through benevolence," as opposed to the popular American frontier myth of "regeneration through violence."[101] Coward notes that Americans sought to "Other" Native Americans for the purposes of creating a national identity, observing that "through the Ignoble Savage, Americans could imagine nation-building as a great triumph over

---

[96] Anderson, Mark Cronlund, and Carmen Robertson. *Seeing Red: A History of Natives in Canadian Newspapers*. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba, 2011p.6.
[97] Ibid p.21.
[98] Ibid p.20.
[99] Ibid p.30.
[100] Alia, Valerie, and Simone Bull. *Media and Ethnic Minorities*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2005 p.86.
[101] Furniss, Elizabeth, *The Burden of History: Colonialism and the Frontier Myth in a Rural Canadian Community*, p.23.

savagery."[102] Living in close proximity to America, it is conceivable that Canadians might also have conceptualized Aboriginals along similar lines.

2.8 Aboriginals and the Contemporary Canadian Press

While current journalism practice emphasizes objectivity as a core value, this standard may not be upheld with regard to Aboriginal people. While perceptions have changed slightly from Aboriginals *being* the problem (i.e., an impediment to colonial expansion, unwillingness to relocate to reserves etc.), to Aboriginals *having* problems (i.e., alcoholism, high suicide rates etc.), the use of stereotypes that inform news frames remain largely unchanged from newspapers of the nineteenth century (e.g., that of the "drunk native").[103] These frames contribute to discourse that has shifted from Aboriginals as racially inferior to Aboriginals as simply incompetent and their way of life as incompatible with non-Aboriginal society.

Augie Fleras also notes this trend in Canadian media coverage, observing that while news editors are more sensitive to terms deemed potentially racist (such as the term Indian) and the crude stereotyping that occurred in past reporting, they continue to "negatively frame aboriginality and Aboriginal peoples."[104] Aboriginals are routinely depicted as "out of control and in need of constraint,"[105] or are alternatively portrayed as "passive recipients of actions or events beyond their

---

[102] Coward, John M. *The Newspaper Indian: Native American Identity in the Press, 1820-90*. Urbana: University of Illinois, 1999 p.7.
[103] Fleras, Augie. *The Media Gaze: Representations of Diversities in Canada*. Vancouver: UBC, 2011, p.217 Shewell, Hugh. *"Enough to Keep Them Alive": Indian Welfare in Canada, 1873-1965*. Toronto: University of Toronto, 2004, p.22.
[104] Fleras, Augie. *The Media Gaze: Representations of Diversities in Canada*. Vancouver: UBC, 2011, p.218
[105] Ibid p.218

control (compared with non-Aboriginal actors, who are overwhelmingly portrayed as active agents)."[106]

This remains consistent with the perception among Canadian mainstream media that Aboriginal life and values are incompatible with Canada's non-Aboriginal society.[107] One reason this view continues is that contemporary newspaper stories often fail to provide historical context that explains Canada's colonial past in relation to contemporary Aboriginal issues, relying instead on stereotypes that resonate with white readers.[108] Professional demands often limit what journalists report in a story, resulting in the omission of important context.[109] This can be problematic in the news coverage of First Nations because their past and present are deeply rooted in Canada's colonial history.

Analyzing the newspaper coverage of Aboriginal land claims and B.C.'s Aboriginal child welfare policy in the 1990s, Harding notes that

> One of the most significant findings of this study is the degree to which the broader features of news discourse about Aboriginal people have remained constant over the last century and a half. In the 1990s, aboriginal issues were framed, much as they were 130 years earlier, in ways that protect dominant interests and signify aboriginal people as a threat to such interests.[110]

Mary Anne Weston, who examined American press representations of Native Americans in the twentieth century, indicates that little changed in the American

---

[106] Fleras, Augie. *The Media Gaze: Representations of Diversities in Canada*. Vancouver: UBC, 2011, p.218.
[107] Long, David Alan, and Olive Patricia Dickason. *Visions of the Heart: Canadian Aboriginal Issues*. Toronto: Harcourt Brace & Canada, 1996 p.147-177.
[108] Harding, R. "Historical Representations of Aboriginal People in the Canadian News Media." Discourse & Society 17.2 (2006):p. 205-235.
[109] Weston, Mary Ann. *Native Americans in the News: Images of Indians in the Twentieth Century Press*. Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1996, p.14.
[110] Harding, R. "Historical Representations of Aboriginal People in the Canadian News Media." Discourse & Society 17.2 (2006) p.21.

press from the nineteenth century to the twentieth, and that many of the same practices – such as the "Othering" of Natives – continued, perpetuating racist "common sense" attitudes about Indians.[111]

Harding concludes that, while the use of overtly racist language has receded in the Canadian press and more Aboriginal voices are being heard, Canadian newspapers are still using racist, colonial discourses that rely largely on negative news frames of First Nations people.[112]

2.9 Covering First Nations Reserves

A recently published report on media coverage of First Nations issues in Ontario notes that Canadian media portray reserves not only as hotbeds of substance abuse and corruption, but ultimately as uninhabitable – particularly when a crisis such as the housing shortage in Attawapiskat emerges.[113] The report attributes negative reporting on Aboriginal communities to journalists being unfamiliar with the workings of Aboriginal governments and unable to access remote Aboriginal communities.[114] The report cites the demands of the profession as negatively impacting the reporting, stating that journalists do not have the time

---

[111] Weston, Mary Ann. *Native Americans in the News: Images of Indians in the Twentieth Century Press*. Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1996, p.2.
[112] Harding, R. "Historical Representations of Aboriginal People in the Canadian News Media." Discourse & Society 17.2 (2006) p.231.
[113] McCue, Duncan, Jorge Barrera, Mike Metatawabin, Robert Harding, Cindy Blackstock, and Robin Pierro. *Buried Voices: Media Coverage of Aboriginal Issues in Ontario*,. Rep. N.p.: Journalists for Human Rights, 2013, Web.
[114] Ibid.

or resources to better inform themselves about these communities in order to produce a well-rounded story.[115]

In his examination of how the media covered the Kashechewan water crisis, Wayne Warry concurs, suggesting that Canadian media have a preoccupation with covering corruption on reserves; he notes that the CBC news juxtaposed a story on the evacuation of Kashechewan with a report on alleged financial mismanagement in the Aboriginal community of Davis Inlet.[116] Warry asserts that such juxtaposition reinforces the idea that Aboriginal people are corrupt or incompetent or both.[117]

In examining Canada's two national newspapers, *The National Post* and *The Globe and Mail*, Warry cites an editorial bias on the part of the newspapers, stating that both promote pro-assimilation views from neo-conservative columnists who advocate for the dismantling of the Canadian reserve system.[118] Writing about the editorial position of *The National Post*, he remarks,

> *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.[119]

---

[115] McCue, Duncan, Jorge Barrera, Mike Metatawabin, Robert Harding, Cindy Blackstock, and Robin Pierro. *Buried Voices: Media Coverage of Aboriginal Issues in Ontario*,. Rep. N.p.: Journalists for Human Rights, 2013, Web.
[116] Warry, Wayne. *Ending Denial: Understanding Aboriginal Issues*. Peterborough, Ont.: Broadview, 2007 p.69.
[117] Ibid p.69
[118] Ibid p.72
[119] Ibid p.72

He also critiques *The Globe and Mail* for similar assimilationist values, claiming that its editorials stressed the need for residents to leave the reserve and seek economic opportunities down south.[120]

Warry observed a difference in local versus national newspaper coverage, citing a 2004 survey that noted how local northern Ontario papers provided more credible coverage than National newspapers.[121] He states that more Aboriginal media are needed to provide a more balanced perspective on stories like Kashechewan.

Amanda Jendrick has asserted that the mainstream public associates Canadian reserves with disorder, chaos, and illness, contending that this is due largely to the perpetuation of negative images by both the government and the media.[122] Citing the Kashechewan reserve as a case study, Jendrick examined media coverage of two newspapers, *The Peterborough Examiner* and *The Ottawa Citizen*, and found that the *Citizen* devoted more coverage to the conditions of the reserve and its inhabitants than to discussion of the crisis itself.[123] She observed that the paper variously described residents as unemployed, uneducated and struggling with addictions (noting, however, that this was tempered to some degree by a few positive portrayals of the Kashechewan residents).[124] Jendrick argues that local newspapers are a better reflection of how the public understands a crisis because

---

[120] Warry, Wayne. *Ending Denial: Understanding Aboriginal Issues*. Peterborough, Ont.: Broadview, 2007p.74

[121] Ibid p.71

[122] Jendrick, Amanda Louise. *Completely Normal Chaos the Kashechewan Crisis and the Public Normalization of Risk on Indigenous Reservations*. Thesis. Trent University, 2009. Ottawa: Library and Archives Canada, 2010. p. 1-32.

[123] Ibid p.55-65

[124] Ibid p.55-65

more voices from the community, and their reactions to the crisis, are heard.[125] To illustrate this, she notes that residents who wrote letters to the editor shared common-sense assumptions about the perceived poor conditions of First Nations reserves – assuming that all reserves were like Kashechewan.[126] Like the *Citizen*, discussion of non-water related problems (e.g., substance abuse) made up the bulk of the articles examined.[127] Of relevance to the current study was that 34% of stories she analysed from the *Examiner* linked Kashechewan to the Third World.[128] Jendrick contends that both newspapers engaged in sensationalized descriptions of Kashechewan residents that provided an incomplete picture of what happened and perpetuated negative Aboriginal stereotypes.[129]

2.10 Aboriginal Stereotypes

In this study of Canadian newspaper coverage of Aboriginals, it becomes important to investigate how newspapers use stereotypes when reporting on Aboriginals. In the introduction to her book, Sandra Lambertus notes, "The media are central in defining the position of Canada's Aboriginal peoples in the social hierarchy and in disseminating stereotypes of this group to the Canadian public."[130] While the crude stereotypes that characterized media coverage of Aboriginal

---

[125] Jendrick, Amanda Louise. *Completely Normal Chaos the Kashechewan Crisis and the Public Normalization of Risk on Indigenous Reservations*. Thesis. Trent University, 2009. Ottawa: Library and Archives Canada, 2010.p.55-65.

[126] Ibid p.61.

[127] Jendrick, Amanda Louise. *Completely Normal Chaos the Kashechewan Crisis and the Public Normalization of Risk on Indigenous Reservations*. Thesis. Trent University, 2009. Ottawa: Library and Archives Canada, 2010. p.60.

[128] Ibid p.58.

[129] Ibid p.128-135.

[130] Lambertus, Sandra. *Wartime Images, Peacetime Wounds: The Media and the Gustafsen Lake Standoff*. Toronto: University of Toronto, 2004 p.4.

peoples in the past are long gone, contemporary Canadian newspapers rely on new ones.

As Harding's content analysis of recent news articles on Canadian Aboriginal issues illustrates, Canadian newspapers continue to use stereotypes of Aboriginal people that produce and reproduce a "common sense" discourse in articles on Aboriginal issues.[131] Using the three prominent stereotypes identified by the *Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* (i.e., pathetic victims, angry warriors, or noble environmentalists) as the foundation for his research, Harding identified several stereotypes – the most prevalent being the incompetent/corrupt Indian, describing Aboriginal peoples as unable to manage their own affairs. Harding suggests these stereotypes help sustain a status quo that counters Aboriginal activism and delegitimizes Aboriginal people by portraying them as incompetent.[132] Other stereotypes include: 1) Aboriginal people as incompetent or corrupt financial managers, 2) Aboriginal people as taking advantage of the system, 3) Aboriginal people as working within the "system" and 4) Aboriginal people as living outside of non-Aboriginal law and social norms. Harding's analysis suggests that non-Aboriginal Canadians may perceive Aboriginal autonomy as deleterious to their interests, resulting in the loss of valuable resources and property rights.[133]

Augie Fleras observes that recent media coverage has a tendency to focus on corruption in Aboriginal communities. The media are particularly scornful of Aboriginal leaders who seem to be failing in their duties:

---

[131] Harding, Robert. "The Media, Aboriginal People and Common Sense." The Canadian Journal of Native Studies Xxv.1 (2005): p.311-35.
[132] Ibid p.329.
[133] Ibid p.324.

> Those incompetent or corrupt financial managers who are taking advantage of the system for self-serving purposes, thereby violating national interests, principles of good governance, or egalitarian principles – all at the expense of those they are expected to protect and serve.[134]

Fleras also notes that, when confronted with such corruption, Aboriginal people are portrayed by the media as hiding behind the "smokescreen of Aboriginal rights (or victimhood) to justify illegal activities or rationalize shortcomings."[135]

In their chapter "First Nations People in the Print Media," Henry Frances and Carol Tator focus on how Aboriginals have been racialized by the press and represented as problem people.[136] They suggest that a "dominant discourse," defined here as the subtle or overt ways that liberal-democratic societies give voice to racism, can be found in national English Canadian newspapers, with stereotypes about Aboriginal peoples dominating the coverage.[137] In an analysis of the press coverage involving Jack Ramsay, an Alberta MP accused of raping an Aboriginal woman, Frances and Tator assert that *The Globe and Mail* resorted to using stereotypes of the Native woman: "The mediated image of the passive, alcoholic, indigent, inarticulate Native woman, who was perhaps sexually promiscuous, appeared as a familiar figure to readers within the dominant discourse."[138] They observe that in the coverage of First Nations, a familiar colonial discourse emerged:

---

[134] Fleras, Augie. *The Media Gaze: Representations of Diversities in Canada*. Vancouver: UBC, 2011, p.218

[135] Ibid p.218.

[136] Henry, Frances, and Carol Tator. *Discourses of Domination: Racial Bias in the Canadian English-language Press*. Toronto: University of Toronto, 2002, p.203-224.

[137] Ibid p.212.

[138] Henry, Frances, and Carol Tator. *Discourses of Domination: Racial Bias in the Canadian English-language Press*. Toronto: University of Toronto, 2002, p.203-224.p.215.

once again, Aboriginals were categorized as "The Other" next to depictions of the white people with whom they were in conflict.[139]

In their examination of contemporary American newspaper depictions of American Indians, Autumn Miller and Susan Dente Ross argue that present-day newspapers do not present blatantly racist nineteenth-century stereotypes, yet these stereotypes resurface in news frames that subtly denigrate North American Indians.[140] Miller and Ross note that this reflects the power of the discourse of the dominant group (in this case Anglo-Americans) to marginalize groups that do not belong to it.[141] One persistent news frame the authors identify is that of the "degraded Indian": a Native person who falls prey to the vices of white society, namely alcohol and drugs.[142] This frame is particularly damaging because it perpetuates a stereotype of Native peoples as substance abusers, robbing them of any intellectual agency. Another news frame that ties into the "degraded Indian" characterization is that of the "generic outsider," which typically portrays Native Americans as "non-participants in decision making and mainstream society" and as "the passive, naive, or childlike recipients of others' decisions."[143]

In her examination of how two Saskatchewan newspapers portrayed Aboriginal people, Crystal Maslin found that they were often portrayed as "problematic; either as having problems themselves or as causing problems for non-

---

[139] Henry, Frances, and Carol Tator. *Discourses of Domination: Racial Bias in the Canadian English-language Press*. Toronto: University of Toronto, 2002,p.203-224, p.208.
[140] Miller, Autumn, and Ross Susan, *They Are Not Us: Framing of American Indians by the Boston Globe*, Howard Journal of Communications, Volume 15, Issue 4, 2004, p.245.
[141] Ibid p.249-250
[142] Ibid p.250.
[143] Maslin, Crystal. "Social Construction of Aboriginal Peoples in the Saskatchewan Print Media." Thesis. Thesis / Dissertation ETD, 2002 p.252.

Aboriginal peoples."[144] The research indicated that roughly half the coverage about Aboriginals in these two newspapers could be characterized as negative, and that stereotypes revolving around perceived Aboriginal corruption were predominant.[145] Maslin identifies three stereotypes: 1) the "Troublemaker," typically an Aboriginal rights advocate who is portrayed as causing problems for non-Aboriginal society, 2) the "Crook," a white-collar criminal who holds a position of power in the Aboriginal community and exploits the system for personal gain and 3) the "Criminal," an Aboriginal who appears in crime stories about illegal activity, trials, or sentencing.[146] In addition to these dominant stereotypes, Maslin describes others such as the "Typical Indian" (e.g., Aboriginals with substance abuse problems). Not all stereotypes are negative; Maslin also highlighted positive stereotypes such as the "Cultural Icon," "The Good Indian" and the "Athlete." She argued that newspaper editors may have included stories exemplifying these positive stereotypes to counter accusations of racist coverage. "The findings of this thesis not only support the theoretical perspective of the social construction of race," she concludes, "but they also serve to confirm other research findings about the continuing racialization of Aboriginal Peoples in the print media and other media."[147] Maslin adds that these stereotypes increase in newspaper coverage when

---

[144] Maslin, Crystal. "Social Construction of Aboriginal Peoples in the Saskatchewan Print Media." Thesis. Thesis / Dissertation ETD, 2002 p.ii.
[145] Ibid p.42-48.
[146] Ibid p.32-56
[147] Maslin, Crystal. "Social Construction of Aboriginal Peoples in the Saskatchewan Print Media." Thesis. Thesis / Dissertation ETD, 2002 p.95.

momentum gathers around questions about autonomy of Aboriginal peoples and the effect of this self-sufficiency on the non-Aboriginal public.[148]

Much Canadian reportage on Aboriginal peoples has centered on Aboriginal land disputes and the demonstrations and acts of resistance that sometimes accompany them.[149] Commonly described as "stand-offs," these stories have also garnered the interest of scholars, who argue that press coverage typically frames these stories with emphasis on violence and militancy.[150] Media coverage of these "stand-offs" is analogous to coverage of First Nations reserves in that both types of story follow a template that comes with a fully loaded set of expectations.[151] While news stories concerning stand-offs offer frames of violence and conflict and use the stereotype of the 'warrior,' stories concerning crises on reserves emphasize frames of poverty and hopelessness and draw upon stereotypes such as the 'helpless victim' or 'drunk Indian.'

The "stand-off" and its accompanying "warrior" stereotype first came to prominence in the Canadian Media during the Oka Crisis.[152] As identified by the *Royal Commission*, the "Warrior" is depicted as a gun-toting, camouflage-clad Aboriginal man intent on disrupting law and order; nevertheless, the "Warrior"

---

[148] Maslin, Crystal. "Social Construction of Aboriginal Peoples in the Saskatchewan Print Media." Thesis. Thesis / Dissertation ETD, 2002 p.54.

[149] Wilkes, Rima, Catherine Corrigall-Brown, and Danielle Ricard. "Nationalism And Media Coverage Of Indigenous People's Collective Action In Canada." *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 34.4 (2011): p.41-42

[150] Ibid p.41

[151] Ibid p.54-55.

[152] Anderson, Mark Cronlund, and Carmen Robertson. *Seeing Red: A History of Natives in Canadian Newspapers*. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba, 2011 p.220-242.

stereotype is deeply rooted in colonial discourse.[153] As Heather Smyth explains, "The stereotype of the warrior rearticulates colonial stereotypes of Native violence, treachery, and savagery."[154] During the Oka Crisis of 1990, Canadian mainstream media largely framed the crisis as a conflict, with an emphasis on the threat to law and order posed by Aboriginals as troublemakers.[155] What started as an issue revolving around Aboriginal and treaty rights quickly devolved into a story of conflict and criminality, with the occupying Mohawk being depicted by the mainstream media as thugs and criminals and the central frame being that of law and order versus disorder and chaos.[156] This frame of conflict and the accompanying "Warrior" stereotype would come to characterize media coverage of other Aboriginal protests.[157]

In his examination of the media coverage of another standoff at Ipperwash, John Miller notes that newspapers framed the protestors at Ipperwash as troublemakers.[158] He observes that protestors were variously described as "rebels," "dissidents," and "militant," terms which strongly suggest their actions were illegal.

---

153 Canada. *Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples*. By Georges Erasmus and René Dussault. Vol 4. Ottawa: Commission, 1996 Public Education: Building Awareness and Understanding.

154 Smyth, Heather, *The Mohawk Warrior: Reappropriating the Colonial Stereotype*, Topia: A Canadian Journal of Cultural Studies 3 (Spring 2000): p.59.

155 Skea, Warren, 1993, *The Canadian Newspaper Industry's Portrayal of the Oka Crisis*. Native Studies Review, 9(1), p.15-27. Roth, Lorna, with Bev Nelson and Marie David. "Three Women, a Mouse, a Microphone, and a Telephone: Information (Mis)Management During the Mohawk/Canadian Governments' Conflict of 1990," in Feminism, Multiculturalism, and the Media: Global Diversities. Angara Valdivia (ed.), Pennsylvania State University. Sage Publication 1995, p.48–81.

156 Fleras, Augie, and Jean Lock. Kunz. *Media and Minorities: Representing Diversity in a Multicultural Canada*. Toronto: Thompson Educational, 2001.

157 Wilkes, Rima, Catherine Corrigall-Brown, and Danielle Ricard. "Nationalism And Media Coverage Of Indigenous People's Collective Action In Canada." *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 34.4 (2011): p.42.

158 Miller, John, *Ipperwash and the Media: A critical analysis of how the story was covered*, Ryerson University 2005. p.8-9.

This framing drew comparisons to the Oka crisis, particularly after Aboriginal activist Dudley George was shot and killed by police during the protest. Miller observes that *The Globe and Mail* had made unfounded accusations that Aboriginal activists who had been present at Oka were now also at Ipperwash.[159] This connection was quickly taken up by other reporters, who noted similar activity occurring simultaneously at Gustafesen Lake and insinuated that First Nations protestors at Ipperwash were colluding with other Native activist groups as part of a rising tide of subversive activity. Other newspapers were quick to adopt this theme of collusion. This framing of Aboriginal protests is closely linked with the stereotype of the "Stand-off Warrior" and suggests a conspiracy underlying Aboriginal protests, whilst ignoring the specificity of these protests.[160]

Sandra Lambertus has noted that newspapers are complicit reproducers of stereotypes and themes through their use of repetitive language, claiming that "the repetition of certain news elements, which link stories from one episode of a news event to preceding ones, contributes to the formation of a coherent news narrative of a developing news event."[161] She wrote that this repetition draws links from one crisis to another, essentially conflating separate events and disregarding their individual contexts. Specifically, Lambertus notes that comparisons were drawn between the Oka and Ipperwash crises through the use of such language and images

---

[159] Miller, John, *Ipperwash and the Media: A critical analysis of how the story was covered*, Ryerson University 2005. p.39.
[160] Ibid p.37-38.
[161] Lambertus, Sandra. *Wartime Images, Peacetime Wounds: The Media and the Gustafsen Lake Standoff*. Toronto: University of Toronto, 2004 p.151.

and demonstrates how these news stories have come to fit within a single news frame.[162]

Pejorative labels were used to describe the occupiers at Gustafesen Lake, with words like "rebels," "renegades" and "squatters" appearing most frequently in headlines and in the stories themselves.[163] When examining the differences in coverage between national and local newspapers, Lambertus observes that local newspapers had a more vested interest in maintaining good relations with the local Aboriginal populace; that they were "sensitive to representing the conflict in a way that supported positive relations between the local Native and Non-Native communities."[164] This meant that local newspapers were less likely to use stereotypes than national newspapers. Lambertus cites *The Globe and Mail* as the worst offender when it came to reliance on labels.[165]

2.11 Conclusion

As this chapter illustrated, past and present media coverage of Aboriginal people has accustomed readers to common stereotypes and frames that show Aboriginals to be corrupt, incompetent outsiders from non-Aboriginal society. These stereotypes and frames abet and support a common-sense way of thinking for readers that focuses exclusively on these negative aspects of Aboriginal communities. Collectively, the practices described above contribute to the *Third World First Nations Reserve* frame.

---

[162] Lambertus, Sandra. *Wartime Images, Peacetime Wounds: The Media and the Gustafsen Lake Standoff*. Toronto: University of Toronto, 2004 p.200-201.
[163] Ibid p.152.
[164] Ibid p.160.
[165] Ibid p.162.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework & Method

Part 1: Theoretical Framework

The first section of this chapter explores the theoretical foundations that support this thesis research – most importantly, discourse. Discourse is useful for examining how dominant power structures relate to marginalized groups and racial minorities.[166] Discourse also becomes a way in which members of a dominant class think about or understand these groups; it gains influence as it is produced and reproduced. Canada's Aboriginal people have a long and complex history; a common complaint regarding media coverage of Aboriginal peoples is a failure on the part of journalists to provide a proper historical context for their stories. Dominant discourse reinforces white attitudes about Aboriginals; however, this discourse can be challenged by counter-discourses.[167]

3.1 Discourse

Michel Foucault, in *Power/Knowledge*, defines discourse as knowledge/power in use. Foucault's view is concerned with how discourse is used by the powerful to sustain their version of the truth. Discourse derives its power from acceptance – that people accept that "this is the way of things." [168]

Elaborating on Foucault, Stuart Hall defines discourse as a system of representation that attempts to bridge the gap between language (what one says)

---

[166] van Dijk, Teun., 'Analyzing Racism Through Discourse Analysis', *Race and ethnicity in Research Methods*, Ed. J. Stanfield, Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1993 p.92-134.
[167] Terdiman, Richard. *Discourse/counter-discourse: The Theory and Practice of Symbolic Resistance in Nineteenth-century France*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1985. p.149-150.
[168] Foucault, Michel, *Power/knowledge : selected interviews and other writings, 1972-1977*, New York, N.Y. : Pantheon Books, 1980 p.93-94.

and practice (what one does).[169] Hall states that discourse "governs the way a topic can be meaningfully talked about and reasoned about. It also influences how ideas are put into practice and used to regulate the conduct of others."[170]

Because discourses are rooted in history (though not always fixed), some can persist over time to become natural and commonsense beliefs.[171] The discourse of racism has persisted throughout much of history, with specific variations including anti-Semitism, anti-Black, and Islamophobia, reinforcing Hall's idea of discourse as both language and practice. Over time, discourse can direct and construct ways in which groups are thought about. Applying this notion to the current study, certain discourses (observable in the media) have shaped a mainstream (or dominant) way of thinking about Aboriginals. These discourses have persisted over time to become common sense, influencing how non-Aboriginals conceptualize Aboriginals.

Discourses surrounding Aboriginal people in Canada establish what Hall defined as a set of binary oppositions that pit one powerful group against a more marginalized group[172] – in this study, white non-Aboriginal society against Aboriginal society.

3.2 Discourses of Domination: The Colonizer and the Colonized

To maintain power, dominant groups often employ a discursive technique whereby the less powerful become marginalized, objectified and transformed into "The Other." This notion has its roots in a racist, colonial past. While colonialism is

---

[169] Hall, Stuart, *Representation: cultural representations and signifying practices*, London; Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage in association with the Open University, 1997 p.44.
[170] Ibid p.44.
[171] Davis, Helen, *Understanding Stuart Hall*, London; Thousand Oaks, Calif.: SAGE Publications, 2004 p.165.
[172] Hall, Stuart, *Representation: cultural representations and signifying practices*, London; Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage in association with the Open University, 1997 p.243.

defined as a process by which a foreign power dominates and exploits an indigenous group by appropriating its land and extracting the wealth from it, it can also apply to a dominant group doing the same to a less powerful one.[173] Edward Said, in his study of how the Western world created the discourse of Orientalism, notes that "European culture was able to manage – and even produce –- the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically and imaginatively during the post-Enlightenment period."[174] Said argues that the West applied an "us versus them" binary, which allowed the West to distinguish itself from non-Western groups (Others) and affirm Western culture and values as superior.[175]

David Spurr notes that, despite the end of European colonialism in the latter half of the twentieth century, colonialism continues to reproduce itself in discourse that remains evident in contemporary journalism.[176] According to Spurr, colonial discourse serves two functions: the first is to appropriate a "savage land," and the second is to create an illusion that the land and its original people were grateful to be colonized.[177] Spurr asserts that the ultimate aim of colonial discourse is not to maintain an *us* versus *them* binary between the colonizer and the colonized, but to see *them* assimilated into *us* (i.e., the less powerful group absorbed into the more powerful one).[178] In the history of Aboriginals in Canada, the Canadian government

---

[173] Henry, Frances and Carol Tator, *Discourses of Domination: racial bias in the Canadian English-language press*, Toronto, Ont. : University of Toronto Press, 2002 p.242.
[174] Said, Edward, *Orientalism*, New York, Ny, Vintage Books, 1978 p.3.
[175] Ibid p.43.
[176] Spurr, David, *The rhetoric of empire: colonial discourse in journalism, travel writing, and imperial administration*, urham, N.C. : Duke University Press, c1993 p.2-3.
[177] Ibid p.28.
[178] Ibid p.7.

pushed for the assimilation of Aboriginal peoples, and the media, as loyal auxiliaries of the state, echoed this idea when covering Aboriginal issues.[179]

3.3 News as Discourse of the Elite

Just as discourse is about power, media discourse can articulate power relationships and frequently gives social elites a voice for their views[180] (in Canada, these elites control economic wealth and political power and are typically comprised of white males of European extraction). The elites utilize the media as a means of constructing boundaries of common-sense discourse by presenting their views as self-evident and dismissing opposing views.[181] While contemporary media appear to operate under a more egalitarian framework, the status quo is actively preserved. Indeed, mainstream media operating in a capitalist market system have a vested interest in seeing that such a system is maintained.[182] Those who abide by these capitalist values are treated favourably by the media; those who dissent and resist are not.[183]

Media scholar Teun Van Dijk has stated that mainstream media have a tendency to avoid subjects which cast the dominant power group in an unfavourable light; such subjects include poverty and its root causes, systemic racism, and the

---

[179] Harding, Robert. "The Media, Aboriginal People and Common Sense." The Canadian Journal of Native Studies Xxv.1 (2005): p.315.
[180] van Dijk, Teun, *Racism and the Press*, London ; New York, NY : Routledge, 1991 p.43.
[181]Ibid p.43.
[182] Fleras, Augie, *The Media Gaze: Representations of Diversities in Canada*, Vancouver [B.C.] : UBC Press, c2011, Winseck, Dwayne, Media Merger Mania, Canadian Dimension 42 (1): p.30-32.
[183] Lambertus, Sandra, *Wartime images, peacetime wounds : the media and the Gustafsen Lake standoff*, Toronto : University of Toronto Press, 2004 p.10.

legacies of colonialism.[184] News stories about Aboriginal peoples in Canada often force the media to confront (or avoid) some of these aspects of Canadian life.

3.4 Media Discourse

Norman Fairclough described media discourses as "ways of representing aspects of the world – the processes, relations and structures of the material world, the 'mental world' of thoughts, feelings, beliefs and so forth, and the social world."[185] Put another way, according to Frances Henry and Carol Tator, a discourse can be defined as "a repertoire of words, images, ideas and practices through which meanings are circulated."[186] John E. Richardson elaborates upon this further: "Discourses are systematically organized sets of statements which give expression to the meanings and values of an institution."[187] At its core, discourse can be most simply described as language in use, but it is also a process by which meaning is created and imparted.[188]

Importantly, newspapers, as a form of mass communication, disseminate discourses to a large audience who understand and interpret these various discourses.[189] Roger Fowler points out that the writer is constituted by discourse,

---

[184] van Dijk, Teun A, *The Mass Media Today: Discourse of Domination or Diversity*, Javnost/The Public 2 (2): p.28-42.
[185] Fairclough, Norman. *Analysing Discourse: Textual Analysis for Social Research*. London: Routledge, 2003 p.124.
[186] Henry, Frances, and Carol Tator. *Discourses of Domination: Racial Bias in the Canadian English-language Press*. Toronto: University of Toronto, 2002 p.224.
[187] Richardson, John E. *Analysing Newspapers: An Approach from Critical Discourse Analysis*. Basingstoke [England: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007 p.76.
[188]Henry, Frances and Carol Tator, *Discourses of Domination: racial bias in the Canadian English-language press*, Toronto, Ont. : University of Toronto Press, 2002 p.244.
[189] Dijk, Teun Adrianus Van. *News as Discourse*. Hillsdale, NJ: L. Erlbaum Associates, 1988 p.vii.

not the other way around.[190] Furthermore, news production cannot be separated from the social context within which it is created. As Fowler also observes,

> News is not a natural phenomenon emerging straight from 'reality', but a *product*. It is produced by an industry, shaped by the bureaucratic and economic structure of that industry, by the relations between the media and other industries and, most importantly, by relations with government and with other political organizations. From a broader perspective, it reflects, and in return shapes, the prevailing values of a society in particular historical context.[191]

With regard to Canada's Aboriginal communities, it would follow that mainstream newspapers would reflect discourses that most Canadians understand as common sense, and would avoid challenging these discourses' underlying, embedded assumptions. In relation to the current study, a post-colonial discourse of Canada's Aboriginal peoples constructs them as "The Other" by relying on stereotypes that portray Aboriginals as corrupt, plagued by substance abuse and incapable of taking care of themselves; this discourse creates the media frame defined here as the *Third World First Nations Reserve*.

Part II: Methodology

As Chapter 2 detailed, the historical connections among Canada's political leadership, the news media, and Aboriginal communities are complex. In recent times, the government's involvement in Aboriginal affairs has tended to be laissez-faire; local leadership is allowed to handle its basic duties, and the government steps in only when crises occur. As for mainstream media, they tend to ignore Aboriginal

---

[190] Fowler, Roger. *Language in the News: Discourse and Ideology in the Press*. London: Routledge, 1991 p.42.
[191] Ibid p.222.

issues unless trouble emerges, and then tend to disseminate information that – while not overtly racist – often contains patronizing messages suggesting an underlying racist subtext. As Chapter 2 noted, this subtext feeds into a long-standing discourse that non-Aboriginals have come to accept about Canada's First Peoples: Aboriginals are incapable of handling their affairs. This may occur because media tend to depend on 'official' sources that provide expedient messages lacking the historical context to make them truly meaningful. Because the purpose of this thesis is to examine media representation of Aboriginals, using two recent case studies involving the Kashechewan and Attawapiskat First Nations Reserves, it is important to explain how that might be accomplished. This section lays out a method of analysing newspaper coverage that may reveal the news frame of the *Third World First Nations Reserve*. The research employs a framing analysis that identifies news frames that feed into discourses about Aboriginals. As will be outlined in this chapter, a textual analysis will help identify the frames. Once identified, these frames should connect to what Norman Fairclough calls discursive and socio-cultural practices.[192] This section begins by defining critical discourse analysis and its usefulness in studying marginalized groups. The chapter will also discuss stereotypes – which, as Chapter 2 suggested, have long been a feature of reporting on Aboriginal peoples and are one of the ways by which the media convey common-sense ideas that members of the reading public use to interpret the news. Finally, framing analysis will be explained, laying out a method for examining the two case studies under consideration.

---

[192] Fairclough, Norman. *Media Discourse*. London: E. Arnold, 1995 p.2.

3.5 Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

Important to this research is the use of news frames and how these frames help shape or become part of discourse involving Aboriginal groups in Canada. Briefly, critical discourse analysis (CDA) seeks to examine the interaction between producer, text and reader, bridging the gap between linguistic analysis and social analysis; it is concerned with language's relationship to power and ideology.[193] CDA "is interested in social problems such as dominance, power abuse, discrimination (racist, sexist, nationalist, ethnicist, etc.)," as Richardson notes, "and the role that language plays in reproducing, or resisting such inequities."[194] CDA views discourse as a circular process whereby social practices influence texts, shaping the context; these texts subsequently influence members of a society who consume them.[195] It represents a more concentrated area of discourse study, extrapolating from the discourse evidence of how dominant groups maintain their status. Applied to a study of Aboriginals and the news media, a CDA can reveal what Henry and Tator describe as the "ideologies and dominant discourses of the mass media and other elite groups."[196] To elaborate, CDA would identify subtle language patterns used by the press to characterize marginalized groups that might otherwise go unnoticed, and connect these patterns to a larger discourse (or common-sense way of thinking) about Aboriginals.

---

[193] Fairclough, Norman. *Media Discourse*. London: E. Arnold, 1995 p.53-74. Richardson, John E. *Analysing Newspapers: An Approach from Critical Discourse Analysis*. Basingstoke [England: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007, p.27.

[194] Richardson, John E. *Analysing Newspapers: An Approach from Critical Discourse Analysis*. Basingstoke [England: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007, p.237.

[195] Ibid p.37.

[196] Henry, Frances, and Carol Tator. *Discourses of Domination: Racial Bias in the Canadian English-language Press*. Toronto: University of Toronto, 2002 p.242.

In this thesis, it is the racialized, postcolonial discourse of "The Other" – in this instance, Canada's Aboriginal groups – that, according to several scholars, consistently emerges in Canadian press depictions of First Nations reserves. These depictions perpetuate a discourse that constructs Aboriginal peoples as incapable of handling of their own affairs and as existing outside the boundaries of white, mainstream society.[197] As the current research argues, this discourse is nourished by the continual use of a *Third World First Nations Reserve* frame.

3.6 Stereotypes

Critical to any study of minorities in the media and their attendant discourses is the use of stereotypes. Walter Lippmann famously coined the term *stereotype*, defining it as a way of categorizing people by capitalizing on certain traits regarded as common and widespread.[198] As defined by Roger Fowler, a stereotype is a "socially-constructed mental pigeon-hole into which events and individuals can be sorted, thereby making such events and individuals comprehensible."[199] Likewise, Frances Henry and Carol Tator write, "Thinking stereotypically is part of the well-documented phenomenon of cognitive categorization, which basically involves people taking shortcuts when processing information."[200] The reinforcement of stereotypes through repetition in news accounts builds their potential for

---

[197] Fleras, Augie. *The Media Gaze: Representations of Diversities in Canada*. Vancouver: UBC, 2011 p.217-218.
Harding, R., "The Media, Aboriginal People and Common Sense", *The Canadian Journal of Native Studies XXV*, 1(2005):p.311-335.
[198] Lippmann, Walter, *Public Opinion*, New York, Free Press, 1922 p.62.
[199] Fowler, Roger, *Language in the News: Discourse and Ideology in the Press*, London, Routledge, 1991 p.17.
[200] Henry, Frances and Carol Tator, *Discourses of Domination: racial bias in the Canadian English-language press*, Toronto, Ont. : University of Toronto Press, 2002 p.29.

recognition in future events, wherein they will be discerned easily.[201] Lippmann explains that stereotypes "mark out certain objects as familiar or strange, emphasizing the difference, so that the slightly familiar is seen as very familiar, and the somewhat strange as sharply alien."[202] In Stuart Hall's assessment, stereotypes can be divided into three practices. The first simplifies, reduces, and essentializes an object. The second creates a binary, *us versus them,* that excludes what does not belong. The third, which is connected to stereotyping's tendency to accompany gross inequalities of power, is to reinforce these inequalities.[203]

Concerning First Nations reserves and their residents, stereotyping in the press has created a shorthand way of thinking that permits readers to latch onto certain racialized assumptions without having to understand the underlying power dynamics at work. As articulated by Augie Fleras, news stereotypes about Aboriginal people in Canada serve several purposes. Aboriginal people are variously presented to the Canadian public as

> a) a threat to Canada's territorial integrity or national interests; (b) a risk to Canada's social order and inter-group harmony; (c) an economic liability; (d) an irritant to the criminal justice system; and (e) pushers of privilege that undermine Canada's egalitarian norms and constitutional principles.[204]

The prevalence of stereotypes used by Canada's newspapers to categorize Aboriginal people feeds into news frames, which ultimately help constitute discourse about Aboriginals.

---

[201] Fowler, Roger, *Language in the News: Discourse and Ideology in the Press*, London, Routledge, 1991 p.17-19.
[202] Lippmann, Walter, *Public Opinion*, New York, Free Press, 1922 p.59.
[203] Hall, Stuart, *Representation : cultural representations and signifying practices*, London ; Thousand Oaks, Calif. : Sage in association with the Open University, 1997 p.258
[204] Fleras, Augie, 'Reclaiming Aboriginality: From Mainstream Media Representation to Aboriginal Self Representation', *Visions of the Heart: Canadian Aboriginal Issues* 3rd Ed, Toronto, ON : Oxford University Press, 2011 p.192.

3.7 Framing Analysis

Because this research assumes that news frames feed into media discourse, it adopts framing analysis – derived from the work of sociologist Erving Goffman – as the essential method of analysis for this thesis.[205] Framing studies, in the words of Autumn Miller and Susan Dente Ross, "focus on how message construction – terms of meaning, internal structure, and physical presentation – affects public perceptions of the information presented."[206] Todd Gitlin defines frames as "principles of selection, emphasis and presentation composed of little tacit theories about what exists, what happens, what matters."[207] According to Gitlin, journalists use news frames to categorize, emphasize and present what has happened and why it may matter to the public. Another researcher, Robert Entman, argues that news frames are about selection and salience: journalists make choices to focus on certain aspects of a news story that are familiar to the reader.[208] For example, as Elizabeth Weston argues, news media often use a frame of the "degraded Indian" when discussing Aboriginal issues.[209] Such a frame, she notes, has resonance with non-Aboriginal readers. This thesis argues that the use of frames that contain stereotypes simplify complex stories for readers (or viewers and listeners) and fail to challenge ideas about groups or individuals who have historically been marginalized by mainstream culture. In a study of an Aboriginal crisis, identifying

---

[205] Goffman, Erving. *Frame Analysis*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1974

[206] Miller, Autumn, and Ross Susan, *They Are Not Us: Framing of American Indians by the Boston Globe*, Howard Journal of Communications, Volume 15, Issue 4, 2004, p.246

[207] Gitlin, Todd. *The Whole World Is Watching: Mass Media in the Making & Unmaking of the New Left*. Berkeley: University of California, 1980 p.6-7

[208] Entman, Robert M. "Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm." *Journal of Communication* 43.4 (1993): p.51-58.

[209] Weston, Mary Ann. *Native Americans in the News: Images of Indians in the Twentieth Century Press*. Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1996 p.62.

the frame of the *Third World First Nations Reserve* taps into a historical-colonial and post-colonial discourse about Aboriginal peoples.

Entman's work provides a model within which the *Third World First Nations* frame will fit. According to Entman, a frame accomplishes four things: 1) define a problem, 2) diagnose a cause (or causes), 3) make moral judgments about the situation, and 4) suggest remedies/solutions to resolve the issue.[210] The current research will apply this four-pronged model to the framing analysis of the Kashechewan water crisis and the Attawapiskat housing crisis. It will be argued that the frame identified by this thesis as the *Third World First Nations Reserve* has become a dominant news frame for reporting on twenty-first-century Aboriginal issues in Canada. As such, this thesis is guided by the following research questions:

1. Is there evidence of a *Third World First Nations Reserve* frame in Canadian national newspaper coverage of the crises affecting Kashechewan and Attawapiskat? How might this frame be identified?
2. Does this frame contribute to the larger, post-colonial discourse of Aboriginals as "The Other"?

As the previous discussion indicated, local press can often promote a better understanding of Aboriginal issues than national press. This leads to a third research question:

3. As a critique of the two selected mainstream newspapers, did the reporting found in the selected Aboriginal newspaper ignore or refute this frame? If so, how are positive counter-frames illustrated?

---

[210] Entman, Robert M. "Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm." *Journal of Communication* 43.4 (1993): p.52.

3.8 Parameters of Study

In this study of Canada's mainstream press, Canada's two national English-language newspapers *The Globe and Mail* and *The National Post* were selected. These newspapers are considered "national" newspapers because they reach a national audience and focus on issues that affect all Canadians. In addition, these newspapers have a significant readership: the *Globe and Mail* has a daily circulation of 302,190 and *The National Post* has a daily circulation of 169,566.[211]

This study examined thirty days of news coverage in the *Globe and Mail* and the *National Post* that provided sufficient coverage for analysis, beginning with the onset of the crises. The dates of coverage for each crisis are as follows: Kashechewan – October 19, 2005, to November 23, 2005; Attawapiskat – November 26, 2011 to December 26, 2011.

Dates of coverage for the *Wawatay News* were extended over a slightly longer period of time because of the paper's biweekly output. Therefore, the dates examined were: Kashechewan – October 21, 2005 to November 17 2005; Attawapiskat – October 28, 2011 to December 22, 2011.

Media discourse scholar Teun Van Dijk once noted "How prominent a role the daily newspaper plays for white people in the definition of the ethnic situation and the construction of an interpretative framework for the understanding of ethnic events."[212] His observations may apply to a study of news framing, because frames contribute to the creation of a discourse. One justification for the selection of the

---

[211] Daily Newspaper Circulation Data | Newspapers Canada." *Daily Newspaper Circulation Data | Newspapers Canada*. N.p., n.d. Web.
[212] Dijk, Teun Adrianus Van. *Racism and the Press*. London: Routledge, 1991 p.x.

Globe and Mail and *National Post* newspapers is that research suggests national newspapers tend to use stereotypes and easily understood news frames more than do local newspapers situated closer to an event.[213] To address the third research question, this study will examine coverage of the same crises in the *Wawatay News*, an Aboriginal press. While Aboriginal newspapers are not necessarily political or intent on differentiating themselves from mainstream newspapers, they may provide a venue wherein Aboriginal people can learn about the events and people shaping their daily lives without reading stereotypical language that lacks context about their communities.[214] Distributed on a biweekly basis to more than eighty First Nations communities across northern Ontario (including Kashechewan and Attawapiskat), plus the region's towns and cities, the *Wawatay News* has a circulation of 9300.[215] The purpose of examining this newspaper is to discern whether it might exhibit a frame that counters the *Third World First Nations Reserve* frame.

3.9 Keyword Search Criteria

A keyword search was conducted of the *Canadian Newsstand Major Dailies* database on Proquest (a full-text database containing a record of all Canada's major daily newspapers).[216] The keywords "Kashechewan," "Attawapiskat," "housing crisis," "water crisis," and "e coli" were used. The search returned 219 hits, which

---

[213] Henry, Frances, and Carol Tator. *Discourses of Domination: Racial Bias in the Canadian English-language Press*. Toronto: University of Toronto, 2002 p.213. Miller, Autumn, and Ross Susan, *They Are Not Us: Framing of American Indians by the Boston Globe*, Howard Journal of Communications, Volume 15, Issue 4, 2004, p. 250. Weston, Mary Ann. *Native Americans in the News: Images of Indians in the Twentieth Century Press*. Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1996 p.15.
[214] Dickason, Olive Patricia, and David Alan Long. *Visions of the Heart: Canadian Aboriginal Issues*. Toronto [u.a.: Harcourt Canada, 2011 p.190.
[215] "About Wawatay." *Wawatay RSS News*. N.p., n.d. Web.
[216] "Canadian Newsstand on Proquest." *Canadian Newsstand on Proquest*. N.p., n.d. Web.

were narrowed down (with letters to the editor removed) to 39 news articles and 18 editorials and columns for the Kashechewan crisis and 38 news articles and 22 editorials for the Attawapiskat crisis. Seven issues of the *Wawatay News* were examined, using its online digital archive.[217]

These data were then examined to determine if each piece met the requirements, namely that they were full-length articles or editorials. Editorials were included if they were either issued by the newspaper itself (in which case no authorship was attributed) or by a columnist or guest columnist. Along with the news articles that reported on the crisis, editorials were considered a valuable part of this study. As authors Henry and Tator note,

> Editorials have important discursive properties. In transmitting ideological messages, they perform important social, political, and sociocultural functions. These messages do a great deal to shape public opinion on events and to set political agendas. Editorials are closely heeded by political decision makers and sometimes influence political and legislative action. Conservative and right-wing editorials have an especially strong impact because the shared social representations and beliefs of dominant hegemonic groups – that is, White upper-class males – are usually imbedded in them.[218]

As such, the inclusion of editorials in this study allows useful examination of how these columnists sought to influence mainstream public opinion about First Nations reserves.

Chapter 4: Findings & Analysis

A framing analysis of selected coverage from the *Globe and Mail* and the *National Post* identified the *Third World First Nations Reserve* frame in use. As noted in Chapter 1, The *Third World First Nations Reserve* frame can be defined as the use

---

[217] "Archive." *Wawatay RSS News*. N.p., n.d. Web.

[218] Henry, Frances, and Carol Tator. *Discourses of Domination: Racial Bias in the Canadian English-language Press.* Toronto: University of Toronto, 2002 p.216.

of language that evokes imagery connecting reserve life to life in a developing, impoverished nation. This news frame was found to have characterized the selected newspapers' coverage of the two First Nations reserves from the onset of the crises.

The analysis examined 77 news articles and 40 editorials from the *Globe and Mail* and the *National Post* and 7 news articles and 2 editorials from the *Wawatay News*. These articles and editorials will be organized around Robert Entman's model of framing analysis, in which frames a) define problems, b) diagnose their causes, c) make moral evaluations about them and d) suggest remedies to solve them. As these analyses will illustrate, when taken together the components of Entman's model comprise the *Third World First Nations Reserve* frame.[219] In addition, each of these components expresses four dominant themes found in the mainstream newspapers: 1) objectification of "The Other," 2) paternalism towards Aboriginals, 3) a critique of political correctness, and 4) a call for assimilation. Applied to the Aboriginal newspaper *Wawatay News*, the framing analysis will illustrate how this newspaper's coverage of the two crises offers a counter to the *Third World First Nations Reserve* news frame and serves to dispel the four themes found within the two mainstream newspapers. The following section is organized around the Entman model, with the analysis of each event providing sufficient examples to illustrate the *Third World First Nations Reserve* frame.

4.1 Defining the Problem: Living in Third World Conditions and the Objectification of "The Other"

[219] Entman, Robert M. "Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm." *Journal of Communication* 43.4 (1993): 51-58.

Within the selected newspapers' coverage of the two crises, many of the first articles were dedicated to describing the living conditions on the two reserves. Emphasized in these descriptions was the stark poverty of these reserves, likening them to Third World nations. Indeed, descriptions of the reserves' living conditions accentuated not only how impoverished they were, but how foreign and alien these conditions were to Canadian readers. This "Otherness" aspect of the reserves would prove a dominant theme in the news articles and editorials, creating the *Third World First Nations Reserve* frame.

Kashechewan Coverage

When news first broke of the E. coli outbreak on the Kashechewan reserve, coverage contained initial reports coming from the Canadian government or the reserve officials, with headlines reading "Polluted reserve to be evacuated"[220] and "Evacuate reserve, Chief urges Ottawa."[221] The first news articles on the crisis concerned the federal government's alleged mishandling of the situation (although the reports also suggested culpability on the part of the Ontario government). These articles presented stories about the negative reaction in the federal parliament and provincial legislature, quoting members of the government and opposition. Politicians were the primary actors in these stories, with many critical articles focusing on the jurisdictional battle between the federal and provincial governments over responsibility for the water crisis and for the evacuation of residents. Again, Canadian readers learned of the crisis and the government's

---

[220] Howlett, Karen; Curry, Bill. "Polluted reserve to be evacuated" *The Globe and Mail* [Toronto, Ont] 26 Oct 2005: A.1.

[221] Curry, Bill. "Evacuate reserve, chief urges Ottawa" *The Globe and Mail* [Toronto, Ont] 20 Oct 2005: A.7.

response via quotes from politicians and government officials. Although some early articles quoted reserve officials, including the then-chief of the Kashechewan reserve, Leo Friday, it was federal and provincial politicians who dominated these first stories; it was the content of their message that emphasized the *Third World First Nations Reserve* frame in the *Globe and Mail* and *National Post*.

A *Globe and Mail* article, headlined "Water plight on reserve a disgrace: Ramsay" and dated October 25, contained this quote from the provincial Minister of Natural Resources: "No Ontarian should have to put up with such Third World conditions."[222] The following day, another article in the *Globe and Mail* quoted then-leader of the NDP, Howard Hampton, who criticizing the premier of Ontario: "Why did people have to suffer under Third World conditions with contaminated water for two years while your government ignored the problem?"[223]

Four days after news of the E. coli outbreak first appeared, the *Globe and Mail* contained first-hand accounts of the living conditions in Kashechewan that painted a picture of life on the reserve. The tone of these news accounts tended to be negative, and the text compared Kashechewan to a Third World country. One article in the *Globe and Mail*, headlined "Conditions on reserve 'atrocious,' doctor says," quoted extensively from said doctor, who described illnesses such as scabies and hepatitis in the community resulting from the contaminated water.[224] The doctor blamed much of the crisis on poor planning and infrastructure, adding that "nothing here is

---

[222]Howlett, Karen. "Water plight on reserve a disgrace: Ramsay" *The Globe and Mail* [Toronto, Ont] 25 Oct 2005: A.14.
[223]Howlett, Karen; Curry, Bill. "Tempers flare with Ottawa as airlift of natives begins" *The Globe and Mail* [Toronto, Ont] 27 Oct 2005: A.1.
[224]Rusk, James." Conditions on reserve 'atrocious,' doctor says" *The Globe and Mail* [Toronto, Ont] 24 Oct 2005: A.5.

worth saving" and advocating for the relocation of residents. This article also quoted Chief Leo Friday, who said that the youth of the reserve were becoming restless, "talking about burning 10 houses" and threatening to blow up the water treatment plant when it stopped working the previous year. This article's emphasis on unsanitary living conditions that led to illness and social unrest is indicative of a *Third World First Nations Reserve* news frame, whereby imagery of disease and violence may have reinforced the reader's mental repertoire about the reserves. In addition to the chief, who is quoted with regard to violence on the reserve, the doctor becomes a primary actor. Presumably an outsider (and non-Aboriginal), his status potentially gives him further credibility to readers. This story relied on "official" sources, namely non-Aboriginal outsiders, who relay to reading audiences what is "really" going on in the reserve; it is assumed that these authority figures would give a truthful account.

In the *National Post*, the article "Reserve may be unlivable: Residents angry," dated October 27, 2005, contained interviews with Kashechewan residents, but it began with the following: "It might be the worst place to live in Ontario, but Marie Reuben would still like to call Kashechewan home. 'It's hard to leave. So many memories,' Ms. Reuben said as she huddled outside the ramshackle gate at the airport."[225] The report implied that the woman is simply too sentimental about her home, which the reporter qualified as the "worst place to live in Ontario." The story further described the various skin infections affecting the reserve's children, mentioning Reuben's son "clutching her arm, as a bone-chilling drizzle started to

[225] Mallen, Sean." Reserve may be unlivable: Residents angry" *National Post* [Don Mills, Ont] 27 Oct 2005: A10.

fall," his chin covered in "angry red marks." An interview with another young mother from Kashechewan revealed how she shared a three-room bungalow with eighteen members of her family, "children congregated around her feet." The house is described as having walls "covered in crayon marks and pock-marked with holes."

Another article in the *Globe and Mail*, headlined "Escape from Kashechewan," detailed evacuation efforts on the reserve and described the residents as "sick and vulnerable" and "huddled" together. In one passage, readers found this lengthy description of the living conditions on the reserve:

> For most non-Aboriginal Canadians the bitterness and squalor on the Kashechewan reserve would be deeply shocking. Overcrowding is endemic. Family members often live three or four to a room, the windows of many houses are boarded up and garbage litters the gardens and ditches. Empty bottles of vodka – smuggled in and sold by bootleggers at up to $100 a bottle – f are strewn in many gardens.[226]

In addition, this article mentions an array of social problems faced by the community, citing an unemployment rate of eighty percent and overdependence on welfare assistance, reporting that "when monthly welfare cheques were given out at the band office yesterday afternoon the queue snaked out the front door and into the streets."

Embedded in both the *Globe and Mail* and *National Post* stories are stereotypes that have historically characterized Aboriginal peoples in the media: the substance abuser, the welfare user and the helpless victim. The headlines signaled to a white reader living far from the reserve that a terrible situation existed. In the *Globe and Mail*, a writer provided an account of living conditions in Kashechewan.

---

[226]Strauss, Julius. "ESCAPE FROM KASHECHEWAN" *The Globe and Mail* [Toronto, Ont] 28 Oct 2005: A.1.

Headlined "Running from the shadows of despair," the article contained interviews with Kashechewan residents that encapsulated what living on the reserve is like.[227] One young man, described as having alcohol and drug addictions, is profiled in the first sentence: "Last Thursday evening, when the federal government was announcing it would build a new settlement for the people of Kashechewan, Mathias Wynne was passed out drunk on a fetid mattress in his filthy room." The twenty-five-year-old man already had two children with whom he was not in contact. Other residents are also profiled and described as suffering from depression, substance abuse, gambling addictions, or health issues like diabetes. The article provided the story of one resident who could be considered a positive example: "Unlike many parents on the reserve, she keeps a clean and tidy house and her daughter, 10-year-old Latea, is fed and clothed well." Such positive descriptions were rare. Instead, the article focused on despair: "The entire town reeks of poverty and neglect" and has a "postwar feel." The writer further described poorly maintained and boarded-up houses, an abundance of stray dogs and the area being littered with empty vodka bottles. The article also suggested that Kashechewan's problems were caused by its remoteness, citing the high cost of living because everything must be transported into the reserve. Unnamed residents also allege financial mismanagement and nepotism by the band council. Once again, the comparisons with the Third World are explicit: "What is not in dispute is that the Kashechewan reserve more closely

---

[227] Strauss, Julius. "Running from the shadows of despair" *The Globe and Mail* [Toronto, Ont] 31 Oct 2005: A.1.

resembles a Third World settlement than a heavily subsidized community in one of the world's richest countries."

The story described above contains numerous Aboriginal stereotypes, such as substance abuse and the corrupted Aboriginal. As this article suggested, logistical problems of maintaining a remote reserve led to an unsustainably high cost of living, despite the millions of dollars spent on it. The only positive aspects of living on the reserve are mentioned by one resident, who is quoted as saying that living on the reserve keeps families together and allows them to take care of the elderly; she states that the alternative is "assimilation and a loss of native culture."

A recurring description in the articles is that of reserve children who are sick, afflicted with strange maladies. The imagery in these articles is similar to that found in media stories about Third World nations, where vivid descriptions of sick children may elicit a paternalistic, sympathetic response in readers. For example, in the *Globe and Mail*, one article uses such imagery when comparing Kashechewan to a neighbouring reserve that experienced a similar outbreak of water-borne related illness 20 years earlier, asserting that "the cause was undeniable: gastroenteritis, the child killer of the Third World."[228] Such explicit use of the term Third World serves to reinforce the *Third World First Nations Reserve* news frame; it contains all the necessary connotations that most readers would understand. The use of the term Third World in conjunction with stories about children may evoke the sympathies of readers and cement the link between the Third World and First

---

[228] MacGregor, Roy. "Only a bay and 20 years separate one aboriginal tragedy from another" *The Globe and Mail* [Toronto, Ont] 27 Oct 2005: A.2.

Nations reserves. Coupled with descriptions of large young families living in overcrowded houses, characteristic of living conditions in developing countries, the use of the term feeds further into this *Third World First Nations Reserve* news frame and contributes to the objectification of reserves and their residents as "The Other" – decidedly not Canadian.

Attawapiskat Coverage

Similar to the Kashechewan coverage, the *Third World First Nations Reserve* news frame in the selected national newspapers' coverage of the Attawapiskat housing crisis remained consistent. Newspaper articles described the living conditions of Attawapiskat as similar to those of Kashechewan, focusing on poverty, disease, and economic depression. As with the Kashechewan coverage, when seeking a cause of the conditions in Attawapiskat, the central narrative was supplied by the government, who blamed the crisis on financial mismanagement and or corruption.

An article in the *Globe and Mail* on November 26, 2011, headlined "Federal help headed for troubled first-nations village," begins by outlining the current living conditions in Attawapiskat: "The deplorable conditions in a Northern Ontario first-nations community, where people are living in tents without running water, adequate heating, or sewage disposal, have prompted a response from the federal government."[229] The writer asserts, "The conditions in the community have been compared to those in an impoverished developing country." Quoting another official source, the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, the story attributes the crisis to the

[229] Galloway, Gloria. "Federal help headed for troubled first-nations village" *The Globe and Mail* [Toronto, Ont] 26 Nov 2011: A.8.

financial problems and governance of the First Nation, stating, “Part of our overall next steps is to get to a place where proper local administration and governance can ensure there is progress being made in the community." The local MP who is quoted in the article blames the problem on underfunding and “systemic negligence” on the part of the federal government. The article quotes the housing manager for Attawapiskat, who describes the community’s problems – mentioning that human waste is being dumped into ditches and the lack of hygiene is allowing the spread of lice and scabies.

The coverage in the two selected newspapers further illustrate the news frame of the *Third World First Nation* by describing the deplorable conditions on the reserve. One article in *The Globe and Mail*, headlined “In Attawapiskat, officials find toddlers living in shack with mouldy mattresses,” describes homes in detail as “burnt-out” shacks, “pocked with holes” or otherwise in states of disrepair.[230] Families are also described being “crammed” together in these shacks: “Houses are built, families move in and grow so quickly that soon they are overflowing the home.” Elsewhere, the article reports “mould… creeping across one mattress.” In all, no positive attributes are used to describe these residents’ houses. This article also contains descriptions of the children of Attawapiskat that elicit Third World imagery. One mother who is interviewed mentions that her children take fewer baths because of plumbing problems. Another passage, describing a child who “ate spaghetti with his fingers,” emphasizes the primitiveness of the residents.

---

[230] Scoffield, Heather. “In Attawapiskat, officials find toddlers living in shack with mouldy mattresses” *The Globe and Mail* [Toronto, Ont] 30 Nov 2011: A.4.

Reflecting a stereotype of Aboriginals as pathetic victims, the residents are depicted as being indifferent to their situation; one resident is quoted as saying "At least I am alive," adding, "that's good enough for me." Another resident expresses gratitude for her tent because it is "kind of better" than the overcrowded house in which she had been living.

"Communities too sad to survive" is the headline from a *National Post* editorial that compares Attawapiskat to a number of other remote, problem-plagued reserves, observing that they have several things in common: "no jobs, no future, bad governance and a climate of utter despair."[231] This editorial notes that Canadians have become indifferent to such stories and that the government's only response to these crises is to "shovel money" at them. The editorial again elicits the *Third World First Nations Reserve* news frame by describing Attawapiskat as immersed in "Third World-style squalor and homelessness" and by likening it to "miniature Soviet style welfare states" that existed in "Kruschev-era Siberia." Such comparisons also emphasize Attawapiskat's "Otherness" from the non-Aboriginal (Canadian) society. The use of the *Third World First Nations Reserve* news frame conveys a sense of poor living conditions and illustrates how the reserve has failed to thrive in a free-market, capitalist system. The editorial also suggests that Attawapiskat residents are "bribed" to stay and "just sit around and do nothing." Like other articles and editorials, this one supported the Federal government's allegations of financial mishandling, whilst describing band councils as "clannish" and "incompetent."

---

[231] "Communities too sad to survive*" National Post* [Don Mills, Ont] 01 Dec 2011: A.16.

Using a decidedly mocking tone, the editorial's writer ridicules the residents' spiritual connection to the land, claiming that communities like Attawapiskat persist through the naïve belief that they will prosper "after rediscovering their ancient culture in some mystical way that defies everything we know about economics and human nature." The writer decries this as "magical thinking," linking reserve life and welfare dependency. "Misery on reserves, your tax dollars at work," the editorial concludes.

4.2 Diagnosing the Causes: Incompetence and Paternalism

The second component of Entman's model of framing analysis is "diagnosing the cause." In the case of Kashechewan, the news articles examined identify government incompetence as the main culprit. Indeed, the use of government officials as primary sources (particularly in the first few days of coverage) not only served to define the *Third World* problems in Kashechewan but also to diagnose their cause as government incompetence. In the selected newspapers, the articles appearing during the week after the story broke focused almost exclusively on the political failure to respond to the crisis. Again, these articles relied on official sources, namely politicians and government officials.[232] As news coverage of the crisis expanded, so too did the number of causes. Articles that described living conditions in Kashechewan as Third World also cited geography as a factor, pointing out that it is a remote reserve situated far from easily-received consumer and government services. Such remoteness, according to these articles, resulted in a high cost of living and social problems. The reasons for these social problems, as

[232] Campbell, Murray." Indifference to native people shows again" *The Globe and Mail* [Toronto, Ont] 27 Oct 2005: A.9.

articulated in the stories examined from the *Globe and Mail* and *National Post*, stemmed from isolation from the non-Aboriginal world and a failure to assimilate into non-Aboriginal ways of life. In the coverage of the Attawapiskat crisis, financial mismanagement and corruption among the reserve's leaders caused the reserve's housing problems. Such simplistic analysis of the problem invariably led to the use of an overly paternalistic tone, suggesting either that the reserve way of life was logistically unsustainable and inferior and that relocation was necessary or, as was frequently suggested about Attawapiskat, that more government oversight was required – with the implication that the residents were incapable of taking care of themselves.

Kashechewan Coverage

A *National Post* article, headlined "All the lost boys and girls," was written by a former teacher about her brief tenure teaching a third grade class in Kashechewan.[233] This teacher writes that the water problems are just "the tip of the iceberg" and that "Kashechewan is a very sick place." She begins her piece by observing that she initially approached this teaching opportunity with much idealism, having "romanticized Third World and Native cultures." However, she reports that classrooms of disruptive and uncontrollable children changed her idealized view of native communities. She describes the children as unruly, poorly parented, overweight and with "rotting teeth." In one passage, the teacher recounts an incident in which a girl threw her own feces around the classroom; in another,

[233] Gough, Laurie. "All the lost boys and girls" *National Post* [Don Mills, Ont] 19 Nov 2005: A3.

the school principal's dog was hung dead from the front porch of her house. She laments:

> I had gone to Kashechewan naively looking for a culture that no longer exists. Instead, I found abuse everywhere -- of children, women, animals and even the land itself, supposedly the subject of so much cultural veneration. On the reserve, open sewage was emptied into the streams; garbage was thrown all over the place; and every year, on Dead Dog Day, stray dogs were shot and thrown into the river, turning the water an alarming, brilliant red.

This teacher attributes the problems in Kashechewan to the observation that the reserve straddles the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal worlds; she describes the reserve as a "squalid imitation of the white man's world." She reiterates often the claim that native culture is dying or dead, and calls the reserve school system a poor, second-class institution compared to the non-Aboriginal system. The teacher's story generated many editorial responses in the ensuing days, with many quick to seize on its bleak descriptions as proof that remote reserves like Kashechewan were not worth saving and should be scrapped.

An editorial in *The Globe and Mail*, for example, headlined "The Black Hole of our Nation's Consciousness," argues that Kashechewan's problems are the result of its remoteness and resultant lack of economic activity.[234] The writer describes the land as "bleak" and suggests that traditional subsistence methods such as hunting and fishing, while "noble," are not a sustainable economic base; he claims that politicians and Aboriginal leaders alike remain wilfully ignorant of the reality of the situation. While the writer blames the current water crisis on the Federal government, he suggests that Aboriginal leaders are also to blame for perpetuating

---

[234] Simpson, Jeffrey. "The Black Hole of our Nation's Consciousness" *The Globe and Mail* [Toronto, Ont] 28 Oct 2005: A.23.

what the author considers an unviable economic system. "Dozens of Kashechewans are scattered throughout Northern Ontario," he writes, "and many exist all across Canada: clusters of native people, living on unforgiving land, far from urban centres, yet asked by their leaders to be treated as 'nations.'"

The author's use of quotation marks around the term *nation* implies that word does not represent a reality. The editorial sharply criticizes the *Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* – which fostered the idea of autonomous Aboriginal nations – claiming that it developed this concept without considering what would actually occur among the First Nations as they shared economic exchanges. In other words, the system was bound to fail; as the writer adds, "Dreamier still were the commissioners' views of economics. Perhaps because they were academics, judges and native political leaders, they have no idea how an economy actually works."

Attawapiskat Coverage

During the Attawapiskat crisis, an article in the *Globe and Mail* began with the sentence "Federal minister wants to know why housing is so deplorable after 'significant funding' provided."[235] According to the article, the Minister noted that the reserve had received $80 million in funds since 2006, adding he wanted to "investigate why the first nation is facing so many challenges given the significant funding for housing, infrastructure, education and administration." The word "deplorable" appears again in the descriptions of the living conditions. In response to the Minster's insinuation, Grand Chief Stan Louttit of the Mushkegowyk Council,

---

[235] Galloway, Gloria; Howlett, Karen. "Officials investigate state of emergency" *The Globe and Mail* [Toronto, Ont] 29 Nov 2011: A.7.

who represents seven Cree First Nations including Attawapiskat, said the majority of funds go into education and to covering the logistical costs of bringing food and other supplies, especially construction materials, to their remote location.

A *Globe and Mail* article on December 1, 2011, reported that a third party manager had been appointed to handle Attawapiskat's finances. Headlined "Ottawa strips Attawapiskat of authority over finances," the tone of the article appears to be critical of this decision; the first sentence notes, "Stephen Harper and his government have decided the best way to fix the problems plaguing the remote and impoverished first nations community of Attawapiskat is to take the job of managing the town's money out of the hands of the native government."[236] In this article, the federal government appears paternalistic and heavy-handed. Like other articles, this one mentions the (now) $90 million that had been allocated to Attawapiskat since 2006, noting that despite these funds "people are still living in tents, sleeping on mouldy mattresses and using slop pails for toilets. Pictures of the conditions have created a national embarrassment." While the tone used in this article strikes an ambiguous note and can be read as critical of the government's decision to appoint a third party manager, it still elicits the stereotype of the corrupt or incompetent Aboriginal.

A similar article in the *National Post* also focused on the government's allegations of financial mismanagement.[237] It cites a list of irregularities, found in an audit, in the disbursement of government funds. The irregularities included

---

[236] Galloway, Gloria. ""Ottawa strips Attawapiskat of authority over finances." *The Globe and Mail* [Toronto, Ont] 01 Dec 2011: A.4.

[237] Chung, Amy "Reserve under new management", *National Post* [Don Mills, Ont] 01 Dec 2011: A.7.

employees being given pay increases without documentation, budgets not being compiled, and "critical infrastructure assets" such as the water plant not being insured. The article also describes the poor living conditions of the reserve:

> For at least the past two years, many residents in the remote community near James Bay – including, in some cases, multiple generations of a single family – have been living in makeshift tents and shacks without heat, electricity and indoor plumbing … Others are using buckets as washroom facilities and sleep in fear of fire because of wood-burning stoves in their homes.

These descriptions of the financial irregularities and poor living conditions seem correlated, suggesting that the conditions developed as a result of mismanagement or even corruption.

Again, the newspaper stories relied almost exclusively on government officials as sources – namely the Prime Minister, the Aboriginal Affairs Minister and some members of the opposition. No reserve officials were quoted (although the *Globe and Mail* article does mention that community leaders from Attawapiskat did not respond to the newspaper's requests for a comment).

An editorial in the *Globe* headlined "Heat, water and transparency" notes, "Images of children and toddlers with skin rashes lying on mouldy mattresses in decrepit shacks, and families of 10 crammed into wood-frame tents with wood-burning stoves create a distinctly un-Canadian scene. But this is daily life in Attawapiskat."[238] Not only does the editorial engage in the *Third World First Nations Reserve* news frame with its focus on poverty, disease, and overcrowding, but it presents a binary *us* versus *them* scenario by suggesting residents live an "un-Canadian" life.

---

[238] "Heat, water and transparency" *The Globe and Mail* [Toronto, Ont] 01 Dec 2011: A.24.

This editorial continues, invoking the stereotype of Aboriginals as incompetent/corrupt by attributing Attawapiskat's problems to Aboriginal incompetence and describing the declaration of a state of emergency as a "tactic" by the community to elicit media attention. The editorial supports the government's decision to appoint a third party manager:

> Placing the reserve in third-party management should bring clarity and transparency to the crisis … While there has been no evidence of misappropriation, the problem of mismanagement, if true, must be addressed. Effective First Nations governance is key to the community's long-term viability.

The use of paternalist language implies that First Nations cannot effectively govern themselves without government supervision. The editorial also highlights the burden placed by this reserve on Canadian taxpayers: "Canadians don't expect to encounter these scenes of poverty and devastation in their own backyard. But they also expect scarce public resources to be well-spent."

4.3 Moral Evaluations: Blame Political Correctness & Corruption

In the weeks following the first reports of the crises, editorials and columns appeared in both *The Globe and Mail* and *The National Post* reflecting the third facet of the frame – offering a moral evaluation of the situation. Regarding Kashechewan, the majority of these editorials noted that the government should be ashamed of its complacency and ineptitude but also blamed a culture of political correctness that proscribed holding Aboriginal residents accountable for the problems on their reserve. Invariably these pieces digressed into diatribes against Canada's reserve system, citing Kashechewan as an example of reserve dysfunction. Similarly, moral evaluations of the situation in Attawapiskat were consistently drawn along the same

lines – blaming a culture of political correctness and the reserve system. However, news coverage of Attawapiskat tended to place greater emphasis on financial mismanagement or corruption amongst Attawapiskat's community leaders.

Kashechewan Coverage

"Fixing the water is easy; asking tough questions is harder," reads the headline of another editorial in *The Globe and Mail*.[239] Its author assigns blame for the water crisis to both the federal and provincial governments, but also implicates the reserve system and the culture of political correctness that abets it. Specifically singling out Aboriginal leaders for their alleged complicity in the crisis on the reserve, the editorial claims that their power "depends on the system" that keeps Aboriginal people captive in self-governing nations separate from the rest of Canada. The author again puts the term *nation* in quotation marks, noting that the reserve system was forced upon Aboriginals and adding that any remedies would ultimately come at the taxpayers' expense.

Editorials revealed the stereotype of Aboriginal incompetence and claimed that living on reserves fostered a culture of dependence and indolence that resulted in the water filtration problems at Kashechewan – suggesting that residents were incapable of fixing the problem themselves. One editorial appeared, several weeks after news of the outbreak, to address the cause of the water crisis.[240] The author writes that the crisis was caused by a broken $30 part, and that politicians and the Kashechewan band have been promoting an "official version"; the crisis, she opines,

---

[239] Simpson, Jeffrey. "Fixing the water is easy; asking tough questions is harder" *The Globe and Mail* [Toronto, Ont] 01 Nov 2005: A.21.

[240] Wente, Margaret. "All because of a broken $30 part" *The Globe and Mail* [Toronto, Ont] 15 Nov 2005: A.27.

is nothing more than a "barrage of hysterical publicity from the band leaders' media team," essentially "political theatre." The author blames the crisis on the incompetence of the water treatment technicians and complacency within the community, noting "not all the training in the world will help if they can't follow instructions, and don't know how to problem-solve … and aren't held accountable for their job performance." Implicating community complacency as another cause of the crisis, she also asserts that nepotism played a part: "Not everyone in Kashechewan is mad at the water operators, who are among the tiny handful of those on the reserve with salaried jobs. Also, a lot of people are related." Wente asserts that the residents of Kashechewan found it easier to blame Ottawa than themselves for their problems, and again intimated that political correctness kept the press and federal and provincial governments from placing blame on Aboriginals. This, she argues, indirectly maintained a corrupt status quo.

In the *National Post,* one editorial criticized the supposedly flawed logic of the reserve system. Headlined "The disgrace of our native policy," the editorial supports the removal of residents from the reserves and suggests they be relocated to areas with more economic opportunities.[241] The editorial indicates that Aboriginal self-government has failed and is merely an excuse for Aboriginal leaders to pocket more money from the government or from "corporate shakedowns." This editorial also calls for doing away with "politically correct" behaviour that, it asserts, only perpetuates problems on First Nations reserves:

> The answer, as politically incorrect as it may be, is to encourage natives to consider leaving their reserves and move to places where they can get real

[241] "The disgrace of our native policy" *National Post* [Don Mills, Ont] 31 Oct 2005: A16.

> jobs, and their children can get a real education … The overall goal should be to integrate natives and let them share in the bounty of our modern economy rather than relegating them to our hinterland, out of sight, out of mind.

Underlying this façade of "tough talk" is paternalistic and assimilationist language that calls on Aboriginals to abandon their reserves and integrate into non-Aboriginal society.

In the *Globe and Mail*, a column entitled "The place without a future" examined the media's response to the Kashechewan crisis.[242] The author observes that "headlines about miserable reserves in remote places are, by now, a media cliché." The columnist recalls past crises, such as one on the Davis Inlet reserve, whose children were described as "howling ghost children sucking solvent fumes from paper bags." The author argues that the reserve system fostered a state of dependency and helplessness among Aboriginal people: "Why couldn't they just fix the pipe themselves?" she asked. "But it wasn't their responsibility. It was the government's job. And now it's the government's job to fix their lives. We've done an awful thing: We've trained them to be utterly powerless to help themselves." According to Wente, The *Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* fostered the idea of self-sufficient reserves; however, she describes the economic framework proposed by the Commission as "nonsense."

Attawapiskat Coverage

---

[242] Wente, Margaret. "The place without a future" *The Globe and Mail* [Toronto, Ont] 01 Nov 2005: A.21.

"Crunching Attawapiskat's Numbers" was the headline of an editorial by a member of the Fraser Institute, a conservative think tank.[243] Citing a financial study comparing Attawapiskat to a small, non-Aboriginal Northern Ontario town, the editorial notes that Attawapiskat's finances are grossly out of proportion to the town's, despite their comparable size; it all but declares that corruption is to blame. Paying particular attention to the salaries of civil servants, the editorial alleges that Attawapiskat's band council members made considerably more than their equivalents in the town. The editorial suggests that this might be a reason why Attawapiskat is so resistant to the appointment of a third-party manager, again insinuating that corruption is to blame. The writer, Mark Milke, further suggests that political correctness had prevented the government from investigating corruption on the reserve:

> Such comparisons should be recalled by everyone when Chief Shawn Atleo from the Assembly of First Nations, and Attawapiskat chief Theresa Spence mount the rhetorical barricades and urge everyone to move on without 'assigning blame,' which is a dodge. Or when they blame 'colonialism.'

The writer treats colonialism lightly, framing it as a rhetorical excuse used by First Nations to mask corruption. By offering a direct comparison between an Aboriginal community and a non-Aboriginal one, the editorial creates an us-versus-them scenario that places Aboriginal people in the role of "The Other" – not only dissimilar, but fundamentally dishonest.

A December 2, 2011 editorial, headlined "Political correctness caused Attawapiskat," also invokes the "problem" of political correctness. The writer argues

---

[243] Milke, Mark. "Crunching Attawapiskat's Numbers" *National Post* [Don Mills, Ont] 09 Dec 2011: A.19.

that fear of being labeled racist prevented the federal government from investigating claims of corruption on reserves; he calls for a greater federal role in managing reserve affairs.[244] Describing Attawapiskat as an "example of Third World hopelessness inside Canada," the editorial posits that political correctness "has made it impossible for Ottawa to impose standards on aboriginal leaders or to demand accountability for the billions spent on reserves by taxpayers or even to offer much advice about how band councils should manage their affairs." While the article never states outright that corruption caused the problems in Attawapiskat, it is suggested in an underlying subtext: "There are problems at Attawapiskat, and scores of other northern aboriginal communities, that go well beyond funding … Political correctness dictates the problem must be too few taxpayer funds, not mismanagement, corruption or incompetence." The editorial reasserts a long-held belief that Aboriginals are incapable of handling their own affairs and that they require greater government oversight.

A front-page column in the *National Post,* headlined "The rising toll of a 'failed experiment'; Money can't fix remote reserves like Attawapiskat," begins by comparing Attawapiskat to a Third World nation: "Shots of mouldy, overcrowded houses and Third World poverty beamed into suburban living rooms," the column notes, "move people to ask questions of their political leaders."[245] It claims that Canadians might be unaccustomed to seeing the Red Cross give aid to First Nations reserves like it does to Third World Nations; however, the column reiterates "that

---

[244] Gunter, Lorne. "Political correctness caused Attawapiskat" *National Post* [Don Mills, Ont] 02 Dec 2011: A.17.

[245] Ivison, John. "The rising toll of a 'failed experiment'; Money can't fix remote reserves like Attawapiskat" *National Post* [Don Mills, Ont] 29 Nov 2011: A.1.

government negligence has indeed been compounded by local ineptitude, and maybe worse, to produce the humanitarian disaster unfolding at Attawapiskat." The columnist also blames the reserve's remoteness, claiming it has no solid economic base. As for the residents' claim of the reserve being an ancestral home, the writer states, "you can't eat culture or heritage." He concludes, "There are no economic reasons for Attawapiskat to exist and it does so only because it is underwritten by the Canadian taxpayer." In a reference to Kashechewan and the government's bid to relocate residents to Timmins, which he indicates was rejected by residents based on an attachment to the land, the columnist concludes: "Despite being plagued with social problems like alcohol and drug abuse, family violence and suicide, the pull of the land proved too great."

4.4 Remedies and Solutions: Relocate and Assimilate

In the selected newspaper coverage, especially in editorials, the final element of the framing analysis invoked an overriding solution to both crises: relocate and assimilate the people on the reserves, and kill the system.

Kashechewan Coverage

One *Globe and Mail* editorial, entitled "It's no answer to throw money at Aboriginal ills," argues against spending more money on improving First Nations reserves – claiming that eight billion dollars is already spent annually on Aboriginals.[246] The editorial asserts that such expenditure of public monies has "little discernible effect on social or economic progress." The editorial cites the problems that plague Aboriginal communities, including alcoholism, drug addiction,

[246] "It's no answer to throw money at Aboriginal ills" *The Globe and Mail* [Toronto, Ont] 03 Nov 2005: A.22.

unemployment, crime and a "witch's brew of other social ills" – and, it continues, "decades of generous spending." The writer insinuates that Aboriginals themselves are the problem and advocates for finding a way to "help natives integrate into the broader community" by moving them closer to urban centres.

The notion of the inhabitability of remote reserves emerges in a *Globe and Mail* article that reported on a then-recent study of Aboriginal living conditions in Canada.[247] The report suggested that Aboriginal quality of life is poor compared to that of non-Aboriginals, noting that Aboriginal people "are poorer, less healthy and less well-educated than the general population." In the article, the study is cited as finding that Aboriginals who live off the reserve fare better than those living on, noting, "The squalid conditions on many reserves may explain why 40% of natives now live off reserves. Figures indicate those who leave their communities fare better than those who stay." The study further indicated that Aboriginal children fared better off-reserve, claiming that these children were kept away from "negative influences often prevalent on reserves." The study, as the article notes, reported that Aboriginals who live off the reserve need less government assistance. Such language in the story has an overtly assimilationist tone.

Attawapiskat Coverage

An article in the *National Post* posed the question of how the long-term sustainability of Attawapiskat and similar reserves can be maintained, given the longstanding reluctance of reserve residents to relocate. Headlined "A 'homeland' at

[247] Smyth, Julie. "What effect does it have?" *National Post* [Don Mills, Ont] 23 Nov 2005: A9.

the crossroads; Relocation: A dirty word on remote reserves," the first paragraph of the article presents stark imagery of poverty and a crude way of life:

> The road to Attawapiskat is not paved. When there is a 'road,' it is made of ice and runs atop a frozen James Bay. For the 2,000 Cree aboriginals living in the fly-in Ontario community, winter means access to the rest of the world. But the frigidity also means school-aged children wearing diapers to bed so they do not have to relieve themselves outside. It means pink Fibreglas insulation, albeit rife with black mould and bursting from the seams of condemned houses, is all that much more important.[248]

The article's tone suggests that residents cannot continue to live in remote reserves like Attawapiskat. The article presents an us-versus-them binary: the people of Attawapiskat live a way of life "far from prosperity, far from wealth and the security many Canadians take for granted." The writer criticizes the residents for wanting to stay in their communities, despite quoting the Grand Chief of Mushkegowuk's explanation: "We're close to our rivers, close to our fish, close to our moose, close to our geese, close to the burial grounds where our grandparents were buried." The article counters such ideas in this paragraph:

> But the community is also far from a hospital with a fulltime doctor, far from a school not built of temporary portables, far from a supermarket where milk and potatoes cost a third of the price charged at the local general store and, perhaps most important, it is far from economic centres and the jobs they offer.

With some insight, the writer suggests that the residents' fear of relocation stems from Canada's past behaviour with its Aboriginal people: "That distrust almost certainly flows from the legacy of colonization and residential school, which make any frank discussion about the failed Indian Act system far more emotional than logical." Despite this acknowledgement, the article dismisses the residents'

---

[248] Kathryn Blaze Carlson. "A 'homeland' at the crossroads; Relocation: A dirty word on remote reserves" *National Post* [Don Mills, Ont] 03 Dec 2011: A.1.

attachment to the land, claiming that any dreams of creating a sustainable economy in this place are unrealistic and offer "little hope of ever achieving a quality of life most Canadians would regard as acceptable."

The *Globe and Mail* article "Arguing the agony of Attawapiskat" assessed the ongoing debate over Canada's reserve system. It begins by observing that "scenes of appalling poverty spark a debate about what is going wrong in first nations communities."[249] While the article quotes various experts – such as a professor of development studies from Queens University, who said that reserves should be allowed to develop their own natural resources in the surrounding land, and an expert from the conservative think tank, the Fraser Institute, who advocated for relocation – no Aboriginal leaders are quoted.

> Another *Globe and Mail* editorial begins with the following sentence:
>
> Reports of people living in tents and shacks at Attawapiskat evoke comparisons with the Third World, with people living in the shantytowns of South Africa and the barrios of Mexico. The comparison is apt, because we now know a lot about how people in the Third World have elevated themselves out of extreme poverty.[250]

Evoking Third World imagery, the editorial advocates for the adoption of private property rights, stating that the "road to advancement runs not through dependence on government transfers but through property rights, contracts and markets, leading to genuine self-determination." This neoliberal stance against the communal Aboriginal culture dominates the column, which claims that concentrated property rights within the state "produce poverty on a mass scale." Further, it suggests that

---

[249] Galloway, Gloria. "Arguing the agony of Attawapiskat" *The Globe and Mail* [Toronto, Ont] 01 Dec 2011: A.4.

[250] Flanagan, Tom. "How the first nations can own their future" *The Globe and Mail* [Toronto, Ont] 16 Dec 2011: A.23.

reserve economics are responsible for the poor living conditions on reserves like Attawapiskat. In this columnist's view, only the adoption of a neoliberal economic system that promotes private ownership would save the reserve from self-destruction.

4.5 Positive Examples of Reserve Coverage in the Selected Newspapers

Of the articles analyzed for this research, one example emerged whose tone regarding life on the reserve might be deemed positive. The article, which appeared in the *Globe and Mail,* contrasted living conditions in Kashechewan with those in a neighbouring First Nations reserve. Headlined "Welcome to Peawanuck, a Reserve that works," the article states that for this reserve, remoteness works in its favour by allowing residents to retain their traditional ways of life such as hunting and fishing and keeping them free of the vices associated with southern society.[251] The article attributes some of the reserve's success to an effective relocation plan that moved residents to a more secure area, away from flood plains. The article also credits a tradition of autonomy that helped residents maintain their sense of community. As the article compares the Peawanuk reserve to Kashechewan, the writer asserts that Peawanuk never had the social problems like crime and substance abuse that plagued Kashechewan: "Its streets emanate none of the neglect and hopelessness found in Kashechewan and many of the other Northern reserves mired in alcohol and drug dependency, rife with crime and suicide and largely dependent on welfare." Despite its positive tone, the article indicates the Peawanuk reserve is considered the exception, not the rule; its successes are frequently

[251] Strauss, Julius. "Welcome to Peawanuck, a reserve that works" *The Globe and Mail* [Toronto, Ont] 12 Nov 2005: F.6.

juxtaposed with the failures of Kashechewan or other reserves. Ironically, the reasons for its success presented by the article – such as the return to a more traditional way of life involving hunting and trapping – were sources of ridicule in other articles and editorial columns.

The *Globe and Mail* did publish editorials from two prominent members of the Aboriginal community who were concerned primarily with how the media covered the crises. The first, entitled "The Stain of Kashechewan's Dirty Water," offered a critique of the coverage, lamenting that it lagged behind other stories such as a lottery win and possible visit to Canada by Prince Charles.[252] This editorial alleges that the media only report on Aboriginal issues when "Indians are dying or complaining," and blames the media, the government, and the Assembly of First Nations for creating the crisis – claiming that the latter two did nothing to fix the problem and the former did nothing to highlight possible solutions.

In another editorial entitled "Reserve Judgment," a member of Canada's Aboriginal community expresses regret at the news media's emphasis on "third world conditions."[253] Elaborating further, the writer notes,

> Canadians already get enough of the 'what' from media headlines describing places like Kashechewan as a 'national disgrace,' its 1,900 residents living in 'Third World conditions' on the west coast of James Bay. There is not nearly enough understanding of the 'why'.

The author recommends several volumes of the *Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* to help Canadians better understand the context of reserves like

---

[252] Wagamese, Richard. "The Stain of Kashechewan's Dirty Water" *The Globe and Mail* [Toronto, Ont] 29 Oct 2005: A.29.
[253] Switzer, Maurice, "Reserve Judgment" *The Globe and Mail* [Toronto, Ont] 12 Nov 2005: D.23.

Kashechewan. He criticizes the media's coverage of the publication of these volumes, which he claims focused too much on the cost of their implementation and not enough on their contents.

Notwithstanding these two dissenting views, the results presented above illustrate that most editorial coverage from the selected newspapers was characterized by negative comments that attacked the status quo of Canada's reserve system and the alleged government and Aboriginal complicity in its continuation. In general, these editorials blamed the disastrous crises on the reserves on an atmosphere of political correctness, ideas of aboriginal autonomy, and a stubborn attachment by Aboriginals to the land and to a more a traditional way of life.

4.6 Countering the *Third World First Nations Reserve* News Frame: *Wawatay News* Coverage of Kashechewan & Attawapiskat

The news coverage of the Kashechewan and Attawapiskat crises in the *Wawatay News* contrasted sharply with the coverage found in the two mainstream newspapers, presenting a counter-frame to the *Third World First Nations Reserve* frame. The *Wawatay News* coverage focused on how the crises affected residents and used sources from the communities, quoting heavily from residents rather than federal or provincial officials. Such coverage presented readers with a different, Aboriginal view.

Kashechewan Coverage

The *Wawatay News* first reported on the Kashechewan water crisis on October 21, 2005 in the form of a brief news item that quoted an Aboriginal Affairs official.[254] A second news item appeared on October 26, reporting that plans for an evacuation were proceeding as planned.[255]

A week later on November 3, an article headlined "Uncertain future worries Kashechewan leaders" described the evacuation of the reserve and the concerns of community leaders.[256] A local band councilor is quoted extensively, detailing the efforts of the evacuation and describing community members' frustration with the situation and the government's response. The article did cite a sergeant of the Canadian Rangers (a military reserve unit established in Canada's northern and remote areas), who said his unit had been guarding homes from possible break-ins. According to the Ranger, "This is a big, somewhat troubled community. It is also somewhat poor. Many people don't have a lot of things. And of the things they do have, they have worked very hard for." The language the Ranger uses to describe the community is measured in comparison to the highly charged language used by the outsiders quoted in the selected mainstream newspapers (such as the doctor who described conditions on the reserve as "atrocious").[257] The *Wawatay's* article did not describe conditions on the reserve and kept a focus on the residents, who provided interviews.

---

[254] "Kashechewan will not be evacuated: INAC" *The Wawatay News*, 21 Oct 2005.
[255] Ibid.
[256] "Uncertain future worries Kashechewan leaders" *The Wawatay News*, 3 Nov 2005.
[257] Rusk, James. "Conditions on reserve 'atrocious,' doctor says" *The Globe and Mail* [Toronto, Ont] 24 Oct 2005: A.5.

Just as the *Wawatay News* avoided describing the poor conditions on the reserve, it also refrained from using explicit descriptions of children being affected. However, one sentence in the article describes "images of children with oozing open sores around their eyes, mouths and covering their bodies," and emphasizes the urgency of evacuating sick children (and adults) as a result of the crisis: "the community's sickest members were airlifted to city centres throughout the province by the Ontario government to receive medical attention."

Another article, headlined "Guarding a Ghost Town," appeared several weeks after the government evacuation of Kashechewan and contained interviews with a resident who stayed behind to guard the reserve.[258] This resident is quoted describing how the remaining residents miss their families who left. While acknowledging the concern about looting and break-ins, the article's overall tone is decidedly less negative than those in the selected mainstream newspapers. One sentence is permeated by a sense of melancholia: "Familiar sights like children playing outdoors, adults going to the store and teenagers out for a stroll are no more." While this is a fairly simple sentence, it reminds the readers that human beings populated this town – people with lives, feelings and hopes. It stands in contrast to the mainstream press coverage and its *Third World First Nations Reserve* frame that depicted a place people should be happy to desert. This article focused on the impact of the evacuation on the community and the list of improvements the government planned to make. The interview with the resident who stayed behind illustrated that the people of Kashechewan were not without civic pride and put a

[258] Hunter, Joyce, "Guarding a 'Ghost town'" *The Wawatay News*, 17 Nov 2005.

human face on the crisis: "The ones left behind are trying to cope. It's stressful. There are a lot of people here who miss their families."

Another article, which appeared on November 17, discussed the help given by the Junior Canadian Rangers in delivering bottled water to Kashechewan.[259] One of the Junior Rangers, quoted above, reflected positively on the experience: "It's been fun and it helps my people." The community's band manager and the Rangers' commanding officer were also quoted in the article, commending the actions of the Junior Rangers and declaring that their actions have had a positive effect on the community.

This article serves as a good example of a counter-frame against *Third World First Nations Reserve* news frame presented in the two mainstream newspapers. In the mainstream coverage, the children of Kashechewan are often depicted as the most vulnerable and most afflicted by the water-borne diseases. More than any other resident shown in the coverage of Kashechewan, it was the children that most evoked images of Third World poverty, with vivid descriptions of their skin conditions and their lives in dilapidated homes. In the *Wawatay News* article, the writer humanizes the youth of the reserve by quoting and naming the participating junior rangers – depicting them as self-reliant actors and agents of change. Secondly, the story illustrates how a functioning military unit (comprised mainly of Aboriginals) operated autonomously to serve its community, thereby emphasizing that community members do respect law and order.

---

[259] Moon, Peter, "Kashechewan Junior Rangers earn praise" *The Wawatay News*, 17 Nov 2005.

Certainly there was less available coverage of the Kashechewan Water crisis by the *Wawatay News* than by the selected mainstream newspapers. Still, stories published in the *Wawatay News* secured more quotes from local residents and band officials and focused on residents' needs and feelings. By allowing residents to speak about the conditions, the crisis aspect of the story was downplayed and the situation was made to appear more manageable. In contrast to the *Globe and Mail* and *National Post* newspapers' overreliance on "official sources" such as politicians and Aboriginal Affairs officials, the *Wawatay News* articles cited residents' own accounts, largely avoiding the alarmist tone and paternalistic language of the politicians who were cited in the mainstream newspapers.

Attawapiskat Coverage

Reports about the housing crisis in Attawapiskat appeared in the *Wawatay News* sooner than in the two selected mainstream newspapers, with the first article appearing on October 28, 2011. This first article quotes primarily from a press release issued by the Mushkegowuk Council that identified five families forced to live in tents as a result of the housing shortage.[260] The article quotes the deputy chief, who stated that poor housing is contributing to health and social problems but did not go into detail about what these problems were. The article adds that other communities, such as Kashechewan, also suffer housing shortages. The deputy chief mentions receiving a letter from a concerned grandmother in Attawapiskat, who said that she was worried for the safety of her grandchildren in light of the approaching winter. The article mentions a meeting between local band councils,

[260] Kornacki, Chris, "Housing crisis continues in Attawapiskat" *The Wawatay News*, 28 Oct 2011.

who declared that the housing conditions were below Canadian and International standards. It emphasizes the effect of the crisis on the five families forced to live in tents. The voices of the residents, such as that of the concerned grandmother, offered a human perspective on the situation for the residents of Attawapiskat, depicting them as people concerned with the state of their community. By keeping an objective eye on the "health and social problems" of the community, the article did not elicit the *Third World* news frame.

A second article, dated November 24, 2011 and headlined "Sewage thrown in ditch from lack of housing," describes housing conditions in benign and clinical language, using terms such as "substandard."[261] The Mushkegowuk Council Grand Chief Stan Louttit is quoted as saying conditions "are very, very extreme," describing families living in "tents with no water, obviously, no sewers, obviously, and no electricity, obviously." Louttit attributes the problem to the elders being too old to dispose of waste properly, especially without the proper waste disposal infrastructure in place. Although federal and provincial politicians are quoted, their words appear at the end of the article rather than in the beginning – perhaps signaling a different emphasis that focuses on the people rather than the government. Although the article contains descriptions of the poor living conditions in Attawapiskat, it also provides context and sources residents and reserve officials rather than federal or provincial sources.

In an article discussing the appointment of the third party manager, the chief is quoted expressing surprise at the imposition of what she called a "modern day

---

[261] Garrick, Rick, "Sewage thrown in ditch from lack of housing" *The Wawatay News*, 24 Nov 2011.

Indian agent" in Attawapiskat.[262] Chief Theresa Spence is quoted extensively, expressing her frustration with the appointment and explaining how the government's allocated money was spent – especially the $90 million cited by the mainstream media. Both the Grand Chief of the Mushkegowuk Council and the Grand Chief of the NAN (Nishnawbe Aski Nation) First Nation are quoted in the article expressing their frustration at the appointment, with the latter commenting that Attawapiskat represents "an extreme example of the health, housing and infrastructure crisis facing all NAN First Nations, where people are forced to live in third world conditions."

As noted, the article is primarily devoted to gauging the local First Nations leaders' reaction to the appointment of the third party manager. Interestingly, the term Third World is used by one of the chiefs to describe the situation at Attawapiskat. This use of the term Third World might signal how ubiquitous the term had become in describing living conditions on certain reserves. Despite the Chief's use of the term, the article itself refrains from the language associated with the *Third World First Nations Reserve* news frame; instead, it briefly describes the crisis itself in banal terms, stating that "the community was facing the onset of winter with families, babies and 80-year-old Elders living in tents and sheds without proper heating or electricity and no running water." No extraneous or sensational detail (characteristic of the selected mainstream newspapers' coverage) is given.

An editorial in the *Wawatay News* profiled the columnist's childhood in Attawapiskat; the author claims that Attawapiskat has always suffered with housing

---

[262] Garrick, Rick "Attawapiskat put under third party management" *The Wawatay News*, 9 Dec 2011.

problems.[263] The columnist recalls his experience sharing a bedroom with five siblings, adding that ten to fifteen people often lived in one house. This columnist claims that community leaders and politicians made unfulfilled promises to improve the housing situation, and advocates for a "new way of thinking" and "creative solutions" for solving the crisis for good.

Unlike the editorials in the selected mainstream newspapers, this columnist uses more measured language and non-explicit terms to describe the housing conditions in Attawapiskat. The reader is better able to empathize with the people on the reserve because the writer, a voice of authority, relates his personal experiences of growing up in a "crowded living space … We shared our home with each other and often many other family members and friends." He refrains from using the alarmist, hyperbolic language characteristic of the selected mainstream newspapers. He also does not push for any radical solutions, such as the abolishment of the reserve system, but rather expresses a desire to see the living conditions improved.

Another editorial on the Attawapiskat housing crisis, entitled "Living up to the Canadian dream," details the problems facing remote First Nations reserves like Attawapiskat, citing infrastructure and social problems as common to such reserves.[264] The author's historical view points to colonization, assimilation, and the systematic abuse of Aboriginal people within the Residential School system as factors that created and sustain this problem. The author claims that many non-Aboriginal Canadians choose to focus on the accusations of financial

[263] Kataquapit, Xavier, "Housing crisis needs solutions", *The Wawatay News*, 10 Nov 2011.
[264] Kataquapit, Xavier, "Living up to the Canadian dream" *The Wawatay News*, 24 Nov 2011.

mismanagement, rather than the unacceptable housing conditions, because the accusations support an underlying idea they have about Aboriginal communities:

> There seems to be a great disdain by many for the assistance the government of Canada and provincial governments provide to First Nation communities. Rather than be appalled at the fact that most First Nations people are living in terrible third world conditions, some choose to blame these communities for this reality.

Written by Xavier Kataquapit, the column encapsulates the long and mostly tragic past of the country and its Aboriginal peoples, while dissipating the idea (which permeates the mainstream newspaper coverage) that reserves are a financial burden to Canadian taxpayers. The writer instead advocates for increased spending by the federal government to reduce the difference in standards of living between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. It should also be noted that the author frequently uses the term "third world" throughout the column, again signalling its prevalence as a frame.

Nothing about the *Wawatay News'* coverage of Kashechewan and Attawapiskat indicated that these challenges had been sensationalized to the same degree as in the coverage by the two national newspapers. Nor was the *Third World First Nations Reserve* news frame present in the coverage in the way it emerged in the national newspapers. Any negative aspects of the stories that were emphasized in the selected newspapers – such as the Third World conditions or accusations of financial mismanagement – were significantly downplayed or largely ignored by the *Wawatay News*. Instead, this newspaper focused on how local leaders reacted to the situation and quoted the residents themselves.

Also absent from the *Wawatay News'* coverage of the two crises were the four themes that comprised the selected newspapers' use of the *Third World First Nations Reserve* frame. Residents were never objectified as "The Other," and instead were presented as friends, family and community members concerned with the state of their reserves. The paternalistic tone suggesting that radical change was needed or that political correctness was to blame for the problems on the reserves was also absent from the coverage. The possibility of relocation and assimilation was never discussed. While one columnist did regret the lamentable conditions faced by many remote First Nations reserves, he advocated for compassion and understanding rather than the relocation or abolishment often proposed by the *Globe and Mail* and *National Post* columnists.

4.7 Conclusion: The *Third World First Nations Reserve* as "The Other"

The news frame that this thesis set out to identify, that of the *Third World First Nations Reserve*, is clearly evident in the mainstream newspapers' coverage. This frame's dominant idea is that these reserves represent "The Other" – a remote, alien culture out of sync with the cultural and economic norms of mainstream society; a community mired in poverty and illness and incapable of taking care of itself; and a group of people in need of the benevolent guidance of a colonial overseer. At no point did the selected newspapers intimate that these people were Canadian citizens; rather, it situated them outside of Canadian life as "The Other." Indeed, the mainstream newspapers were struck by the "un-Canadian" idea that such poverty could exist here. However, because it was an Aboriginal community, it becomes – in a sense – less shocking and indeed expected. This speaks to what

Amanda Jendrick wrote about crises on First Nations reserves and how these crises become normalized by the Canadian public; she writes that the emergency in Kashechewan is "represented by a popular, non-Indigenous majority (the media) as a normal attribute of indigenous reservations and that Indigenous peoples are squarely fit into the category of helpless victims as opposed to the dominant, non-Indigenous majority who are portrayed with increasing agency and heroism."[265] These news stories are so consistent in their framing that First Nations Reserves are automatically associated in the Canadian public's mind with corruption, illness and poverty.

This framing of reserves in the news media can have different effects. As Jendrick observed, normalizing these crises fosters a sense of complacency on the part of the Canadian public and allows governments to avoid taking serious action on these problems – which can be dismissed as the norm. From the audience's perspective, the frame offers a buttress between what they are reading and how it affects them personally, as though they were reading about the plight of people in an impoverished, developing nation: sympathetic to their plight, yet ultimately powerless to do anything about it. Ascribing Third World characteristics to remote First Nations reserves allows the audience to remove themselves even further from the news story; as a consequence, they are not required to take action. As David Spurr noted, there is often a disconnect between the public and what they are reading in the newspaper. This is exacerbated when the people they are reading

---

[265] Jendrick, Amanda Louise. *Completely Normal Chaos the Kashechewan Crisis and the Public Normalization of Risk on Indigenous Reservations*. Thesis. Trent University, 2009. Ottawa: Library and Archives Canada, 2010. p.130.

about are framed as "The Other"; because they feel no connection to them, members of the public are less likely to react.[266] As one of the editorials in the *Wawatay News* noted, many Canadians resent the financial assistance provided to First Nations by the Federal government through the reserve system and often believe that reserve crises are of Aboriginals' own making.[267] By focusing almost exclusively on mismanagement/corruption on the reserves, the stories in the selected mainstream newspapers did nothing to engender sympathy amongst an already-skeptical Canadian public.

In mainstream newspapers, particularly their editorial sections, the *Third World First Nations Reserve* framing and its resultant "Othering" effect justify the proposal of heavy-handed remedies such as relocation and assimilation. The paternalistic tone embedded in these articles and editorials reflects a postcolonial perspective that asserts, among other things, that Aboriginals are still incapable of taking care of themselves and that non-Aboriginals must make the hard decisions for Aboriginal communities. Claims in the *Globe and Mail* and the *National Post* editorials that political correctness had contributed to problems on the reserves allow the newspapers to attack notions of Aboriginal autonomy and to minimize the historical impact of Canada's colonial and assimilatory policies. In short, the residents of these reserves are depicted not as Canadian citizens but as subjects of the government who must accept paternalistic intervention in their lives. By emphasizing how "un-Canadian" these reserves are – by virtue of their poverty,

---

[266] Spurr, David. *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration*. Durham: Duke UP, 1993 p.45-46.
[267] Kataquapit, Xavier, "Living up to the Canadian dream" *The Wawatay News*, 24 Nov 2011

disorder and corruption – drastic remedies such as relocation and assimilation become more acceptable in the eyes of the Canadian public, especially when dealing with "The Other."

Chapter 5: Conclusion

As the previous chapter illustrated, the *Third World First Nations Reserve* frame emerges prominently in news coverage of the Kashechewan and Attawapiskat crises. It appears most clearly in the articles and editorials that describe the living conditions on the reserve as "Third World." This suggests that the metaphor has become ubiquitous in describing reserve life, especially when a crisis occurs. Such language conflates reserve life with poverty and despair. Inevitably, this reduces the effort the newspapers needed to invest in reporting on the crisis. As one of the editorials in the *Globe and Mail* noted, this connection of Aboriginal life to the Third World (establishing the *Third World First Nations Reserve* frame) has become so commonplace as to be cliché.[268] While it cannot be asserted with any degree of certainty, this also suggests that Canadians have become so accustomed to this frame that frames eliciting other, more positive ideas seem an anomaly. Considered within the same frame, the troubles on the reserves of Kashechewan and Attawapiskat became interchangeable with past struggles of other troubled reserves

[268] Wente, Margaret. "The place without a future" *The Globe and Mail* [Toronto, Ont] 01 Nov 2005: A.21.

such as Davis Inlet. This was referenced frequently in the coverage by the selected newspapers.[269]

5.1 The *Third World First Nations Reserve* Frame

When defining the problem, the selected newspapers' descriptions of the reserves placed emphasis on their bleakness and remoteness. From the vividly described scenes of streets strewn with liquor bottles and trash to the descriptions of the houses themselves – overcrowded and in disrepair – the news coverage suggested an out-of-control community incapable of taking care of itself. While these accounts contained elements about the poor living conditions, their constant emphasis on the communities' negative aspects reinforced the *Third World First Nations Reserve* frame and subtly advanced an argument that these places are uninhabitable and not worth saving. The *Third World First Nations Reserve* framing is particularly revealing in the few instances when the residents were profiled. The coverage tended to rely on media stereotypes that have become commonplace in Canadian media treatment of Aboriginal peoples. Residents were largely depicted in ways similar to how Aboriginals have been portrayed in the past: as pathetic victims who are devoid of agency, afflicted with substance abuse problems and indifferent to their troubled situations.

The descriptions of the diseases caused by the water contamination in Kashechewan were particularly evocative of the Third World, and indeed were described as such by one of the articles ("gastroenteritis: the child killer of the Third

---

[269] Strauss, Julius. "Running from the shadows of despair" *The Globe and Mail* [Toronto, Ont] 31 Oct 2005: A.1., Wente, Margaret. "The place without a future" *The Globe and Mail* [Toronto, Ont] 01 Nov 2005: A.21., "The disgrace of our native policy" *National Post* [Don Mills, Ont] 31 Oct 2005: A16.

World").[270] Again, residents were described as passive recipients and the newspaper accounts focused particular attention on how these diseases affected the children on the reserve. By describing sick Aboriginal children in graphic detail, the newspapers linked this tragedy to something readers might see in a charity television commercial asking for money for children in the developing world.

When it came to diagnosing the causes of the two crises, there was some variation in how the stories were covered. In the case of Kashechewan, blame was initially placed on the federal government for its apparent lack of oversight of the water filtration system. However, as the coverage progressed, this view changed to blaming those living on the reserve itself (in the case of Kashechewan, one editorial writer directly blamed the residents for not maintaining the water filtration system).[271] As was observed above, some columnists even asserted that reserve life was responsible for creating a culture of helplessness and dependence. This illustrates how the *Third World First Nations Reserve* news frame is tied into an existing idea that suggests Aboriginals are incompetent and unable to take care of themselves. In the coverage of Attawapiskat, however, the housing crisis was almost immediately attributed to Aboriginal incompetence and or corruption. In this instance, the link between the use of official sources and what was reported is important. The reliance on official sources – namely the federal government, who first accused the reserve of mismanaging government-allocated resources and claimed that they were ultimately responsible for the crisis – enlarged the view that

---

[270] MacGregor, Roy. "Only a bay and 20 years separate one aboriginal tragedy from another" *The Globe and Mail* [Toronto, Ont] 27 Oct 2005: A.2.

[271] Wente, Margaret. "All because of a broken $30 part" *The Globe and Mail* [Toronto, Ont] 15 Nov 2005: A.27.

corrupt reserve management was responsible for the crises. Newspaper editorials became openly critical of the reserve's leadership and the reserve system in general. In this portion of the coverage, the theme of paternalism became particularly salient.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, this news frame of Aboriginal incompetence, identified in the work of Robert Harding,[272] has become increasingly apparent in news reporting of First Nations communities; it once again suggests that Aboriginals are incapable of handling their own affairs. While Harding identified Aboriginal corruption/incompetence as a separate news frame, this study sees it as a fundamental element of the *Third World First Nations Reserve* news frame – in that it serves to allow newspaper reporters and editorial columnists to diagnose the causes of a crisis and make moral judgments about them. Editorial columnists, especially, used this frame to expand on existing arguments against the reserve system and the imperative of political correctness pertaining to Aboriginals and their attachment to the land. This framing, along with ideas about Aboriginal incompetence/corruption, presented readers with a scenario that portrayed reserve life as unsustainable and that supported assimilation.

While the selected newspapers were quick to ascribe problems on the reserves to incompetence by either the federal government or reserve officials, any in-depth investigations of the root causes of the crises did not emerge in the coverage. As an editorial by an Aboriginal columnist in the *Globe and Mail* noted, the media were preoccupied with the conditions of the reserves rather than the origins of those conditions: "But they did widely report on Kashechewan's 'Third World

[272] Harding, Robert. "The Media, Aboriginal People and Common Sense." The Canadian Journal of Native Studies Xxv.1 (2005): p.311-35.

conditions,' and advocated shutting down the reserve system as a final solution to this 'national disgrace.'"[273] Indeed, it appeared more expedient for the newspaper writers to lay blame on incompetent reserve management rather than to examine the problematic and complex history behind the reserve system in Canada. Any attempt by reserve residents to blame their predicament on an overbearing federal government or on post-colonial behaviour was met with immediate derision in the selected mainstream newspapers and dismissed as nothing but emotional rhetoric.

This moralizing tone featured most prominently in the editorial sections; many editorials criticized a perceived climate of political correctness that, they claimed, prevented any real discussion of the problem via fears that criticism of Aboriginal leaders or the reserve system would be deemed racist. This attitude, expressed in many columns, suggested that the federal government was essentially hamstrung by politically correct attitudes and could therefore do little to change the reserve system.

However, moral evaluations of the situations at Kashechewan and Attawapiskat were most commonly aimed at reserve leadership, which editorials claimed stood to benefit most from maintaining what they deemed the 'status quo.' Editorials often couched their opinions in language of 'speaking plainly' or using what they would call a 'tough love' approach; this generated a patronizing and paternalistic tone as they sought to link reserve leadership to the dismal state of affairs in Canada's First Nations reserves. Some editorials, particularly in the case of Attawapiskat, made unsubstantiated allegations that the problems had been caused

[273] Switzer, Maurice, "Reserve Judgment" *The Globe and Mail* [Toronto, Ont] 12 Nov 2005: D.23.

by financial mismanagement, or, even worse, corruption. In the case of Kashechewan, it was the nepotistic reserve leadership overseeing the filtration system that was responsible for the outbreak of E. coli, according to one columnist.[274] Regardless of the unique conditions responsible for the crises on the two reserves, arguments in the editorials often spiralled into tangents about corruption within the reserve system itself.

Editorial writers also criticized any moves toward greater Aboriginal autonomy. Several editorials blamed the *Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* for instilling this notion of greater Aboriginal autonomy; they dismissed the *Commission* as fanciful and unrealistic and disparaged the use of the term 'nation' by Aboriginal leaders. Editorials were equally dismissive of the idea that residents might be able to support themselves through hunting and craft making, as any attachments to a more traditional way of life were criticized as overly romantic and not economically feasible.

Clearly, these editorials often expressed the idea that Aboriginal autonomy is impossible because Aboriginals cannot handle their own affairs. The arguments against a return to an economy centred on traditional activities like hunting or fishing illustrate the ethnocentric values of the writers for the selected newspapers. These values also supported a free market system and private property, constructs to which the Aboriginal communities stood averse. This is particularly evident in the editorials that liken the reserves to Soviet-style welfare states, emphasizing their

---

[274] Wente, Margaret. "All because of a broken $30 part" *The Globe and Mail* [Toronto, Ont] 15 Nov 2005: A.27.

"Otherness." As Robert Harding argued in his examination of contemporary media coverage of Aboriginals, bids for greater autonomy from the Aboriginal community are often construed as a threat to the government or corporate interests represented by newspapers; given the hostility evidenced in the selected newspapers, this would seem to be true.

Almost all remedies proposed by editorials in the selected newspapers advocated for either relocation or dissolution of the reserve system in Canada – that is, assimilation. Functioning as the fourth component of the *Third World First Nations Reserve* frame, this argument offered a solution to the immediate problems emphasized in the news articles (namely, the poor living conditions of these two reserves). Rather than subvert the status quo, the news coverage, news articles and editorials appeared to favour the removal of residents to urban centres like Timmins, Ontario. This assimilationist tone, as the literature review illustrated, has abetted the practices that have been government policy for a large part of Canadian history. The language of these editorials advocating for relocation and removal is inherently paternalistic and patronizing, signalling that colonial discourse is still present in media coverage of Aboriginals.

It was in the editorials pushing for assimilation that the concept of "The Other" became most prevalent, stressing how deviant Aboriginal communities are from non-Aboriginal ones. For example, in the editorial comparing Attawapiskat's finances to those of a small Canadian town, the writer juxtaposed the corrupt and

mismanaged Aboriginals against the fully functioning non-Aboriginals.[275] There is also the very subtle insinuation that the Aboriginals' character is somehow to blame for this corruption, and that these problems would not occur if they were exposed to more civilizing influences of non-Aboriginal society. As Spurr observed, colonizers seek to establish difference between themselves and the colonized, asserting themselves as the superior culture whilst pushing for the assimilation of the inferior one.[276]

5.2 Perspectives of the *Wawatay News*

To what extent did the *Wawatay News* counter this dominant *Third World First Nations Reserve* news frame? Befitting its status as both an Aboriginal and local newspaper, the *Wawatay News* was able to secure more local sources; it interviewed more residents or people working directly with the community, compared to the coverage in the *Globe and Mail* and *National Post* that relied heavily on official sources such as the federal government. By interviewing local residents, stories in the *Wawatay News* placed these crises in context and showed that residents were active and concerned with the plight of their community. While the reserve conditions might have been shocking to outsiders (including reporters from the selected newspapers), reporters from the *Wawatay News* understood the conditions and sought the viewpoints of local residents. While the crises were described as such, the manner in which they were described was more reasoned and even-handed. The coverage offered a more personalized perspective on the crises;

---

[275] Milke, Mark. "Crunching Attawapiskat's Numbers" *National Post* [Don Mills, Ont] 09 Dec 2011: A.19.

[276] Spurr, David, *The rhetoric of empire: colonial discourse in journalism, travel writing, and imperial administration*, urham, N.C. : Duke University Press, c1993 p.7.

residents were depicted not as pathetic victims, nor as "The Other," but as citizens concerned with the plight of their communities.

The language used in the news articles in the *Wawatay News* stood in stark contrast to that of the selected mainstream newspapers. Absent were the alarmist headlines proclaiming that the reserves were too polluted or uninhabitable. Less inflammatory wording was used in place of the charged terms that characterized the stories in the *Globe and Mail* and the *National Post*. Instead of describing residents as "crammed" together, the reporter for the *Wawatay News* opted for understated language: for instance, houses were described as having "crowded living spaces." The choice of a more neutral tone illustrates how the editors at the *Wawatay News* may have sought to make this story more personal for the reader. These were not foreign people living in a remote land, but friends and neighbours enduring a crisis. This approach is similar to how non-Aboriginal people would be depicted weathering a natural disaster. While the *Wawatay News* did not downplay the crises, its coverage was much more concerned with how the crises affected the communities and how they would survive them.

The editorials in the *Wawatay News* also provided a direct counterpoint to those examined in the selected newspapers. The editorials avoided broad-stroke arguments against the reserve system in Canada and instead focused on how more compassion was needed from the Canadian public. These editorials in the *Wawatay News* adopted a more compassionate and understanding approach. In contrast to the *Globe and Mail* and *National Post* editorials, the editorials in the *Wawatay News* also offered readers the historical context that was lacking in the mainstream

media's coverage – explaining how colonialism and abusive government policies had a part in creating the problems on these reserves.[277] Again, the perspective differed from the *Globe and Mail* and *National Post*. For example, one editorial in the *Wawatay News* informed readers that overcrowding in Attawapiskat was not new: the author himself had had to endure such conditions growing up.[278] This may illustrate how these conditions are normal, rather than new, to Aboriginals. The editorial deemphasized the "Otherness" of these reserves by illustrating that the people have endured a history of hardship through no fault of their own.

5.3 Concluding Remarks & Further Research

In conclusion, a study of two large national newspapers and one small Aboriginal press does not offer sufficient data to make broad generalizations about the mainstream press and its treatment of Aboriginal peoples. Indeed, it is beyond the purview of this study to attribute motives to the selected newspapers' consistent framing of these reserves as Third World. However, this study does suggest that more research is needed, especially given the recent climate of tension that has grown between the federal government and various Aboriginal groups over incursions into economically valuable First Nations reserve lands and recent protest movements within the Aboriginal community such as *Idle No More*. As Chapter 2 noted, Aboriginal representation in Canada's mainstream press has historically been negative, with press coverage supporting the interests of

---

[277] Kataquapit, Xavier, "Living up to the Canadian dream" *The Wawatay News*, 24 Nov 2011.
[278] Kataquapit, Xavier, "Housing crisis needs solutions", *The Wawatay News*, 10 Nov 2011.

government or big business in opposition to Aboriginal rights[279] (as noted above in the history of the Indian Act, the federal government established the reserve system to remove Aboriginals from land that was considered economically valuable.)[280] As reserve lands become increasingly valuable to contemporary government economic interests, it is important for Canada's mainstream media to accurately reflect and report on this – in order for Aboriginal people to be seen as an integral part of Canada's national conversation on these issues rather than disenfranchised, alien "Others." Perhaps with increasing contact between previously-remote reserves, the government, and the media, opportunities will increase for better reporting about the reserves – and not only when a crisis occurs.

With this said, further research should explore how different news media, both Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal, report on First Nations reserves. With newspaper readership declining, it is an opportune time to examine how online sources are approaching these stories. Perhaps the greater connectivity between the non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal worlds, fostered by the Internet, will create more opportunities for balanced perspectives. This greater interconnectivity among media outlets also brings the possibility of outsourcing reserve stories to local journalists who are more familiar with the situations of these communities. The *CBC* has already begun to experiment with this; in a recent collaboration with the *Journalists for Human Rights: Northern Ontario Initiative*, it produced several stories

---

[279] Harding, Robert. "The Media, Aboriginal People and Common Sense." The Canadian Journal of Native Studies Xxv.1 (2005): p.311-35. Anderson, Mark Cronlund, and Carmen Robertson. *Seeing Red: A History of Natives in Canadian Newspapers*. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba, 2011, p.16.

[280] Canada. *Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples.* By Georges Erasmus and René Dussault. Vol. 1. Ottawa: Commission, 1996. Looking Forward Looking Back. Part 9: The Indian Act.

from residents of Attawapiskat about the ongoing housing crisis.[281] This remains a fascinating area of study; as Canada's Aboriginal population begins to assert itself more in the public eye, it can hopefully help to dispel some of the negative and harmful common-sense discourses that have followed Aboriginals throughout their history.

[281] Spence, Richard. "Attawapiskat's Housing Crisis: A Ground-level Perspective - Aboriginal - CBC." CBCnews. CBC/Radio Canada, 12 Dec. 2013. Web. Rose, Priscella. "My Attawapiskat Is More than a Housing Crisis - Aboriginal - CBC." CBCnews. CBC/Radio Canada, 12 Dec. 2013. Web.

References

Alia, Valerie, and Simone Bull, *Media and Ethnic Minorities*, Edinburgh University, Press, Edinburgh, 2005

Anderson, Mark Cronlund, and Robertson, Carmen L., *Seeing Red: A history of Natives in Canadian Newspapers*, University of Manitoba Press, Winnipeg, 2011

Berkhoffer, Robert F., *The white man's Indian: images of the American Indian, from Columbus to the present*, Vintage Books 1978, New York, 1993

Cannon, Martin John, and Lina Sunseri. *Racism, Colonialism, and Indigeneity in Canada: A Reader*. Don Mills, Ont.: OUP, 2011

Coward, John, *The Newspaper Indian: Native American Identity in the Press*, University of Illinois Press, 1999

Cummins, Bryan D. *"Only God Can Own the Land": The Attawapiskat Cree*. Toronto: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2004

Davis, Helen, *Understanding Stuart Hall*, London ; Thousand Oaks, Calif. : SAGE Publications, 2004

Dickason, Olive Patricia and Long, David Alan, *Visions of the Heart: Canadian Aboriginal Issues*, Harcourt Brace, Toronto, 2011

Entman, Robert M. "Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm." Journal of Communication 43.4 (1993)

Fairclough, Norman. Analysing Discourse: Textual Analysis for Social Research. London: Routledge, 2003

Fairclough, Norman. *Media Discourse*. London: E. Arnold, 1995

Fleras, Augie, *Media and minorities : representing diversity in a multicultural Canada*, Thompson Educational Publishing, Toronto, 2001

Fleras, Augie, *THE MEDIA GAZE: Representations of Diversities in Canada*, UBC Press, Vancouver, 2011

Fleras, Augie, and Jean Leonard. Elliott. *Multiculturalism in Canada: The Challenge of Diversity*. Scarborough, Ont.: Nelson Canada, 1992

Fleras, Augie, and Jean Leonard. Elliott. *The "nations Within": Aboriginal-state Relations in Canada, the United States, and New Zealand*. Toronto: Oxford UP, 1992

Foucault, Michel, *Power/knowledge : selected interviews and other writings, 1972-1977*, New York, N.Y. : Pantheon Books, 1980

Fowler, Roger. *Language in the News: Discourse and Ideology in the Press*. London: Routledge, 1991

Furniss, Elizabeth, *The Burden of History: Colonialism and the Frontier Myth in a Rural Canadian Community*, Vancouver, BC: UBC, 1999

Gitlin, Todd. *The Whole World Is Watching: Mass Media in the Making & Unmaking of the New Left*. Berkeley: University of California, 1980

Goffman, Erving. *Frame Analysis*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1974

Hall, Stuart, *Representation: cultural representations and signifying practices*, Thousand Oaks, London, 1997

Harding, Robert, *The Media, Aboriginal People and Common Sense*, The Canadian Journal of Native Studies XXV, 1(2005):311-335.

Harding, Robert, *Historical Representations of Aboriginal People in the Canadian News Media*, Discourse & Society, Mar2006, Vol. 17 Issue 2, p205-235, 31p

Henry, Frances, and Carol Tator. *The Colour of Democracy: Racism in Canadian* Society. 3rd ed. Toronto: Nelson Canada, 2006

Henry, Frances and Carol Tator, *Discourses of Domination: Racial Bias in the Canadian English-language Press,* Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2002

Jenrick, Amanda Louise, *Completely Normal Chaos: The Kashechewan Crisis and the Public Normalization of Risks on Indigenous Reservations*, Trent University, Peterborough, Ont, 2008

Lambertus, Sandra, *Wartime images, peacetime wounds: the media and the Gustafsen Lake standoff*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 2004

Lippmann, Walter, *Public Opinion*, New York, Free Press, 1922

Long, John. *Treaty No. 9: Making the Agreement to Share the Land in Far Northern Ontario in 1905*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's UP, 2010

Lytwyn, Victor P. *Muskekowuck Athinuwick: Original People of the Great Swampy Land*. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba, 2002

Manuel, George, and Michael Posluns, *The Fourth World: An Indian Reality*, Don Mills, Ont.: Collier-Macmillan Canada, 1974

Maslin, Crystal, *The Social Construction of Aboriginal Peoples in the Saskatchewan Print Media*, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, 2002

McCue, Duncan, Jorge Barrera, Mike Metatawabin, Robert Harding, Cindy Blackstock, and Robin Pierro. *Buried Voices: Media Coverage of Aboriginal Issues in Ontario*,. Rep. N.p.: Journalists for Human Rights, 2013

McMillan, Alan D., and Eldon Yellowhorn. *First Peoples in Canada*. Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2004

Miller, Autumn, and Ross Susan, *They Are Not Us: Framing of American Indians by the Boston Globe*, Howard Journal of Communications, Volume 15, Issue 4, 2004, Pages 245 – 259

Miller, John, *Ipperwash and the Media: A critical analysis of how the story was covered*, Ryerson University 2005,

Ponting, Rick J., *First Nations in Canada: perspectives on opportunity, empowerment, and self-determination*, McGraw-Hill Ryerson, Whitby, Ont, 1997

Richardson, John E. *Analysing Newspapers: An Approach from Critical Discourse Analysis*. Basingstoke [England: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007

Roth, Lorna, with Bev Nelson and Marie David. *"Three Women, a Mouse, a Microphone, and a Telephone: Information (Mis)Management During the Mohawk/Canadian Governments' Conflict of 1990,"* in Feminism, Multiculturalism, and the Media: Global Diversities. Angara Valdivia (ed.), Pennsylvania State University. Sage Publication 1995,

Said, Edward, *Orientalism*, Vintage Books, New York, 1979

Skea, Warren, 1993, *The Canadian Newspaper Industry's Portrayal of the Oka Crisis*. Native Studies Review, 9(1), 15-27.

Shewell, Hugh, *"Enough to keep them alive": Indian welfare in Canada, 1873-1965*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 2004

Smyth, Heather, *The Mohawk Warrior: Reappropriating the Colonial Stereotype*, Topia: A Canadian Journal of Cultural Studies 3 (Spring 2000): 58-80.

Spurr, David, *The rhetoric of empire : colonial discourse in journalism, travel writing, and imperial administration*, Duke University Press, Durham N.C., 1993

Terdiman, Richard. *Discourse/counter-discourse: The Theory and Practice of Symbolic Resistance in Nineteenth-century France*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1985

Tomlinson, B.R. "What Was the Third World?" Journal of Contemporary History 38.2 (2003): 307-21

Trigger, Bruce G. *Natives and Newcomers: Canada's "Heroic Age" Reconsidered*. Kingston: McGill-Queen's UP, 1985

van Dijk, Teun., 'Analyzing Racism Through Discourse Analysis', Race and ethnicity in Research Methods, Ed. J. Stanfield, Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1993

van Dijk, Teun A, *The Mass Media Today: Discourse of Domination or Diversity*, Javnost/The Public 2 (2): p.28-42

van Dijk, Teun A, *News as Discourse*. Hillsdale, NJ: L. Erlbaum Associates, 1988

van Dijk, Teun, *Racism and the Press*, London ; New York, NY : Routledge, 1991

Warry, Wayne, *Ending denial: understanding Aboriginal issues*, Broadview Press, Orchard Park, N.Y., 2007

Weston, Mary Ann, *Native Americans in the news: images of Indians in the twentieth century press*, Greenwood Press, Wesport, Con, 1996.

Wilkes, Rima, *Nationalism and Media Coverage of Indigenous People's Collective Action in Canada*,

York, Geoffrey. *The Dispossessed: Life and Death in Native Canada*. Toronto: Lester & Orpen Dennys, 1989

Websites Cited

Aboriginal Affairs

"Audit of the AANDC and Attawapiskat First Nation (AFN) Management Control Framework." Government of Canada; Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada;. N.p., 28 Sept. 2012. Web.

"First Nations." *Government of Canada; Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada; Communications Branch;*. N.p., n.d. Web

"Indian Status." Government of Canada; Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada; Communications Branch;. N.p., n.d. Web

"Minister Duncan Announces Support for Kashechewan First Nation Housing." *Government of Canada; Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada;*. N.p., n.d. Web. 11 Dec. 2011.

Pope, Alan. "Report on the Kashechewan First Nation and Its People." *www.collectionscanada.gc.ca*. Aboriginal Affars Canada, 31 Oct. 2006. Web.

"Treaty Research Report - Treaty No. 9 (1905-1906)." Government of Canada; Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada; Communications Branch;. Government of Canada, n.d. Web.

Indian Act (R.S.C., 1985, c. I-6, s. 18

Assembly of First Nations

'The Reality for First Nations in Canada', *Assembly of First Nations,* N.p., n.d. Web

CBC NEWS

News, CBC. "Feds Aware of Attawapiskat Crisis for Years." *CBCnews*. CBC/Radio Canada, 03 Dec. 2011. Web.

News, CBC. "Attawapiskat Chief Slams Audit Leak as 'distraction'" *CBCnews*. CBC/Radio Canada, 08 Jan. 2013. Web.

Rose, Priscella. "My Attawapiskat Is More than a Housing Crisis - Aboriginal - CBC." CBCnews. CBC/Radio Canada, 12 Dec. 2013. Web.

Spence, Richard. "Attawapiskat's Housing Crisis: A Ground-level Perspective - Aboriginal - CBC." CBCnews. CBC/Radio Canada, 12 Dec. 2013. Web.

TOXIC WATER: THE KASHECHEWAN STORY." *Newsinreview.cbclearning.ca*. CBC, Dec. 2005. Web

The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples

Canada*. Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples.* By Georges Erasmus and René Dussault. Vol. 1. Ottawa: Commission, 1996. Looking Forward Looking Back. Part One: The Relationship in Historical Perspective

Canada. *Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples*. By Georges Erasmus and René Dussault. Vol 4. Ottawa: Commission, 1996 Public Education: Building Awareness and Understanding

ARCHIVED - Highlights from the Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples." *Government of Canada; Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada; Communications Branch;*. N.p., n.d. Web

Newspaper Articles Cited

Daily Newspaper Circulation Data | Newspapers Canada." *Daily Newspaper Circulation Data | Newspapers Canada*. N.p., n.d. Web

"Canadian Newsstand on Proquest." *Canadian Newsstand on Proquest*. N.p., n.d. Web

The Globe and Mail

Heat, water and transparency" The Globe and Mail [Toronto, Ont] 01 Dec 2011: A.24.

"It's no answer to throw money at Aboriginal ills" The Globe and Mail [Toronto, Ont] 03 Nov 2005: A.22.

Campbell, Murray." Indifference to native people shows again" The Globe and Mail [Toronto, Ont] 27 Oct 2005: A.9.

Curry, Bill. "Evacuate reserve, chief urges Ottawa" The Globe and Mail [Toronto, Ont] 20 Oct 2005: A.7.

Flanagan, Tom. "How the first nations can own their future" The Globe and Mail [Toronto, Ont] 16 Dec 2011: A.23.

Galloway, Gloria. "Federal help headed for troubled first-nations village" The Globe and Mail [Toronto, Ont] 26 Nov 2011: A.8.

Galloway, Gloria; Howlett, Karen. "Officials investigate state of emergency" The Globe and Mail [Toronto, Ont] 29 Nov 2011: A.7

Galloway, Gloria. ""Ottawa strips Attawapiskat of authority over finances." The Globe and Mail [Toronto, Ont] 01 Dec 2011: A.4.

Galloway, Gloria. "Arguing the agony of Attawapiskat" The Globe and Mail [Toronto, Ont] 01 Dec 2011: A.4.

Howlett, Karen; Curry, Bill. "Polluted reserve to be evacuated" The Globe and Mail [Toronto, Ont] 26 Oct 2005: A.1.

Howlett, Karen. "Water plight on reserve a disgrace: Ramsay" The Globe and Mail [Toronto, Ont] 25 Oct 2005: A.14.

Howlett, Karen; Curry, Bill. “Tempers flare with Ottawa as airlift of natives begins” The Globe and Mail [Toronto, Ont] 27 Oct 2005: A.1.

MacGregor, Roy. “Only a bay and 20 years separate one aboriginal tragedy from another” The Globe and Mail [Toronto, Ont] 27 Oct 2005: A.2.

Rusk, James.” Conditions on reserve ‘atrocious,’ doctor says” The Globe and Mail [Toronto, Ont] 24 Oct 2005: A.5.

Scoffield, Heather. “In Attawapiskat, officials find toddlers living in shack with mouldy mattresses” The Globe and Mail [Toronto, Ont] 30 Nov 2011: A.4.

Simpson, Jeffrey. “The Black Hole of our Nation’s Consciousness” The Globe and Mail [Toronto, Ont] 28 Oct 2005: A.23.

Simpson, Jeffrey. “Fixing the water is easy; asking tough questions is harder” The Globe and Mail [Toronto, Ont] 01 Nov 2005: A.21.

Strauss, Julius. “ESCAPE FROM KASHECHEWAN” The Globe and Mail [Toronto, Ont] 28 Oct 2005: A.1.

Strauss, Julius. “Running from the shadows of despair” The Globe and Mail [Toronto, Ont] 31 Oct 2005: A.1.

Switzer, Maurice, “Reserve Judgment” The Globe and Mail [Toronto, Ont] 12 Nov 2005: D.23.

Strauss, Julius. “Welcome to Peawanuck, a reserve that works” The Globe and Mail [Toronto, Ont] 12 Nov 2005: F.6.

Wagamese, Richard. “The Stain of Kashechewan’s Dirty Water” The Globe and Mail [Toronto, Ont] 29 Oct 2005: A.29.

Wente, Margaret. “All because of a broken $30 part” The Globe and Mail [Toronto, Ont] 15 Nov 2005: A.27.

Wente, Margaret. “The place without a future” The Globe and Mail [Toronto, Ont] 01 Nov 2005: A.21.

The National Post

“Communities too sad to survive” National Post [Don Mills, Ont] 01 Dec 2011: A.16.

“The disgrace of our native policy” National Post [Don Mills, Ont] 31 Oct 2005: A16.

Chung, Amy “Reserve under new management”, National Post [Don Mills, Ont] 01 Dec 2011: A.7.

Gough, Laurie. “All the lost boys and girls” National Post [Don Mills, Ont] 19 Nov 2005: A3.

Gunter, Lorne. “Political correctness caused Attawapiskat” National Post [Don Mills, Ont] 02 Dec 2011: A.17.

Ivison, John. “The rising toll of a 'failed experiment'; Money can't fix remote reserves like Attawapiskat” National Post [Don Mills, Ont] 29 Nov 2011: A.1.

Kathryn Blaze Carlson. “A 'homeland' at the crossroads; Relocation: A dirty word on remote reserves” National Post [Don Mills, Ont] 03 Dec 2011: A.1.

Mallen, Sean.”Reserve may be unlivable: Residents angry” National Post [Don Mills, Ont] 27 Oct 2005: A10

Milke, Mark. “Crunching Attawapiskat’s Numbers” National Post [Don Mills, Ont] 09 Dec 2011: A.19.

Smyth, Julie. “What effect does it have?” National Post [Don Mills, Ont] 23 Nov 2005: A9.

The Wawatay News

"About Wawatay." *Wawatay RSS News*. N.p., n.d. Web

"Archive." *Wawatay RSS News*. N.p., n.d. Web

“Kashechewan will not be evacuated: INAC” The Wawatay News, 21 Oct 2005

Garrick, Rick, “Sewage thrown in ditch from lack of housing” The Wawatay News, 24 Nov 2011

Garrick, Rick “Attawapiskat put under third party management” The Wawatay News, 9 Dec 2011

Hunter, Joyce, “Guarding a ‘Ghost town’” The Wawatay News, 17 Nov 2005

Kataquapit, Xavier, “Housing crisis needs solutions”, The Wawatay News, 10 Nov 2011

Kataquapit, Xavier, “Living up to the Canadian dream” The Wawatay News, 24 Nov 2011

Kornacki, Chris, “Housing crisis continues in Attawapiskat” The Wawatay News, 28 Oct 2011

Moon, Peter, “Kashechewan Junior Rangers earn praise” The Wawatay News, 17 Nov 2005

The Toronto Star

"Broken People, Broken Policy." Toronto Star [Toronto] 31 Oct. 2010, A 9 sec.: n. pag. Print.