

Winston Churchill Memorial Trust Fellowship 2015

Fellowship Report

*Te Ao Pāpāho:
Engaging with the Mainstream Media*

Ben Leonard, 2016

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Introduction

In the simplest terms possible, this project asks whether, for indigenous peoples and groups, there is value in engaging with the mainstream media.

This is a question that began in my work with Ngāti Tamaoho, and is one I have heard asked many times by different hapū and iwi organisations and other rōpū. It has always been expressed to me as a serious and genuine question on the value of the mainstream media to indigenous peoples.

This project, therefore, sets out to investigate the outcomes of different levels of engagement with the media.

It also seeks to investigate the wider question of what the advantages and disadvantages of engagement and disengagement are. As such, it explores different levels of engagement and their results.

These are large and complex topics, and this report is unable to fully explore all of the many overlapping issues impacting this question.

However, every effort has been made to include discussion and perspectives on the wider context within which these question exists.

Background

In both Canada and New Zealand, the interaction between indigenous peoples and the mainstream media occurs within the wider context of historical and continuing colonisation, oppression and imbalance of power.

There is a long history in both countries of stereotyping, misrepresentation and under-representation of indigenous peoples in the media. These are problems that still continue to this day.

Though there are some emerging examples that subvert this characterization, there can be no doubt that the mainstream media has been one of the most destructive tools of colonisation used against indigenous people.

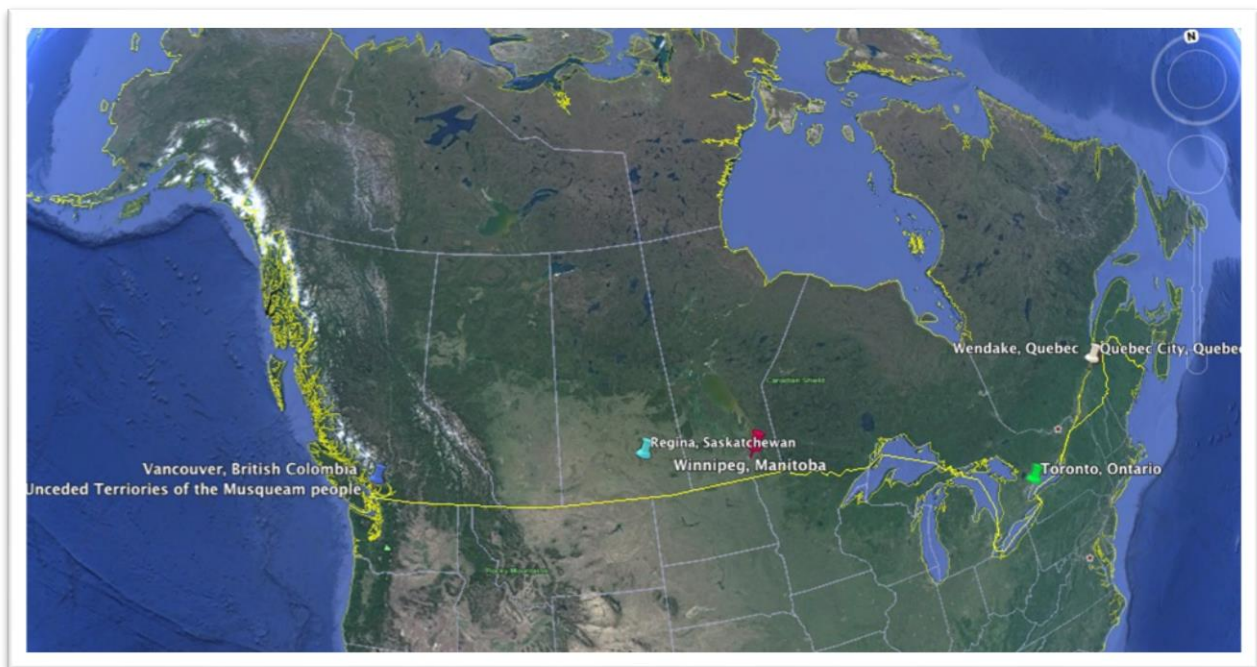
As such, this project begins with the basic premise that engagement with the media has historically led to many extremely negative outcomes for indigenous peoples.

However, both Canada and New Zealand also continue to push forward with attempts to acknowledge and address these problems, with varying degrees of success.

In New Zealand, Te Tiriti O Waitangi claims settlements and Waitangi Tribunal cases are steadily progressing. Meanwhile Māori-led businesses and Māori-led media are reemerging as increasingly important forces in the countries growth.

However, media representations of indigenous peoples and their inclusion in the media industry has not caught up. The legacy of colonisation and the mistrust caused by generations of misrepresentation and marginalization continue to be major barriers to change.

With these factors in mind, I travelled across Canada for approximately four weeks to investigate engagement and disengagement between media and indigenous peoples. I visited Vancouver, Regina, Winnipeg, Toronto and Québec City, as well as the unceded territories of the Musqueam people in British



Colombia and the Wendake territory of the Huron-Wendat people in Québec. I would also like to acknowledge the many other unceded and traditional territories of Canada's First Nations that I travelled through.

I spoke with many people across a range of different professions and backgrounds. They were kind enough to share their time and knowledge with me and our discussions are presented below. I would like to dedicate this report to them and to once again thank them for the kindness and generosity they showed me during my time in Canada.

Why Canada?

The reasons for choosing Canada are many. Firstly, indigenous Canadian/First Nations peoples have a shared experience of colonisation by Great Britain with Māori peoples in Aotearoa.

Secondly, in both cases a system has emerged where descendants of the colonising nations are the population majority with the indigenous peoples' descendants being a substantial minority population.

Thirdly, our two nations also operate within a mainstream Western media context where indigenous voices are frequently marginalized and misrepresented.

Finally, both nations' indigenous groups have a wide and varied experience with the mainstream media. It is hoped that the sharing of these experiences between our two countries can be beneficial.

There are many deep and complex issues contributing to the current relationship between media and indigenous peoples. These issues are diverse and it is important to stress that each group has had its own unique experience that in turn informs their own perspectives and approach.

Likewise, each individual I spoke with has their own experiences that they shared with me. It is important to recognize this diversity and its impact on this report.

Why are the research questions important?

In essence, this project is necessary because of the huge power imbalance between indigenous peoples and the media.

New Zealand is in a period of great change with regards to the Tiriti o Waitangi partnership between Māori and the Crown.

As claims with the Crown are settled, many iwi and hapū are better resourced and are more engaged with government ministries and decision-making bodies at a regional and national level. As the mainstream media continues to report more on issues that touch on Māori culture, knowledge and history, iwi and hapū face a difficult decision.

Engaging with the mainstream media opens the door to wider exposure and the benefits that can bring. However, centuries of experience with a monocultural mainstream media have eroded the trust between iwi/hapū and the media.

This project hopes to be able to offer some insights into the different ways some indigenous peoples and groups deal with the mainstream media and what the outcomes are.

It is hoped that this report will be useful in answering the fundamental question the author has heard asked many times; “is it worth engaging with the Pākehā media?”

It is also hoped that this report will offer some insights for Māori rōpū and organisations, in thinking about how they want to present themselves, their history, and their culture through the media.

Finally, it is hoped that this report will be useful for media organisations in understanding this imbalance of power and how their reporting practices affect indigenous people.

Terminology

A brief discussion on terminology is necessary to properly interpret this report. I have given special attention and consideration to each terms use and an introduction to the issues surrounding them follows below.

First Nations

First Nations is a term you will find throughout this report. It refers to the indigenous peoples of Canada and, more specifically, to their modern governance bodies. It is a term that has come into broad public use and has now found itself used as something of an official term for the many and diverse indigenous peoples of Canada. Importantly, the term First Nations is also sometimes used to further define Canada’s indigenous peoples as either First Nations, Métis or Inuit.

Specifically, the term refers to the governing bodies otherwise referred to as ‘bands’. Such bodies are often but not always affiliated with specific land blocks and/or historic treaties with the government.

The term arose partly in response to terms such as ‘Indian’ which some considered offensive. Interestingly, many people I spoke to still used the term ‘Indian’ regularly to refer to indigenous Canadians or Americans. I do not use the term here as it is not mine to use.

The term First Nations is used throughout this report with great care. I do so to honor the diverse, individual, and sovereign indigenous Nations of the territory now referred to as Canada.

Indigenous people and Indigeneity

Indigenous peoples is another term that you will find throughout this report. It refers to the bands, tribes, nations, Iwi or other groups who are historically, linguistically, traditionally, and culturally tied to a specific territory. Another prominent term used to refer to indigenous populations is ‘aboriginal’.

In the context of this report, ‘indigenous peoples’ often refers to the first peoples of the territory now within the Canadian borders. However, I also use the term

more broadly to include indigenous peoples around the world from Australia, to Aotearoa, to the many nations of the United States.

Unfortunately this term often implies that a people have experience to colonialism. That is certainly the case in Canada, the United States, Australia and New Zealand, as well as many Pacific nations.

My apologies to those who see this word as an unnecessary colonial gloss on their diverse cultures, traditions and histories. It is certainly not intended that way. Rather I use the term here as a recognition of those traditions and of the autonomy, sovereignty and inextinguishable human rights of these peoples.

Finally, it is also necessary to say something about the use of the word and the comparison of indigenous peoples experiences are used in this report. Firstly, it is not the author's intention to take away from the incredible range of diversity in indigenous peoples languages, traditions and histories. These things are immutable. It is extremely important to recognize this diversity, as many interviewees did during my report.

However, this report does begin with the basic premise that the individual experiences of one people can be of vital assistance to many others. In the case of New Zealand and Canada, indigenous peoples certainly have many shared experiences. These run the gamut from British and French colonialism to land confiscations, to bans on traditional and cultural practices. They also reach across modern experiences including language revitalisation, treaty settlements and as dealt with in this report, media representations.

It is hoped that the experiences shared here by the interviewees will be of use to tackling the many problematic issues in the relationship between media and indigenous peoples.

Media and Mainstream

It is also necessary to define another term that occurs frequently in this report: media. Media is a term with many broad and intersecting definitions. A full discussion of these is not possible within this report. However it is necessary to discuss the way the term is used here.

In this report media refers to the industry encompassing news, communications, current affairs, journalism, digital media and broadcasting. It also refers to the specific organisations that make up this industry including large national television and radio networks (such as the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation or CBC) right through to small local newspapers, Facebook pages or websites. Often the term outlet or organisation is used in conjunction with these terms to refer to individual media companies.

The terms mainstream and mainstream media can also be found in this report. These terms are particularly problematic and the author would like to

acknowledge that. What exactly constitutes the 'mainstream' is a subjective question and one that can cause harm in who it includes and excludes. This is not the author's intention and my apologies to readers for the use of such a loaded term.

However, with consideration and discussion with many interviewees and advisors it has been used in this report. Despite its problematic exclusivity, the word is one that has come in to common usage.

In my preliminary research for this report I found the term used frequently by those writing and speaking on my areas of inquiry. Indeed many of the interviewees themselves used this word frequently. As such it is used here as a term that seems well understood and greatly utilised by those who are far more knowledgeable on these subjects than myself.

The term is used in this report to refer to mass media that is distributed to the wider public (often nationally or internationally) and that therefore has substantially power to influence and shape public discussion, thought and opinion.

Method

My investigation focused on three main groups of people. Naturally, there was intersection between these groups.

Firstly, representatives from indigenous Canadian and First Nations' groups and regional bodies to discuss how they engage with the media and why they take that approach. I also spoke with them about how this approach developed and what their aspirations and goals are for the dissemination of their knowledge and culture.

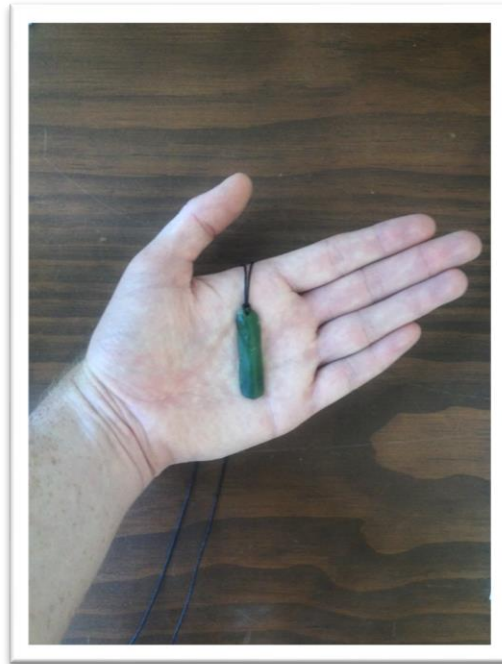
Secondly, I spoke with indigenous Canadian and First Nation's members who are working within the media. With this group, we focused on their role in the media, the issues they face, and their thoughts on addressing the problems of representation that indigenous people face.

Thirdly, I spoke academics teaching and researching in the subject area of media representations of indigenous peoples. There are a number of academics producing research on the different ways to address media representations of indigenous peoples who provide great assistance to me.

I also visited libraries, academic institutions and media organisations.

I spoke with each interviewee for an average of three hours, although some interviews were significantly longer and others shorter. I recorded these interviews and have had them transcribed with the help of my colleague Patsy Hickey at Ngāti Tamaoho Trust. My thanks to her for all the long hours of work to make these interviews available to the public and available for use in this report. Aroha ana e hoa.

Each interview began with an introduction of myself and an outline of this project. Most interviewees followed this with an introduction of themselves and their work. As a token of my appreciation for their time and sharing their knowledge each interviewee was presented with a small tāonga blessed by Ngāti Tamaoho (shown below).



Acknowledgements

This research would not have been possible without the assistance of many people.

First and foremost my greatest thanks to the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust, especially its board and communications staff. Without their assistance this research would have not been possible. I am eternally grateful to them for backing this trip and report and I hope that it fulfils the immensely laudable purposes the trust was created for.

My sincerest thanks also to all my interviewees listed below. Their knowledge and experience is the foundation of this report:

- Duncan McCue
- Dory Nason
- Daniel Justice
- Sheryl Lightfoot
- Shannon Avison
- Cherish Francis

- Nelson Bird
- Creeson Agecutay
- Jillian Taylor
- Vera Houle
- Rick Harp
- Damon Johnston
- Diane Redsky
- Niigaanwewidam James Sinclair
- Lorena Fontaine
- Miles Kenyon
- Rebeka Tabobondung

I would also like to thank the representatives of the Musqueam Nation & Huron-Wendat First Nation I was able to speak with.

My thanks also to the Ngāti Tamaoho Trust and particularly to its kaiwhakahaere Christine Herzog and chair Dennis Kirkwood. It was their support and encouragement which began this research and their continued support which allows me to do this work that I so greatly treasure. My thanks also to all the Trust and its staff for their support and to Patsy Hickey for undertaking the invaluable task of transcribing these interviews. Kia ora koe e hoa mā.

Also to Dr Graeme Campbell for his invaluable support and guidance during this research. Without him none of this work would be possible. Aroha ana matua.

Thanks also to all those from the University of Auckland, and from Massey University who assisted my preliminary research on these issues. Special thanks to Sue Abel at the University of Auckland for her encouragement on my research question and her suggestion of potential interviewees.

Finally to my friends and family who supported me through this research, the travel itself, and the creation of this report. My thanks especially to Charlotte for her support.

Interviews

Vancouver, British Columbia



Duncan McCue – CBC News, University of British Columbia, Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation.

Duncan McCue is a journalist and reporter working for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), as well as being an adjunct professor at the University of British Columbia Graduate School of Journalism. Duncan has had a long and celebrated career reporting on stories of national and international significance, including those involving indigenous peoples, and is himself a member of the Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation.

He also created the *Reporting in Indigenous Communities* online resource centre that was an invaluable source of information and perspective on my research subject.ⁱ

During my time in Canada almost every interviewee I spoke to referred to Duncan's work as a case-in-point of the power of the mainstream media to bring positive change. Many of them also insisted that I speak to him as a foremost expert on the subject. It was appropriate then that he was my first interviewee upon my arrival.

Issues discussedⁱⁱ

Duncan stressed the point that although he was a member of an indigenous community, and worked to address the problems of the mainstream media's depiction of First Nation's peoples, he was a general reporter and not restricted to the 'native beat' as he put it.

This was an important distinction to draw given the roles and experiences of the people I spoke to during my trip. Some worked for the First Nations governments they were members of, others worked for indigenous reporting sections of major news outlets, others worked for organisations whose sole mandate was to report on indigenous peoples in Canada.

These differences are important to consider in placing peoples individual views within the context of my research. It was something I found myself reflecting on regularly during my trip.

I felt very fortunate to have Duncan as my first interviewee. Firstly, because of his extensive expertise in the subject area. Secondly, because our discussion introduced me to many of the issues that would become major themes during my trip.

The first of these was the importance of building relationships. Specifically Duncan introduced the importance of building relationships between media staff (often journalists) and people from First Nations communities or indigenous organisations. Duncan saw these very personal, one-on-one relationships as key to progressing indigenous peoples representation in the media.

The main reason for this was the lack of understanding between the media and First Nations peoples. This led to the perpetuation of stereotypes and other misrepresentations because of a lack of cultural and historic understanding by reporters. It also led to a lack of engagement from some indigenous peoples who may lack connections to media. Many groups also lack the resources to be able to engage with them effectively.

The media's lack of understanding also led to an *othering* of indigenous peoples that flowed from the media to their audience. This is evidenced by the way media often report on issues of indigenous sovereignty.

As Duncan noted, meaningful protest can be reduced to a traffic story while historic injustice claims are often headlined for the how much they cost the taxpayer. Unfortunately, this is still common in New Zealand.

In terms of indigenous peoples' disengagement with media, Duncan was not ambiguous. He noted the prevalence of disengagement, and at times resistance, he had seen. This was often a result of a lack of trust of media organisations, both because of historic portrayals of indigenous people and because of the sporadic and one-sided interactions that many communities had with media organisations.

He noted that many communities felt that the news media only sought out their stories when there was a crisis.

Importantly, this did not necessarily mean that indigenous communities and organisations did not want engagement with the media. On the contrary, Duncan seemed to suggest that many communities wanted more engagement but lacked the trust that the media would cover their stories appropriately.

This also raised the issue of funding. Duncan noted that those nations who were better resourced invariably had better engagement with media. This engagement was also often more strategic, resulting in better outcomes, as groups were able to develop media strategies and employ staff to implement them. Again, this suggested a strong willingness to engage where resources permitted, rather than a wholesale resistance to working with media.

In terms of the importance of the media for indigenous peoples, Duncan raised several interesting issues.

Firstly, and perhaps most importantly, was the ability of the media to bring about rapid and large-scale change.

The media's influence on the public's understanding and opinion of an issue cannot be understated. This is especially true given the lack of adequate public education on indigenous peoples in Canada. For many, the media may be their only substantive connection with indigenous peoples and their stories. Therefore both misrepresentation and under-representation can easily re-enforce stereotypes and strengthen racial bias.

Conversely, accurate representation by media (with context and depth) can help to bring important issues into public discourse in ways that few other institutions can. A story on a historic treaty claim with the appropriate history and indigenous voices can help transform public perception and create a positive feedback loop. These stories can help to fight racial bias and give a better understanding of the struggles indigenous peoples face.

Media coverage can also bring about substantial change at a governmental level. In its most basic form this happens when the public, informed by the media, go to vote. It can also happen when media coverage of an issue leads to direct action in the form of protest, petitions, or pressure for a governmental inquiry. As such, fair and balanced reporting can lead to very real change on issues that affect indigenous peoples. Conversely, stereotyping and misrepresentation can have exactly the opposite effect.

Duncan summarised this discussion by noting that the importance of the mainstream media lay simply in its reach. By rapidly delivering information and opinion to millions of people, Canada's mainstream media has an almost unrivaled power to inform and misinform. This makes it a useful tool.

As Duncan states, this tool has been utilised in the past as a means of colonisation and oppression of indigenous peoples.

However, Duncan suggests that with more indigenous people working in the media, and better education and training for non-indigenous workers, the tool can be repurposed.

Duncan also noted the importance of indigenous media and addressed some of the issues around its role in the wider media landscape.

Firstly, he noted the importance of indigenous media as a corrective force against the problems of the mainstream. Specifically he referred to organisations such as the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN) and several indigenous peoples newspapers. Duncan noted how these organisations, who are largely staffed and run by indigenous people, make it an integral part of their reporting to regularly engage with indigenous communities. He suggested that these organisations help to redress the imbalance of representation in the wider media landscape.

While this is undoubtedly a laudable and necessary goal for indigenous media, Duncan noted that it can be limiting as indigenous media continues to expand.

As organisations work hard to redress generations of systemic bias in the media they may also cover stories that ask critical questions of indigenous people or organisation. Duncan suggests that this is a normal part of the media's responsibility to investigate issues and hold those in power to account. However, he also notes that others may consider this more critical role to be in opposition to the goal of indigenous media to promote indigenous peoples issues.

Duncan saw this as an important coming of age for indigenous media. He noted that some organisations were beginning to grapple with the implications of having to cover stories that may be critical of their own.

This presents a unique challenge for indigenous media moving forward. Many still see the role of indigenous media as a necessary counter-weight to mainstream coverage of indigenous issues. However, when legitimate stories arise that may be critical of indigenous groups or peoples many organisations face the question of whether this conflicts with their role in the wider media landscape.

This is also an issue that has featured prominently in New Zealand in recent years. It is perhaps best illustrated by the controversy surrounding Māori Television's coverage of the management of Kōhanga Reo and their subsidiaries. The story implicated many leading figures and exposed serious financial mismanagement leading to a governmental inquiry. Māori Television, and several reporters in particular, were subjected to a huge backlash from many of these leading public figures with the network reportedly being put under substantial political and financial pressure not to run the stories. In the end the stories were run with the fall-out dealt continuing to ripple through the New Zealand media industry to this day. The story went on to win the Best Investigative Reporting award at the 2014 World Indigenous Journalism Awards, highlighting the importance of facing this challenge head on.

In all, Duncan's comments suggest that this will continue to be one of the most difficult challenges faced by indigenous media. However, it is also a necessary one that has wide-ranging benefits for indigenous peoples into the future. As he says:

"Part of the reason why we have been stuck in the place that we have been for the past for the past 100 years, for First Nations or for Māori... is because of the limited story that non-native folks have been telling about us and that we've been telling about ourselves.

Until we start to expand our stories, until we start to, as I say share stories of ourselves as indigenous people but also as humans... then we're going to be stuck in those same levels." ⁱⁱⁱ

Dory Nason – University of British Columbia, Leech Lake Band of Minnesota Chippewa

Dory Nason is an Assistant Professor at the University of British Columbia's First Nations and Indigenous Studies Program. She teaches Indigenous Literature and Criticism, Indigenous Theory and Research Methods, and Indigenous Feminisms and has co-edited and contributed to a number of publications on these subjects. Dory is also a member of the Leech Lake Band of Minnesota Chippewa.

Dory was my second interview in Vancouver and my first of several at the University of British Columbia.

Issues discussed^{iv}

We began by discussing the role that new forms of media have in indigenous communities.

Dory noted the importance of social media as a platform for indigenous peoples. Specifically, she noted that indigenous peoples were a large and rapidly growing population on Canadian social media. This is important both in highlighting the importance of looking at different kinds of media, and in highlighting indigenous peoples engagement with non-traditional media.

In terms of the importance of having a diverse approach to media engagement for indigenous peoples, social media should not be overlooked. Dory noted the wide-spread and innovative use of social media by her students to tell their stories, engage in important conversations and raise awareness of important issues. She also noted how social media was used by activists to reach out to the wider public and to local and national government. The autonomy and editorial independence of social media removes some of the problems of interpretation and mediation presented by traditional media.

Importantly, Dory noted that social media was perhaps most effectively used in conjunction with traditional mainstream media rather than as a complete alternative to it. Having a range of media platforms to engage with allowed indigenous peoples to have a diverse tool-kit to present their stories. Social media could also be used as an effective critique of traditional media with Dory's students able to discuss the media's portrayal of individual stories in a public discourse.

Dory was careful to note that the experience of indigenous groups differed greatly across Canada and wider North America. Each group had its culture, language and traditions and its own unique experience of colonisation and its continued effects. Many groups also had vastly different experiences with the media, ranging from little interaction at all for some northern communities, through to a history of centuries of interaction for others living closer to colonial urban centres.

These different experiences and different cultural lenses effected each indigenous groups engagement with the media and their reasons for taking that approach.

Dory noted that those based close to large urban centres such as Toronto and Vancouver had far more pressure to engage with media simply by virtue of their location. Similarly, these communities also often have had more historical experiences with media to draw from, be these negative or positive.

The result is that communities close to urban centres have simultaneously more pressure to engage and more historical baggage in dealing with media. Dory noted how this led to a prevalence of coordinated media strategy from urban communities as opposed to more remote communities who have less physical connection with western traditional media.

As with many of the people I interviewed, Dory raised the issue of missing and murdered indigenous women. This issue has been an ongoing one for many generations and highlights the continuing effects of colonisation and the role the media plays in it.

Dory noted how police and other law enforcement continue to ignore the murder and abduction of indigenous women, predominantly from urban centres. This is part and parcel of wider societal values that devalue the lives and safety of indigenous women. It is a pervasive issue that is too large and far-reaching to touch on at length in this discussion. However, the media's response to this issue is an important case study in the importance of media for indigenous peoples, the problems it continues to have, and some ways forward.

The stories of missing and murdered indigenous women face two main problems in the mainstream media; under-representation and misrepresentation.

Under-representation occurs where media outlets ignore stories on indigenous women while covering those of non-indigenous women. Misrepresentation occurs where outlets use stereotyping or fail to provide adequate context and background to a story.

Dory noted how stories on indigenous women frequently ignored important or historical background information that would help readers to understand the problem. Similarly, many stories engaged in various forms of victim-blaming, culture-blaming and pervasive colonial attitudes to the rights of indigenous women. Sometimes these were obvious and explicit, other times they occurred by how the story was told.

Despite these problems, Dory also noted that media coverage of these stories was improving. She put this down to inclusion of more indigenous women in media roles, greater cultural and historic understanding from media staff, and an increase in awareness of the ways misrepresentation and under-representation occur and the serious effects they can have.

When these stories are covered well the positive effects of their coverage can be huge. Dory noted the slow but tangible improvement on police attitudes and responsiveness to these cases as the media's coverage did. This supported the case for the importance of good media coverage on indigenous peoples. Improvement in underrepresentation and misrepresentation are more than laudable goals of good journalism. They can also lead to practical improvements on the issues they cover.

Daniel Justice – University of British Columbia, Cherokee Nation

Daniel Justice is a Professor and Chair of the University of British Columbia's First Nations and Indigenous Studies Program. He is also the First Nations and Indigenous Studies and English Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Literature and Expressive Culture. He teaches and publishes in the field of indigenous literary studies and is a member of the Cherokee Nation.

Daniel's area of study is indigenous literature and he has published widely on the subject as well as contributing to it as a fiction and non-fiction writer. I spoke to Daniel in his office at the University of British Columbia and was particularly interested in the intersection of indigenous literature and media.

Issues discussed^v

We began by discussing Daniel's experience of indigenous groups who engage with the media.

On the topic of indigenous peoples engagement with the media, Daniel noted that there many communities seeking to use the media strategically. Of those that were doing so, forming individual relationships with reporters and media staff was seen as key to improving how their stories were told.

Daniel also supported the idea of the continued importance of the mainstream media for indigenous peoples.

Firstly, Daniel noted the importance of a diverse approach in working with the media. Increasing the number of platforms a group engaged with gave them more options in how their stories could be told and to whom they would be presented. Therefore the traditional and mainstream media is best utilised along with other forms, including social media and indigenous media, to capitalize on the advantages of each.

Daniel saw the main advantage of the mainstream media as its reach. While it may not have the autonomy or immediacy of social media, or the cultural competencies of indigenous media outlets, mainstream media was still useful as a way to bring stories to the wider Canadian public. Daniel also noted that mainstream media was slowly improving in its shortcomings by hiring more indigenous reporters and engaging more with social media.

Daniel also addressed the effects to not engaging with the media. Where indigenous groups do not comment on a story this can often leave a vacuum that the media will try to fill with other voices. He suggests that engaging with the media can be a way to re-insert indigenous voices into important conversations. In the context of the historical under-representation of indigenous peoples and their stories in the media, developing relationships with media is even more important than ever.

Daniel also noted that some positive work that has already been done by indigenous journalists working in the mainstream. Therefore he suggests a policy of disengagement could ignore the good work already being done. Despite the fact that much of the change needs to take place on the part of the media, Daniel suggests that ignoring the problems only guarantees that they will not be addressed.

Resourcing for indigenous groups wishing to be strategic in their involvement with the media remains a crucial issue. This is especially problematic when funding often comes from vested interests including local, provincial, and national government. Daniel explained that it was often those projects or groups who were less critical of the status quo that received funding.

Sheryl Lightfoot – University of British Columbia, Lake Superior Band of Ojibwe

Sheryll Lightfoot is an assistant professor at the University of British Columbia's First Nations and Indigenous Studies Program as well as the Department of Political Science. Her areas of research include global indigenous politics, indigenous rights, and indigenous diplomacy. She is also a member of the Lake Superior Band of Ojibwe.

I was particularly interested in speaking to Sheryl about global movements in indigenous rights and the comparisons that could be drawn between the experiences of different indigenous peoples.

Issues discussed^{vi}

Sheryl noted a wide range of examples of problematic coverage of indigenous peoples and their stories. The story of chief Theresa Spence's hunger strike outlined how a serious and important story could be reduced to stereotypes. The protest and its surrounding issues were represented primarily by images of round dancing and text supporting the common stereotype that Duncan McCue referred to as the 'warrior', a parochial, colonial and simplistic representation.

Reporters and media outlets also frequently misrepresent stories because of a lack of cultural and historical awareness. The story of a young Haudenosaunee girl from Ontario who's family led preferred to use traditional healing methods over chemotherapy was represented without a proper understanding of the cultural values underpinning that decision and the historical context it exists within.

This fed into an all too common stereotype that other interviewees discussed that First Nations people somehow receive special benefits from the government because of their indigenous status. It is an extremely damaging stereotype that serves to support racial bias. It is also one that media outlets could easily avoid with the appropriate context. Unfortunately it is also a prevalent stereotype in New Zealand as evidence by the recent 'KiwiMeter' story.^{vii}

Sheryl also discussed the coverage of the protests of development on the Musqueam nations traditional land and burial grounds at *ćəsnaʔəm* near Vancouver. Rather than reporting on the substantive issues of the development on Musqueam land, the media focused on the protest, its effect on traffic, and the impact on the progression of the development. The representation of indigenous peoples as obstacles to progress is another pervasive stereotype found in both the Canadian and New Zealand mainstream media.

In terms of improving engagement Sheryl noted how protest movements and activism can help to create grass roots movement and draw in the media. However, she also noted how stereotyping can effect these kinds of stories as they are filtered through traditional media lenses. The *Idle No More* movement, for example, was reduced by many mainstream outlets to an environmental issue.

Tackling these stereotypes can be extremely difficult. Sheryl noted that it is often easier for people to deal with issues that play into existing stereotypes or representations such as environmental issues. The true historical and cultural realities are often complex and may not be included in media narratives for reasons including lack of time/space and lack of awareness. However, when dealing with many of the issues important to indigenous peoples, historic and culture context is crucial. An understanding and acceptance of these factors is critical to good reporting on stories that involve indigenous groups.

This raises the important point that stories involving indigenous peoples and groups often cannot be treated as some other news stories are. The complex historical interactions of media and indigenous peoples, as well as the legacy of colonisation and its continued effects, necessitate a different approach.

This is compounded by the lack of public education on the historical and contemporary issues indigenous peoples face. These stories should necessarily convey the background and context needed for an audience to properly comprehend them.

Sheryl, like Dory Nason, highlighted the importance of the mainstream media by discussing its impact on the crisis of missing and murdered indigenous women. Pressure from indigenous groups, advocacy and community groups and independent media, as well as an increase of indigenous people in newsrooms led to an improvement in the quality and quantity of stories on the issue.

Musqueam Nation, Traditional Un-ceded Musqueam Territories

On my last day in Vancouver I visited the Musqueam Nation at their Cultural Education Resource Centre in the south-west of what is now know as the Vancouver area but remains the traditional un-ceded territories of the Musqueam people.

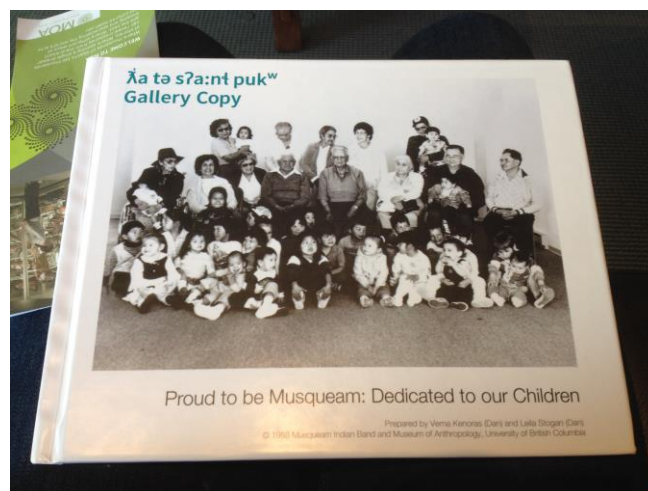
My visit was to look at the recently opened Cultural Education Resource Centre that aims to preserve and present Musqueam culture and history. In this way it was an interesting juxtaposition to the media representations I had been discussing during my interviews in Vancouver. Here was a First Nations community communicating their stories as they saw fit.

It was also interesting to examine their exhibition on the protests at *čəsnaʔəm*, which Sheryl Lightfoot introduced above. These were peaceful protests by the Musqueam people over the treatment of their traditional lands and burial grounds. Meanwhile, major media coverage tended to focus on the disruption caused by the protest, rather than the reasons for its existence. This re-enforced the points made by my interviewees regarding the stereotypes and lack of context so often perpetuated by the media.

These protest actions were also a central feature of an exhibit I looked at in the University of British Columbia's Museum of Anthropology. This exhibit was undertaken in conjunction with the Musqueam Nation. As such it made for an interesting study into the power of different representations of indigenous peoples stories. There were the reports from the local and national media, the multimedia exhibition by both the UBC and Musqueam Nation, and finally the Musqueam peoples own representation of these events at their cultural centre.

Gallery

A series of photos taken at both the University of British Columbia's Museum of Anthropology and the Musqueam Nation's Cultural Education Resource Centre.



Publication as part of the exhibit on *čəsnaʔəm*.
University of British Columbia Museum of Anthropology, May 2015.



Part of a multimedia work depicting the struggle for land rights at ʕəsnaʔəm by the Muqeam people. University of British Columbia Museum of Anthropology, May 2015.



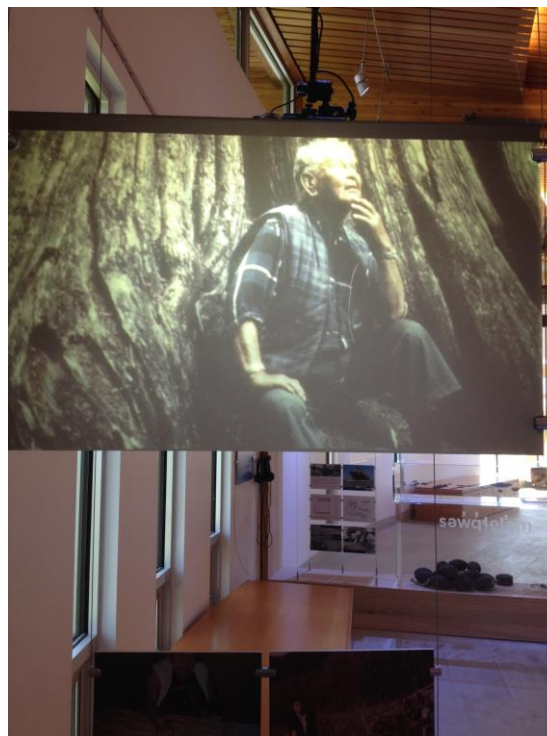
Part of a multimedia work depicting the struggle for land rights at ʕəsnaʔəm by the Muqeam people. University of British Columbia Museum of Anthropology, May 2015.



*Musqueam Cultural Education Resource Centre.
Musqueam Territory, May 2015.*



*Inside the Musqueam Cultural Education Resource Centre.
Musqueam Territory, May 2015.*



*Audio-visual display at the Musqueam Cultural Education Resource Centre.
Musqueam Territory, May 2015.*



*Comparison of building tools, ancient and modern at the Musqueam Cultural Education Resource Centre.
Musqueam Territory, May 2015.*



*Exhibition on the protests at $\acute{c}asna\lambda\acute{e}m$ at the Musqueam Cultural Education Resource Centre.
Musqueam Territory, May 2015.*

Regina, Saskatchewan



Shannon Avison, First Nations University of Canada (Assistant Professor, Indian Communication Arts)

Shannon Avison is an Assistant Professor and Department Head of Indian Communication Arts at the First Nations University of Canada. She was researched and published in the area of indigenous media and has trained some of Canada's best-known indigenous journalists.

The First Nations University of Canada is a unique institution that aims to marry a variety of First Nations traditional & cultural elements with western academic systems. As the University says, it is a place where indigenous students can learn in the context of their own traditions, languages and values.

Within the University, the Indian Communication Arts Department offers a unique program to examine media and communication arts through First Nations perspectives. In the context of my research it was an excellent place to discuss the intersection of indigenous and western media practices.

Issues Discussed^{viii}

Shannon's experience as an educator in communications and media at the First Nations University gave her some unique insights.

Perhaps most interestingly she outlined the progression in the media industries views on indigenous peoples shifting from media subjects to media consumers and producers. This highlights the role that profit still plays in the media and how that can adversely affect representations of indigenous people. As Shannon mentioned, media companies are only too happy to work with groups who can pay with advertising.

Shannon also spoke about the increase in indigenous people in media roles as a positive change. Specifically Shannon mentioned the work being done on missing and murdered indigenous women. It was ultimately indigenous journalists whose work brought the issue to public and government attention.

Unfortunately, Shannon still noted many instances of persistent stereotyping, particularly around violence. One of her former students even suggested that stories playing on stereotypes of indigenous people increase newspaper sales.

To combat these stereotypes, Shannon noted the importance of telling stories that include indigenous voices without *othering* them.

These stories can often be simple in scope and include indigenous voices along with many others. This helps to combat common representations of indigenous people that can reduce them to cultural curiosities. While stories on pow-wows are important, it is equally important to show indigenous people as part of the often mundane everyday world.

As with many other interviewees, Shannon noted that there are many organisations that want to get their news out to the wider public but lack the resources to do so. Ultimately the resourcing of groups remains a problematic factor in the lack of indigenous representation in the mainstream media.

Shannon also raised the issue of new migrants and how these people come to understand the indigenous peoples of their new homes. Without formal education on the issues and subjects at play, media is often the primary way new migrants learn about indigenous peoples.

Shannon also spoke about the issue of leaving 'no comment'. This is something that many interviewees touched on. The example Shannon gave highlighted how common this reaction was among indigenous groups in Saskatchewan. While there were many good reasons for this, Shannon noted how leaving no comment could further marginalise indigenous voices, leaving the media to fill the gaps itself. Importantly however, this example showed how far the media still has to go in re-establishing a relationship of trust with indigenous peoples.

Cherish Francis - File Hills Qu'Appelle Tribal Council (Director of Communications), Nekaneet Cree First Nation

Cherish Francis was the Director of Communications at the File Hills Qu'Appelle Tribal Council during my visit to Regina. Cherish has an extensive background in First Nations media and communications, having previously worked for Aboriginal Peoples Television Network and the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations.

As Director of Communications for the File Hills Qu'Appelle Tribal Council, Cherish was responsible for communications and media for 11 First Nations and their tribal council. With a background as a journalist Cherish had a unique perspective from both sides of my research area.

Issues discussed^{ix}

As a communications specialist working for the FHQTC, Cherish had plenty of experience in the relationship between indigenous groups and the media in Saskatchewan.

Cherish discussed the importance of social media in her job and how different platforms can be useful for different audiences. In particular, Facebook was used to keep in touch with members, sharing the latest news and inviting them to events. This functions similarly to how a newsletter might have in the past. Cherish noted how effective a good use of the platform had been at increasing member engagement.

Meanwhile Twitter was used to communicate news and opinions directly to media organisations and political figures. It was also useful as a platform to

critique the mainstream media and their stories involving indigenous groups. This echoed what Dory Nason had noted about the power of social media to act as a check on the mainstream.

Most importantly for Cherish and the FHQTC was a strong communications policy. Having a thoroughly considered and detailed policy allowed all parts of the FHQTC to work toward their communication goals and better engagement with the media. In particular, having dedicated spokespeople and communications managers seemed to have the greatest effect.

As always, funding remains a major burden. However, Cherish noted how the FHQTC had prioritised her work and made an effort to find a way to pay for it. Naturally, this is not an option that is available to many indigenous groups but it was striking to see the benefits it had. Examples Cherish gave such as Makwa Sahgaiehcan First Nation showed how important it was to prioritise media and communications.

Cherish also addressed the issue of leaving 'no comment'. She echoed the concerns of Shannon Avison and others who saw this as an understandable but damaging strategy to take.

Cherish was also careful to underline that the misrepresentation of indigenous people was not just spread through the media. Formal education, be that primary, secondary or tertiary, also held great responsibility in informing the non-indigenous public.

Overall, Cherish saw improvements both in education and the media. She drew attention to the effect the Idle No More had on public understanding of indigenous peoples and treaty relationships. These and other national movements were beginning to draw attention to issues of indigenous sovereignty and human rights in a way that hadn't been before. Ultimately, Cherish believed this was pushing indigenous peoples into a position where their stories could no longer be ignored.

Nelson Bird – CTV Regina, Peepeekisis First Nation & Creeson Agecutay – CTV Regina, Cowessess First Nation

Nelson Bird is a journalist, producer and current assignment editor at CTV Regina. Creeson Agecutay is the host and producer of CTV's 'Indigenous Circle' a weekly programme covering stories from First Nations peoples throughout Saskatchewan and beyond. Nelson is also a senior advisor on the program, which he formerly hosted for more than 15 years. Both are graduates from the Indian Communication Arts program at the First Nations University of Canada.

My interview with Nelson and Creeson was held together and our group discussion recorded below.

Issues discussed^x

Both Nelson and Creeson had wonderful insights to share on the relationship between media and indigenous peoples.

Nelson noted how far things had come in recent years compared to his early career. At that time disengagement, stereotyping and misrepresentation were the rule rather than the exceptions. This was mainly a result of a lack of indigenous people working in the media. It was these people (including Nelson himself) who began to make steps to heal the relationship between media and First Nations.

Creeson spoke of how First Nations are often represented as roadblocks to progress for Canada. In particular, protests on resource extraction and environmental degradation are frequently represented as impediments to prosperity for the non-indigenous population. They are also often represented as dangerous disruptions to the 'orderly' process of government-approved resource extraction.

These representations intersect dangerously with the political rhetoric around terrorism, which is now filtering into legislation. Specifically of concern for Creeson was Bill *c-51*. This bill (now enacted as the Anti-Terrorism Act 2015) was pushed by the government as a move to tackle terrorism by allowing government agencies greater power and allowing more information to be collected and shared about individuals.

However, many commentators have noted the bills potential for misuse, specifically in targeting indigenous protestors. This has also been the case in the United States and bears an uncanny resemblance to the factors surrounding the Urewera Raids of 2007 in New Zealand. It continues in the tradition of characterizing indigenous peoples as dangerous threats to the common peace, perhaps best displayed by the media during the 1990 Oka Crisis in Québec. This is a rapidly developing area and one that I hope to be able to investigate further.

As experienced journalists and enrolled members of their respective First Nations, Creeson and Nelson had plenty of first hand experience in the relationships between First Nations and the media.

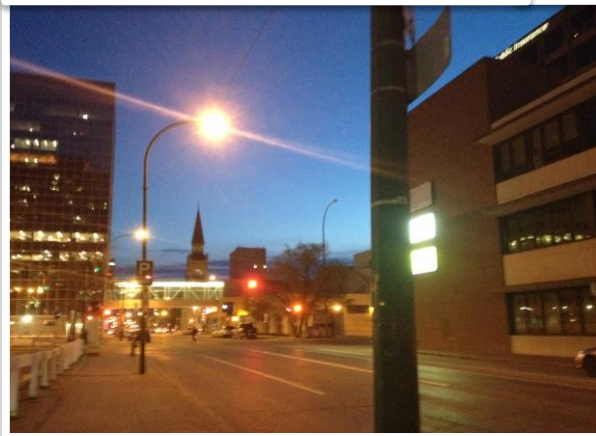
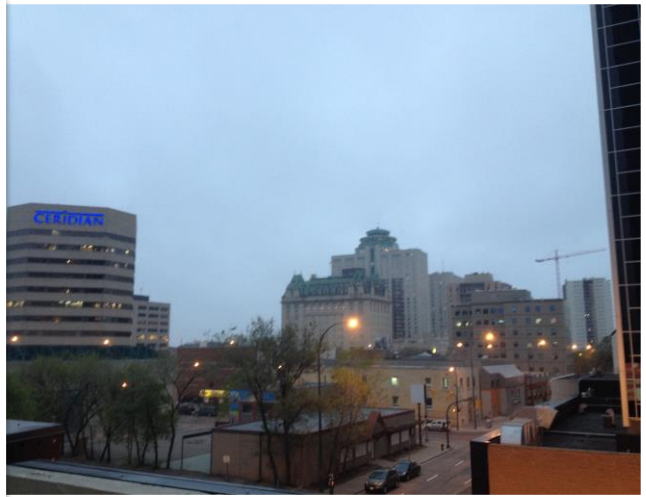
Both noted the importance of having indigenous people in media roles. The experience, understanding and connection indigenous journalists bring with them helps them to amplify the voices of other indigenous voices. However, it is also important to give indigenous journalists a wider scope than simply reporting on indigenous people's stories. Having indigenous journalist's reporting only on indigenous stories furthers the process of *othering* and contributes to the continued marginalization of indigenous voices.

Nelson and Creeson also echoed the comments of earlier interviewees concerning the leaving of 'no comment' with media. As journalists they noted

how difficult this made their job despite their best efforts to include indigenous voices.

Creeson also discussed the problem of resources for groups to develop better relationships with media. He noted the severe under-funding many groups face (combined with the effects of historic injustices) that limits what can be spent on engaging with the media. As other interviewees also stated, it is difficult to allocate money for communications when you have housing or public health issues to tackle first. This highlights that it is often not a rejection of media at play but simply a lack of resources to properly engage.

Winnipeg, Manitoba



Jillian Taylor CBC Manitoba, CBC Aboriginal, Fisher Cree First Nation

Jillian Taylor is a reporter and journalist working for CBC Manitoba based in Winnipeg. Jillian has extensive experience reporting on both indigenous peoples stories in the context of a major news outlet and is herself a member of the Fisher Cree Nation. She has also undertaken research on indigenous media in Australia as part of the Commonwealth Broadcasting Association's travel bursary.

Issues discussed^{xi}

We began by discussing the ongoing struggle of First Nations to combat negative stereotypes perpetrated by the media.

Jillian highlighted the importance of activist movements such as Idle No More. As with many interviewees, she cited this movement as having had the strongest effect in a generation on bringing public attention to indigenous peoples. Jillian saw these movements as important because communities take it upon themselves to change the perception of their issues.

Jillian also noted the *othering* effect the media can have when representing indigenous peoples. Some representations can serve to further stereotypes even though media outlets may believe they are taking positive steps by including more indigenous peoples. As Jillian said, it is important to widen the representation of indigenous peoples is more than a cultural curiosity. Combating the marginalization of indigenous voices means showing that indigenous people can be your local doctor, a teacher at your child's school or your neighbour across the fence.

Vera Houle - Aboriginal Peoples Television Network, Sandy Bay Ojibway First Nation

Vera Houle is the Director of Community Relations at the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN). She has previously worked as a journalist, reporter, producer for a range of outlets including CTV and APTN. She was also previously Communications Advisor for the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs.

APTN is a television network made for, by and about the indigenous peoples of Canada and was among the first network of its kind around the world. Today APTN broadcasts nationally and is a required network in all basic cable TV packages.

Issues discussed^{xii}

Vera's extensive experience in media and in particular the growth of APTN gave her great insight in the relationship between media and indigenous peoples. She noted how her early career had included many battle to get positive stories on indigenous people to the forefront. These were not considered newsworthy by the outlets she worked for.

She credits the development of APTN as having huge effects on the mainstream media in Canada. As the network has grown, so to has the space and resources dedicated to indigenous peoples in other newsrooms. APTN has also trained and developed many journalists who have gone on to successful careers in other mainstream outlets. To this extent Vera sees APTN as now part of the mainstream news industry in Canada.

As with other interviewees, Vera credits national protest movements with doing some of the greatest work in bringing issues to the public attention. In particular, she credits the protest over the First Nations Governance Act as being a turning point in the public perception of indigenous peoples rights. It was a moment that also galvanized her commitment to pushing these issues in the mainstream media.

Vera also noted many benefits that engagement with the media could have. The stories that the media puts forward can help to give people a better understanding of cultures and the needs of First Nations peoples today. It was important that both indigenous and non-indigenous groups understood each other's needs before the relationship could develop. Vera put responsibility in the hands of both parties to have an ongoing conversation about each other's needs. She suggested that a major barrier is still the lack of direct communication between First Nations groups and media companies.

Rick Harp, mediaINDIGENA, INDIGENA Creative Group, Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation

Rick Harper is the co-founder and president of the INDIGENA Creative Group, and head of mediaINDIGENA.com; a multimedia platform dedicated to indigenous news and the arts. Rick has worked as a journalist for over 15 years including time at APTN. He is also a member of the Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation.

mediaINDIGENA often publishes critiques on issues of indigenous stories in the media. I was interested to talk to Rick about his experience in the media and why he wanted to venture into a more independent multimedia platform.

Issues discussed^{xiii}

Rick's experience developing mediaINDIGENA was an interesting counterpoint to other interviewees experience in large national organisations. His extensive experience in the media and in developing his own online platform gave him some great perspectives on my areas of research.

In developing mediaINDIGENA, Rick wanted to create an online presence for critical discussion of indigenous peoples affairs and how they are covered in the mainstream media. At the time Rick felt that there was a complete lack of this kind of discussion online and hoped to inspire other writers and developers to create their own organisations.

Although he considers this situation to have improved, he still cautioned against complacency in the media. In particular he noted that the curated nature of peoples interactions online can often lead to the feeling that the media's coverage of indigenous peoples has improved more than it really has.

Rick was careful to note the wide gap in resourcing between different First Nations. There were many larger bodies, including provincial governing bodies, who had resources to be able to develop communications and media policies and pay staff to deal directly with the media. Naturally, these groups reaped the benefits in the inclusion of their voices and stories in the news.

These groups also have greater power to exercise in the media industry, both as producers and consumers. Rick specifically discussed the tentative steps the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs took to boycotting one particular media outlet after their continued stereotyping and misrepresentation of indigenous peoples. This kind of boycott illustrates the power that can come with a well-coordinated media strategy.

Rick also discussed the McLean's article on the state of racism in Canada. This was an article that many interviewees highlighted as containing problematic views on indigenous people and the media's interaction with them. Rick saw the article as a cursory mainstream understanding of a series of problems with deep and complicated origins. While he thought it was beneficial for a mainstream paper like McLeans to recognize the problems with how indigenous people were represented, he also believed that the article did nothing to bring the underlying issues of colonialism to light.

However, Rick questioned if these occasional recognitions contributed to any ongoing changes. While some people had used the article as a springboard to open up the discussion about representations of indigenous people, Rick believed this rarely led to ongoing conversations that made any real changes.

Rick raised the critique that simply raising an issue in the mainstream media may not make any practical difference to tackling it. This was a divisive question among the people I interviewed. In general those currently working in or with the mainstream media had much greater confidence in its ability to affect positive change than those who weren't.

Rick also discussed the importance of who presents a story in terms of how it is framed and mediated. The benefits of a direct action movement like Idle No More was that it had little precedent and so was less easily packaged as part of the existing narrative on indigenous rights. It was also carefully presented by its organisers with direct communication to the public and through trusted media outlets. Although Rick felt that the movement was ultimately mediated through the media's lens, it did enjoy a period of largely unfettered communication that opened up dialogue on indigenous peoples rights.

Damon Johnston – Aboriginal Council of Winnipeg, Fort William First Nation & Diane Redsky - Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre, Shoal Lake 40 First Nation

Damon Johnston is the President of the Aboriginal Council of Winnipeg. It is an organisation with the aim to bring together and empower the indigenous people living in Winnipeg. Damon also serves on a number of other advisory boards including the Aboriginal Chamber of Commerce and the Mayor's Indigenous Advisory Circle. He is also a member of the Fort William First Nation, based in Thunder Bay.

Diane Redsky is the Executive Director of the Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre, which is an indigenous social services organisation based in Winnipeg. Diane previously led the Canadian Women's Foundation National Task Force on Sex Trafficking of Women and Girls in Canada and has presented to the United Nation Commission on the Status of Women. She was also awarded the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal for her work on addressing violence against Aboriginal women in Canada.

I spoke to both Diane and Damon together, at the Neechi Commons, an indigenous peoples owned and run grocery store, café and arts centre in Winnipeg.

Issues discussed^{xiv}

We began by discussing the current state of media coverage of First Nations stories.

Dianne expressed concerns that the underlying model of the media industry in Canada could not gel with indigenous values. She believed it was a work-in-progress that may not necessarily find its balance in the foreseeable future. The profit-focused structure of the media was particularly problematic in bringing indigenous voices to the public.

In terms of improving the situation, Dianne focused on hiring. She believed that the best way to address the problems was by having more indigenous people there to tell their stories and give a voice to others. This was a simple and effective solution favoured by every interviewee I spoke with. Many, including Diane and Damon, considered much of the positive change of the past decade to be the result of more indigenous people working in the media.

Both Diane and Damon also discussed the importance of their own organisations communications strategy and staff. Diane suggested that this meant that her organisation could decide how and when to engage with media if it fit its needs rather than being at the mercy of the news-cycle. In short, having a media strategy allowed them to be proactive in their own representation.

Niigaanwewidam James Sinclair - University of Manitoba, Peguis First Nation

Niigaanwewidam Sinclair is an assistant professor and department head of Native Studies at the University of Manitoba. He is also a regular commentator to

many media outlets including APTN, CBC and CTV. He is also the co-editor and editorial director of several indigenous peoples publications. Niigaan also took a role in the Idle No More movement in 2012 and 2013.

Issues discussed^{xv}

We began by discussing the current media coverage of First Nations peoples.

Niigaan expressed the same concern as Diane and Damon that the media's profit-focused model may not be able to give a fair and balance voice to indigenous peoples. He was understanding of these companies need to find a way to finance their work but worried that indigenous peoples were still rarely clients for media outlets. In a profit-focused model this naturally gave them less buying power to express their views.

Niigaan was critical of the representations of First Nations people that still persist in the mainstream media, even on indigenous peoples networks. In particular, Niigaan stressed that indigenous people were represented as problems that needed to be 'solved'. He put this down to the funding different networks receive, especially indigenous networks who rely on government funding. He was also careful to stress that this was not the fault of these networks but of the criteria they had to meet to receive funding.

Niigaan also addressed the problematic daily news-cycle. In particular he was concerned that journalists were not given proper education in indigenous peoples rights and histories, then expected to produce a story on them in a short amount of time. He believe that journalists should be expected to have a broad understanding of First Nations histories and a more specific understanding about the communities they would likely be working with. This should all be done before a journalist is expected to produce a story.

Given how many interviewees had addressed Idle No More, it was interesting to hear from Niigaan's perspective about the internal workings of the movement. Niigan found it difficult that despite Idle No More's boycott of several networks, the media went ahead and found people to comment anyway. This displays the results of the 'no comment' approach discussed earlier. Without a competent and appropriate voice the media will find something to fill the gaps.

In general, despite many bad experiences, Niigaan was in favor of utilizing the media. He believed that having dedicated media staff and a strategic plan helped Idle No More to put across a strong and coherent message. In particular, he pointed to having a small number of dedicated spokespeople as being key to the movements success. Niigan's point about the media's search for division and opposing viewpoints in stories involving indigenous people was particularly compelling.

Niigaan's advice on the effectiveness of education through the media was also very interesting. He noted that trying to educate the public on complex subjects like colonialism through the media is extremely difficult given the short time

frame for stories and the daily news cycle. Although he ultimately suggested probably best done outside the media, he did note that there were simple points that should be stressed regularly. When media consumers are regularly asked these simple questions, the hope is that they will continue to question for themselves.

Lorena Fontaine – University of Winnipeg, Sagkeeng First Nation, Opaskwyak Cree Nation

Lorena Fontaine is an assistant professor and doctoral candidate at the University of Winnipeg, researching indigenous language rights in Canada. She has previously taught at the First Nations University of Canada and at Queens University and has been working with indigenous political organisations for over 20 years.

Lorena has worked extensively on Residential School claims and is currently involved in a digital storytelling project on the history and legacy of Residential Schools.

Issues discussed^{xvi}

Lorena highlighted many of the important points that had been made regarding the importance of developing relationships. She stressed the importance that these relationships be personal rather than between companies or large groups. This reinforced the idea that growing the wider relationship between media and indigenous peoples needs to begin at a personal level.

This was underscored by Lorena's discussion about the effects a personal relationship can have on how a story gets told. She suggests that times when the media is not doing a good job is the most important time to have a say. Often having that say is best done when there is a personal relationship existing already. In this way media staff can be educated and informed on an individual and personal level as their relationships with indigenous groups develop.

Lorena also supported the idea that the media was of great importance to indigenous peoples. She noted the frequent inability of governments or NGO's to make changes despite admitting a problem. To bring those issues to the public and push for them to be dealt with, Lorena backed the media as an important tool. In her example on residential school claims she notes that the plan was never to fully settle, but to use the court process to help get raise the issues in the public eye with the aim of broader change.

Lorena also stressed the importance of funding. She noted how the creation of reserves in Canada has stripped away sovereignty and forces a filter on the things that First Nations can say. She noted that many First Nations are financially and politically dependent on the Federal government and that this is a major determinate in how the relationship with media progresses.

Toronto, Ontario



Miles Kenyon – Journalists for Human Rights

Miles Kenyon is the Program Manager for the Journalists for Human Rights' Indigenous Reporters Program. The program offers training, scholarship opportunities, and media internships to young indigenous students and graduates looking to work as reporters, producers and journalists. The program seeks to ensure that indigenous peoples are not simply reported on, but also have their own voices in the media. Another goal of the program is improving non-indigenous coverage of indigenous issues by training non-indigenous journalists.

Miles also previously worked as youth and elder council coordinator for Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation in Dawson City, Yukon.

Issues Discussed^{xvii}

Miles noted his experience of mistrust of media in some indigenous communities. He put this down to many factors but suggested that the historical misrepresentation of indigenous people was a major driver. He also noted the often-incompatible goals and methods of western story telling with the stories indigenous groups need told.

Miles also suggested that some indigenous groups view the historic failings of the media as part of the wider failure of colonial institutions to support them. In this context the failures of the media to provide adequate representation sit alongside successive governments failure to do the same.

Miles also noted the lack of cultural competency of many journalists as being a key factor in continued misrepresentation. He suggested that many journalists are acutely aware and want to contribute to doing a better job. However, many lack the basic understandings of the cultures they are covering. This inevitably creates friction and prevents the journalist from accurately and fairly representing people.

My discussion with Miles also supported what other interviewees had mentioned about the diverse ways indigenous groups may not engage with media. This runs the gamut from 'no comment' or not calling back, right through to the example in Thunder Bay that Miles cited. It is important to recognise the different causes and therefore different ways of addressing these concerns.

From the workshops JHR conducts, Miles suggested that a major concern of indigenous groups is that they are often unsure how to go about getting their news to media that they trust. This supports the idea that journalists developing personal working relationships with the indigenous groups they cover is extremely important. As always, trust needs to be built between if the relationship is to progress, especially when many groups have suffered long-standing misrepresentation.

Rebeka Tabobondung – Muskrat Magazine, Wasauksing First Nation

Rebeka Tabobondung is the founder and editor of MUSKRAT Magazine, an online platform dedicated to showcasing indigenous arts and literature. Rebeka has previously worked as a documentary filmmaker and as Research Coordinator of the Indigenous Knowledge Network for Infant, Child, and Family Health at St. Michael's Hospital in Toronto.

Issues Discussed^{xviii}

Like Rick Harp and mediaINDIGENA, Rebeka had created MUSKRAT Magazine because of a lack of indigenous voices in the media. She noted her inspiration from the work of grass-roots organisations who had made significant gains for their people.

While she saw the mainstream media as useful, she also put great importance in the role of small-scale local media who can more easily develop trusting working relationships with indigenous groups.

Rebeka also raised the issue of the covering the arts as a way to promote indigenous voices. As she noted, many indigenous groups choose to tell their stories not through the western storytelling frame that is easily digestible to mainstream media, but through their own arts and cultural practices. Accurately covering these practices, both modern and traditional, can help to promote indigenous voices and stories that may otherwise be marginalized.

Rebeka also underscored the importance of trust in the relationship between media and indigenous peoples. She suggests that MUSKRAT Magazine is able to fairly and accurately cover indigenous people's stories because they have worked hard to form a trusting relationship. This can be a slow and deliberate process that many large media outlets often don't take the time and care to achieve.

Overall, Rebeka suggested that the media was getting better at reporting on indigenous people's stories largely thanks to the hiring of more indigenous journalists. This supported what many other interviewees had said about the improvements that had been made when more indigenous people enter the newsroom.

Rebeka also echoed the idea that mainstream media was important to indigenous peoples. In particular she credited mainstream media's ability to reach a wide range of people as key to its importance. She suggested that education could take place through the media. Though it is often a slow and repetitive process it is still an extremely important one for impacting wider society.

*Wendake, Unceded Territories of the
Huron-Wendat Nation*



Huron-Wendat Nation

Introduction

I came to Wendake as my last stop of the trip to speak to the head of the Huron-Wendat First Nation about their media strategies. I also came to visit the township of Wendake which takes a unique approach to engagement with their non-indigenous neighbors.

The first purpose was disappointed as the Huron-Wendat Nation's current leader had pressing business arise and did not have enough time to meet with me on the day I was there. However a relationship has been established over email and I hope to continue this with questions regarding my research.

The second purpose, however, was a great success and immensely important to the trip as a whole.

The Huron-Wendat Nation

The Huron-Wendat Nation is a First Nations government of Wyandot peoples based in Wendake, located to the north-west of Quebec City.

The Wyandot peoples have a long and rich history in the areas now known as New York, Michigan, and Ohio in the United States and in Ontario and Quebec in Canada. In 1760 a group of Wyandot-Huron peoples living at Wendake signed a treaty with the British Crown guaranteeing them the free exercise of their religion, customs, and trading in their territories. This treaty was re-affirmed by the Supreme Court of Canada in 1990.

The modern reserve and township of Wendake is the administrative centre for the Huron-Wendat First Nation in Canada.

As an outsider, the level of connection and interaction between Wendake and Quebec City was impressive. While in other parts of Canada I had seen and been told of the disconnection between on-reserve communities and urban centers, this was not the case here. Wendake and the Huron-Wendat First Nation have developed extensive ties with local media and the non-indigenous public by way of their economic development opportunities including trade but perhaps most interestingly, through tourism.

Wendake is only a short drive from Quebec City and its advertising firmly establishes it as a major tourist destination for those living in the city. Indeed, many people I spoke to in Quebec City remembered visits to Wendake fondly, while others noted that it was a major source of tourism for the wider Quebec City area, drawing national and international visitors.

Aside from First Nations members housing, various social services, local businesses and the First Nations government, Wendake is also home to the

Huron-Wendat Museum, Tsawenhohi House, Onhoüa Chetek8e - Huron Traditional Site, Kabir Kouba Falls Interpretation Centre and the Hôtel-Musée Premières Nations. These sites are gathered together and promoted by Tourism Wendake, which contributes to the entire township being a huge tourist destination in the region.

During my day in Wendake I visited all these sites and spoke to many staff working there. The size, extent, detail, and richness of these sites, particularly the Onhoüa Chetek8e Traditional Site and the Huron-Wendat Museum was overwhelming.

These places presented huge amounts of detailed material on Huron-Wendat history and culture in unique and innovative ways. The museum included multimedia displays and interactive games along with the more traditional museum staples such as historic artefacts and tāonga.

The Onhoüa Chetek8e site holds regular cultural displays as well as tours of many recreated traditional buildings including a huge longhouse. The Museum also includes an outdoor trail with many traditional buildings (including its own longhouse), as well as interpretation sites about traditional activities of the people.

To gain a full understanding of the extent of these sites, a gallery is provided below.



Onhoüa Chetek8e Traditional Site, May 2015.



Onhoüa Chetek8e Traditional Site, May 2015.



Onhoüa Chetek8e Traditional Site, May 2015.



Onhoüa Chetek8e Traditional Site, May 2015.



Onhoüa Chetek8e Traditional Site, May 2015.



Onhoüa Chetek8e Traditional Site, May 2015.



Onhoüa Chetek8e Traditional Site, May 2015.



Onhoüa Chetek8e Traditional Site, May 2015.



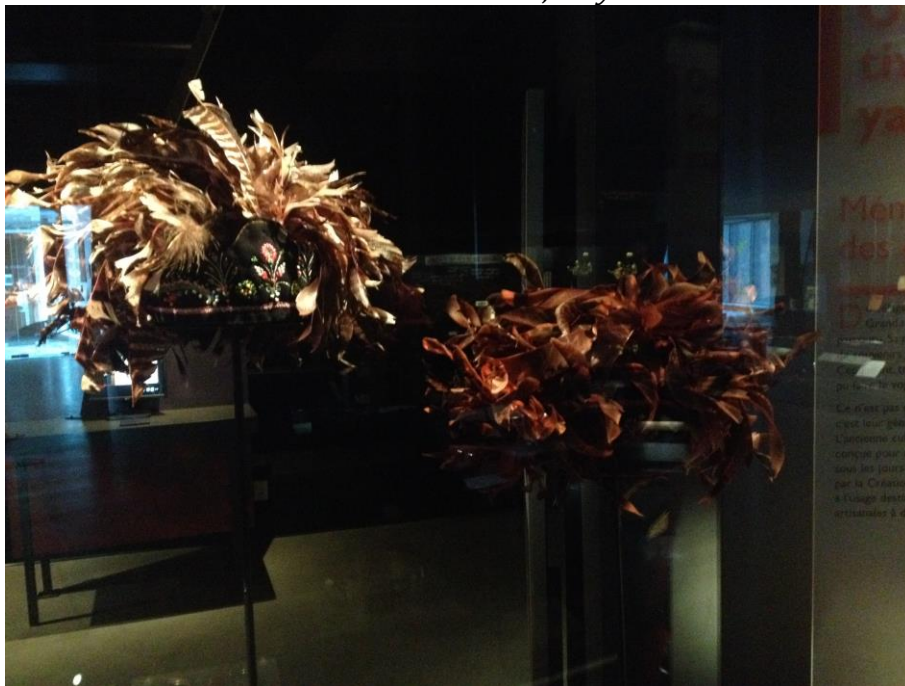
Onhoüa Chetek8e Traditional Site, May 2015.



Onhoüa Chetek8e Traditional Site, May 2015.



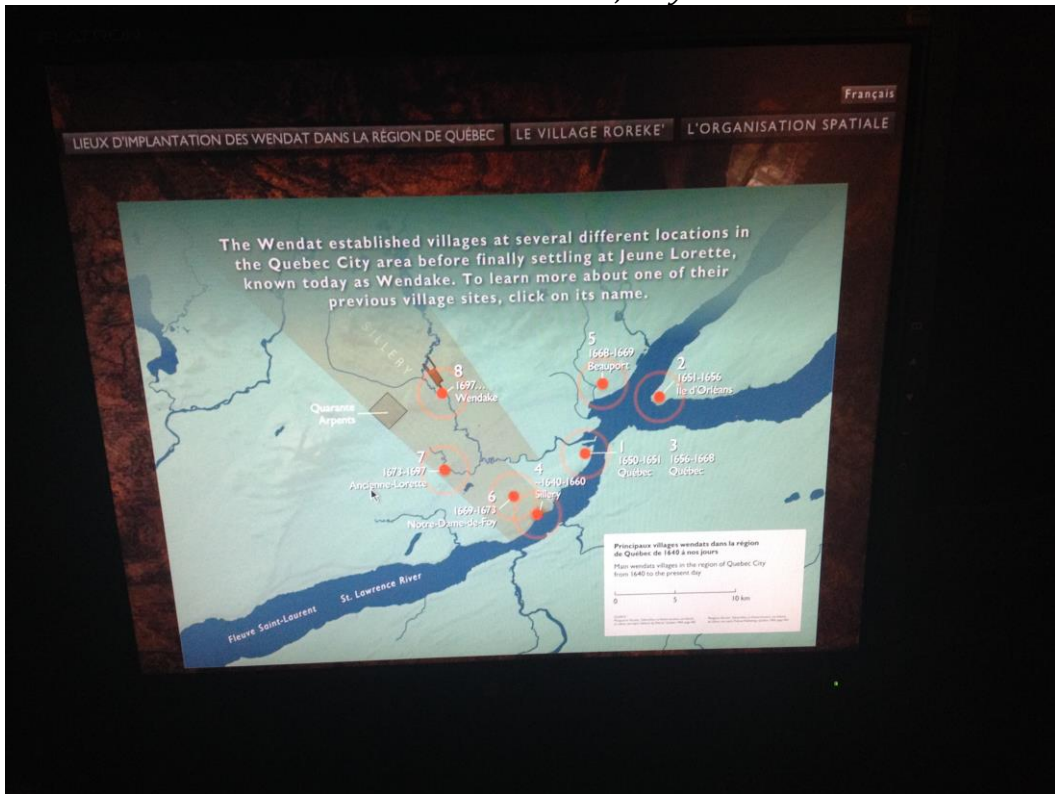
Huron-Wendat Museum, May 2015.



Huron-Wendat Museum, May 2015.



Huron-Wendat Museum, May 2015.



Huron-Wendat Museum, May 2015.



Onhoüa Chetek8e Traditional Site, May 2015.



Onhoüa Chetek8e Traditional Site, May 2015.



Onhoüa Chetek8e Traditional Site, May 2015.



Huron-Wendat Museum, May 2015.



Huron-Wendat Museum, May 2015.



Huron-Wendat Museum, May 2015.



Huron-Wendat Museum, May 2015.



Huron-Wendat Museum, May 2015.

Conclusions

My visit to Wendake and the places shown above impressed several things upon me.

Firstly, the immense value of controlling your own message. By the use of these sites, and their interpretation platforms, the Huron-Wendat First Nation is able to engage with visitors and with the wider public (both indigenous and non-indigenous) in a way that allows them full autonomy over their own representation.

In this way the Huron-Wendat First Nation addresses some of the problems of stereotyping and misrepresentations in the mainstream media by producing its own media for public consumption. Not only does this allow people to tell their own stories, but it also encourages the wider public to directly engage with the people.

However, many barriers exist to achieving this. There are many groups throughout Canada and New Zealand that simply do not have the resources to produce and maintain these centres.

Others do not want this level of direct exposure of their culture to the non-indigenous public and especially the media.

However, Wendake offers a perspective on the benefits of a well-resourced indigenous community with autonomy over their own representation.

The result of these centres and the work done to create them is that visitors and outsiders such as myself leave with a much greater understanding of this peoples history and culture.

Conclusions

From the interviews conducted, there were many major themes and conclusions that arose.

Although I anticipated a great diversity in the responses I received, the greatest surprise was the level of agreement across such a wide range of people.

The value of the mainstream media

Before undertaking this research, it was suggested to me that the relationship between media and indigenous peoples had been so eroded and the trust so fully lost that many indigenous groups were completely opposed to any forms of western media. Given the above examples that would be an easy and understandable conclusion to reach.

However, this research has found that to be untrue.

On the contrary, while many of the people I spoke with had experienced reluctance and apprehension in dealing with the media, all of them noted the overwhelming desire of most groups to have their voices heard across as many platforms as possible, especially in the mainstream.

While interviewees varied on how they thought the media could be utilised, every person I spoke to agreed that it had the ability to be an incredibly useful tool for indigenous peoples.

The most frequently discussed reason for this was simply the reach of the mainstream media. Whether it is a local newspaper or the nightly national news, the mainstream media still has an unparalleled ability to disseminate information.

Historically, this power has been used by colonisers against indigenous peoples. This process still continues today.

However, while acknowledging this, the people interviewed for this report also largely agreed that the media's power could be used to benefit indigenous peoples. This could be done in a number of ways.

The first of these is to educate and inform. As Nelson Bird suggested, the Canadian national curriculum is completely lacking in education on the traditions, cultures, and histories of Canada's indigenous peoples. It is also lacking in critical discussion of the colonialism that begat the country as it exists today, and the ways that continues to effect indigenous and non-indigenous Canadians.

This amplifies the power of the mainstream media. Without formal education on these subjects, many people are reliant on the media to inform them. However, without the proper context and cultural competence, without the inclusion of indigenous voices, and given the stereotyping discussed above, it is hardly surprising that many Canadians are misinformed and lacking a proper understanding of their nations history.

As Shannon Avison suggested, the media also has a special responsibility to new migrants arriving in Canada without an understanding of its first peoples.

The second major way the media's reach can be put to use is to put pressure on the government. This occurs in two ways.

Firstly, the media has the ability to put direct pressure on government. As Daniel Justice noted, the connection between the mainstream media and the government is extensive. Both rely on one another to function properly.

In this way the mainstream media's inclusion of indigenous people and indigenous voices can help to influence political discourse and decision-making. Indeed the lack of inclusion of indigenous perspectives in the media is a major factor in the government's history of ignoring their voices.

Secondly, as discussed above, the media has the ability to inform the public. As such they have a direct power to inform the decisions of voters in representative democracies like Canada and New Zealand. This is an enormous political power to wield and one which historically been used for the marginalization of indigenous peoples in both countries. However, the inclusion of more indigenous voices and the proper representation of their peoples can turn it into a potent tool for advancing their rights.

This was a fact recognized by all the interviewees I spoke with. Many of them had first-hand experience at the media's ability to bring about direct and rapid change. There are many stories discussed above of both the positive and negative effects of that power.

Many viewed it as the single greatest reason to engage with the media, despite its historic misuse. Vera Houle suggested that it is a power indigenous peoples must utilize if real and substantial change can take place.

Different levels of engagement

One of the wider purposes of this report was to investigate the outcomes that different levels of engagement with media have.

One of the most frequently negative cited outcomes of not engaging with the media was the information vacuum it creates.

Many people cited examples of stories which indigenous groups left 'no comment' on, only to have their interests spoken for by another party. Although

the leaving of no comment is a perfectly legitimate response to the issues outlined above, this report suggests that it often has the effect of further marginalizing indigenous voices.

Barriers to strategic engagement

This project found that far from being opposed to media engagement, many indigenous groups in Canada see it as an important tool that can be utilised. The major barrier to this is funding.

Funding is an issue for almost all indigenous communities. It is an issue born of the effects of colonisation and reinforced by the government to this day. It is also an issue that affects every facet of indigenous peoples own sovereign governance and particularly the organisations of First Nations governments themselves.

Funding is frequently stretched across multiple important areas including housing, social services, education, employment and transport. With these areas needing attention it is unsurprising that media strategies or communications staff can be hard to find. As Creeson Agecoutay put it, it is hard to focus on developing engagement with media when you have a housing crisis on your hands.

Furthermore, as Daniel Justice noted, funding for critical media can be a difficult to come by.

Many indigenous peoples and organisations still rely on government funding which can be highly restrictive in its grant criteria. This makes it difficult to create fair and honest content since it is likely to be critical in nature, given the historic relationship between the government and indigenous peoples.

Developing media plans

For those groups who do manage to allocate funding to media, the most effective strategy appears to be the development of a detailed and cohesive media plan.

As Cherish Francis suggested, the most important part of a plan for indigenous groups is the discussion around the goals of engaging with media.

These goals will be unique to each group and can help to direct and inform each interaction with the media leading to a unified approach and a consistent message. Employing a media or communications specialist, even on a short-term basis, can also be greatly effective.

A media strategy can also be used to define how each platform can be best utilised. As Dory Nason suggested, social media can be very effective for internal communication, direct communication with media and political staff, and as a way to critique stories in the mainstream media.

Relationship between media and indigenous peoples

One of the most prominent concepts discussed during this research was the nature the relationship between indigenous peoples.

This relationship has been stretched and eroded over time to the point where trust has been broken. In some cases it was never established.

The erosion of this relationship, or the barriers to establishing it in the first place, fit into three major categories; misrepresentation, stereotyping, and under-representation.

Every person I spoke with discussed numerous examples, both historical and modern, of how the media had misrepresented, stereotyped, and under-represented indigenous peoples. As an institution that is a key tool of both historic and modern colonisation, this is hardly surprising.

As Miles Kenyon suggested, the media is just one in a long list of institutions that have let indigenous peoples down.

Misrepresentation, stereotyping, and under-representation

In general, interviewees broke down these problems into two subcategories.

Firstly, stereotyping and misrepresentation. To students of media this will come as no surprise. The media has a long and storied history of stereotyping marginalized communities.

However, indigenous communities have suffered particularly damaging stereotypes perpetuated through the media that continue to persecute them at every turn. These are a continuing form of colonialism with very real and frequently dangerous consequences.

Of particular concern in the Canadian context are the stereotypes characterised by Duncan McCue as the '4D-W' rule. The four 'D's are drunkenness, death, drumming, and dancing. These are the four most pervasive stereotypes that indigenous people in Canada face and often the only representation they receive in the mainstream media.

The first two of these stereotypes reduce indigenous peoples to caricatures of helplessness and hopelessness who have brought their problems on themselves. The second two represent indigenous peoples as cultural novelties, bravely attempting to hold onto out-dated practices and traditions.

Based on this research I would also add the stereotype of corruption to this list. This stereotype depicts indigenous people, especially First Nations governments, as inevitably corrupt organisations prone to tax evasion, embezzlement and

misappropriation. It is one that interviewees discussed at length because of its frequency.

This also extends to a common media subtext of indigenous people as inherently dishonest and unethical. Unfortunately this is also a stereotype perpetuated by corners of the New Zealand news media.

The 'W' in this case refers to the developing stereotype of indigenous peoples as 'warriors'. While this is sometimes defended as a positive representation, its use is anything but.

This stereotype both *others* and *exoticises* indigenous peoples attempts to protect their sovereignty through protest and other direct action. It represents them as cultural curiosities, out of step with modern development, who valiantly but hopelessly defend cultures and traditions that ought to have died out.

Distressingly, this is also developing into a stereotype that represents indigenous peoples as dangerous threats to the 'peaceful' status quo. This latest development is particularly troubling for a number of reasons.

Indigenous peoples in Canada who lead protest movements over environmental degradation, historical treaty injustices or human rights violations (such as residential school cases) are shown as roadblocks to the progress of the nation.

As Niigaan Sinclair noted, a protest will more frequently be reported on because of its effects on traffic than because of the underlying issues it raises.

This was also the case in the media coverage of protests over the developments at *ćəsnaʔəm* I was shown at the Musqueam Cultural Centre.

This stereotype labels indigenous peoples as 'an enemy among us' or as dangerous rebels who are seeking to undo the social, political and economic cohesion of the nation.

This stereotype is also developing a concerning interaction with the modern rhetoric on terrorism.

As Creeson Agecutay noted, these kinds of representations are fueling political discourse that is increasingly labelling indigenous peoples as terrorists.

While this may sometimes be subtle, the passage of bill c-51 (now the Anti-Terrorism Act 2015) is an example of how indigenous people are having their civil and human rights eroded by being labelled domestic terrorists. This is a frightening development with effects that are only beginning to be felt.

The second major sub-category discussed was under-representation.

This occurs both in the number of indigenous people working in media companies and newsrooms, and in the frequency with which the media covers

indigenous peoples and includes their voices. Again, this will come as no surprise to many with existing experience in the media.

While improving, the hiring of indigenous people in media roles, especially senior ones, continues to be lag far behind their representation in the general population.

The same is true of the frequency with which media stories include indigenous voices and perspectives. The *Buried Voices* study discussed by Miles Kenyon showed this to be statically undeniable. Furthermore, in cases where indigenous voices are represented they will often be marginalized in the context of the wider story or outweighed by others under the guise of balanced reporting.

Improvements in the relationship

Despite the problems highlighted above, many interviewees saw the media's relationship with indigenous peoples in Canada as improving. Although the historical imbalance of power was still in place, positive changes were occurring.

One of the most frequently cited examples was the hiring of more indigenous staff into media roles.

Although progress was slow, most people saw substantial improvement to reporting with the hiring of more indigenous staff. Jillian Taylor noted how the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's recently established indigenous reporting team (of which she was a part) had a huge impact on its ability to fairly and accurately report on stories important to indigenous people.

These staff members bring cultural competency and unique perspectives to their roles and are acutely aware of the problems inherent in the relationship between media and indigenous peoples.

If the media is to be truly representative of the public it informs, then it must include more indigenous voices.

Another often cited reason for the improving relationship, was the impact of direct action and social movements.

Chief amongst these was the impact of Idle No More.

Almost all interviewees cited this movement as being a driving force in the improvement of non-indigenous Canadians' understandings of their struggles. The power of that information on government policy is discussed above.

In particular, people noted how Idle No More enacted a strategic and coordinated approach to media that was unique in its decentralized organisation and covered a wide range of issues. This approach had great success at combatting the common stereotypes levelled at indigenous peoples' protest movements.

Another important factor was the impact of indigenous media. The number of media organisations owned and run by indigenous people in Canada is immense, as is the diversity in their approach. These organisations range from local newspapers or radio broadcasters in the far north, through to national networks like APTN which comes standard with most basic cable subscriptions.

The impact of these indigenous organisations cannot be understated. They influence the mainstream both in the quality and competency of the work they produce and in the media professionals they develop. Many interviewees noted instances of media professionals developing their skills in indigenous owned media before going on to improve reporting in non-indigenous organisations.

These organisations also help to raise the level of critical discourse on issues of importance to indigenous peoples. Rebeka Tabobondung noted how stories that indigenous media breaks are increasingly covered in the mainstream. This helps to combat the 'othering' of indigenous voices by increasing the frequency and accuracy of reporting on stories of importance to indigenous peoples.

It also helps to combat the pervasive stereotype of indigenous peoples as passive media subjects by showing skilled producers and critical consumers, just like any other group.

Re-establishing the relationship

All the interviewees I spoke with noted that the most important barriers to re-establishing a relationship of trust between media and indigenous peoples lay at an individual level. They suggested that the best way to begin to mend the relationship more generally was for media staff to work at rebuilding a trusting relationship at an individual level.

The importance of trust to re-establishing this relationship should come as no surprise to journalists. It has long been a basic principal of good journalism, and also of good research, that a relationship of trust must exist for fair and accurate reporting to happen.

Moreover, journalists and other media staff are the representatives of the wider media's part in the larger ongoing relationship. Therefore each interaction must only proceed when trust has been earned, if the connections between media and indigenous groups are to be mended.

Building a relationship from the individual level also has the benefit, as many interviewees noted, of promoting learning on both sides.

People I spoke to with experience trying to get their messages to media suggested that many journalists and media staff might be perfectly ethical but lack the basic cultural and historical knowledge to do the job well.

As such, developing personal relationships may be one of the most effective tools in educating the wider media industry on cultural, traditional and historical issues.

Recommendations

Making recommendations in such a nuanced, interconnected, and complex field is an inherently fraught task. However, in line with the requirements of this report, I make some preliminary recommendations based on my research questions.

These recommendations are not intended to be exhaustive, but merely represent a selection of the most important conclusions from the information gathered.

It must be acknowledged that in addressing the problems discussed in this report, the responsibility falls on the media organisations themselves.

Recommendations for media organisations

1. Understand the issues and media's role within them

One of the major barriers to change is the basic lack of understanding in media organisations of the negative affect the media has had on indigenous peoples. This is a result of the wider cultural disregard for the suffering of indigenous peoples and the lack of education that goes with it.

If media organisations want to address these problems then it is recommended that they commit to a programme of cultural and historic education for their staff and management.

This programme should focus on the media's role in colonisation and the marginalization of indigenous peoples. Given the complex, overlapping issues, this programme should be in depth and ongoing.

2. Commit to addressing these problems at the highest policy level

Media organisations should amend company policy to reflect a commitment to addressing the problems media causes for indigenous peoples. This should be done at the highest policy level possible.

For these problems to be properly addressed, they must be recognized in the core framework and business model of each media organisation.

In Aotearoa, this is doubly as important given the importance of organisations to understand and abide by the partnership established in Te Tiriti O Waitangi.

3. Create a strategic plan

Once the commitment to addressing the problems has been made in policy, a strategic plan should be made to fulfil these obligations. This plan should clearly show how to translate the wider conceptual policy into everyday work.

All staff and personnel should understand how to conduct their work to meet the organisations goals and responsibilities.

4. Build relationships with indigenous peoples in your area

This report shows that one of the most significant barriers to addressing these problems is the lack of a relationship between media organisations and the indigenous peoples of their area. This is the result of colonisation and specifically the harm wrought on indigenous peoples by the media.

As such, media organisations need to reach out to the indigenous peoples of their area and seek to build constructive relationships. These initial conversations must progress slowly, and only with the full consent of each indigenous group. Media organisations need to understand the cultural and historical context of these interactions before proceeding.

This report describes several examples of how these relationships could be rebuilt.

5. Hire more indigenous staff

Finally, media organisations must hire more indigenous staff. This was a simple but extremely important point made by almost everyone interviewed for this report.

Indigenous staff bring their immense cultural and social knowledge with them and are a crucial part in rebuilding the relationship between media and indigenous peoples.

However, many interviewees also noted how important it is not to tokenize these staff. As such, each organisation needs to include these considerations in hiring and staffing policy, and in their ongoing education programs.

Recommendations for Māori rūpū, iwi and hapū trusts, and governing bodies

This project began with the question of whether there is value for indigenous people in engaging with the mainstream media.

The interviewees for this project almost unanimously answered that question in the affirmative.

As such, I make some suggestions for Māori rūpū, iwi and hapū trusts, and governing bodies on the question of engagement with the media.

If, as this report suggests, there is some value to engaging with the media, what should these organisations do?

1. Consider and discuss the value of media engagement

The primary recommendation here is for each organisation to strategically consider the question of media engagement, and to have open discussions on its benefits and detriments.

The media is a powerful tool that has been historically wielded against indigenous peoples. Yet, the information presented in this report also suggests that it can be a positive force for change.

It is recommended then, that each organisation devote time, funding and other resources to the consideration of their approach to the media.

This does not suggest that organisations and rūpū should necessarily engage with media. Rather, that the question of engagement with the media be approached strategically.

2. Consider the groups goals and aspirations

In making this decision, the most important factors to consider are the aspirations and goals of the group. This will help to determine whether the media can play a role in achieving those goals, or whether it is a barrier to them.

If engagement with media does not contribute to achieving these goals, then groups will still achieve better outcomes through having strategically considered the question.

Other important factors for consideration in developing a media policy are discussed in the *Conclusions* section of this report.

If the process results in the conclusion that engaging with the media is the best outcome then a consideration of different levels of engagement is recommended. This report suggests a variety of levels of engagement and some outcomes of each.

3. Create a strategic media policy

The creation of a single media policy document is highly recommended. A strategic media policy will help an organisation to achieve its defined goals in working with the media. The benefits of having a strategic approach to dealing with the media are outlined in the *Conclusions* section of this report.

A detailed policy will also help to guide members of the organisation in their dealings with the media. This will help the organisation to make strategic use of the media to achieve its aspirations.

4. Hire or train media staff

To implement a media policy, it is also recommended that organisations hire or train media or communications staff.

This report presents many examples of the importance of having dedicated staff and the positive benefits they can bring. In Aotearoa there are already many highly experienced Māori organisations and individuals working in this field.

Where possible, it is also suggested that organisations invest in training their own members in media and communications. This further builds the capacity of the organisation and of the organization's membership and staff.

5. Funding

This report suggests that one of the primary barriers to the hiring or training of media and communications staff is funding.

With many groups still reliant on fixed government funding, it can be difficult to direct resources to dedicated media staff. As many interviewees discussed, there are often more pressing concerns than media strategy.

This reality and its historic causes are important to acknowledge. In some cases, it may be impossible or impractical to hire media or communications staff.

In light of that, this report suggests some options for breaking the funding barrier:

- Training existing staff or members in media and communications
- Hiring a media or communications consultant on a short-term contract or part time basis.
- Using a combination of small amounts funding from other income streams to direct toward media strategy.
- Use of capability developments grants.
- Seeking pro-bono advice from whānaunga with media/communications experience.
- Seeking media and communications students as interns for specific projects.

While finding the resources to create a media policy and hire communications staff may be difficult, this report suggests that the benefits often far outweigh the costs.

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