Face-to-Faces Work:
Audience Response to First Nations Social Movement Videos

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1 Introduction

> *"Ideological leverage is always superior to violence ... The problems of Indians have always been ideological rather than social, political or economic...It would be fairly easy, with a sufficient number of articulate young Indians and well-organized community support, to greatly influence the thinking of the nation within a few years."*
>
> *Vine Deloria, Jr. <u>Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto</u>, (1969) pp. 256-257*

Historically, First Nations peoples have organized themselves and built communities and networks of survival and resistance. As underlined by Vine Deloria (1969) in the quote above, the path to self-determination will be forged using better ideas as weapons. Deloria suggests that it would be "fairly easy" for First Nations people to influence public opinion by promoting better ideas. However, changing public opinion is not easy. The general Canadian public holds ill-informed and entrenched opinions about First Nations - opinions reinforced within a media environment that systemically neglects First Nations issues.

Public opinion can change, but only if the ideas and messages are disseminated as part of a broad social movement for First Nations self-determination. In this paper we report on an exploratory study that begins to shed light on how people respond to new media about First Nations issues and develop some ideas about how new media can support the broader social movement for First Nations self-determination.

Calls to understand the impact of online communication on social movements have increased in recent years. Broadband networks and information and communication technologies (ICT) are used to share information and support social movement activities. Social media refers to web-based services which enable users to share content with each other. Protests such as the Arab Spring, Occupy, the Quebec student protests, and Idle No More, now feature coverage shared through these services which highlight and define the central tenants of the movement.

Interestingly however, while there has been considerable public interest in the role of social media in protest movements and social movements in general, virtually all of the commentary has

focused on the production and dissemination of these alternative media forms by social movement actors rather than the reception of these alternative messages by audiences.

There has been some research to date - much of it from our research team - documenting how First Nations peoples and communities in Canada are using broadband networks and ICT (for example, see: Gratton & O'Donnell, 2011; McMahon et al., 2011; O'Donnell et al., 2011; Whiteduck et al., 2012). Within this growing body of literature, our team has made several contributions about online videos and First Nations (Hancock & O'Donnell, 2009; Perley, 2009). To date however there has been little research on how new online applications can help support First Nations social movements and no research on the impact of videos about First Nations that are available online.

The current study begins this discussion by applying a critical analysis to the results of an exploratory study of the reception by the general public of online videos about First Nations. The methodology includes an empirical study of how people viewed and responded to two online videos about First Nations culture. Although both our study and analysis is very exploratory we believe it is an important contribution because of the lack of previous research on this topic.

2 Alternative media online, First Nations and managing impressions

Several authors, including Gail Valaskakis (1994), have highlighted that the portrayal of First Nations in the mainstream media in Canada reproduces stereotypes that do not reflect the realities and variety of Aboriginal peoples' lives and experiences. This misrepresentation moves the focus of public attention away from the material realities of Aboriginal peoples. Media, then, are important sites of struggle for different - and sometimes clashing - world views and the formation of public opinion.

In response, Aboriginal peoples have produced different types of alternative media for many decades, such as newspapers, radio, and television (Avison & Meadows, 2000; O'Donnell & Delgado, 1995). In their review of Aboriginal media in Australia and Canada, Avison & Meadows (2000) argue that an "Aboriginal public sphere" can exist that allows Aboriginal people to engage in discussion and debate on topics absent in mainstream media. An Aboriginal public sphere is a space where Aboriginal people can make meanings of and represent their own realities and experiences.

Our ongoing research has studied remote and rural First Nation communities and the First Nation organizations that support the use of broadband networks and ICT in innovative, ground-breaking, and creative ways (see, for example: Carpenter et al, 2012;; Milliken et al, 2009; McKelvey & O'Donnell, 2009; O'Donnell et al., 2010; O'Donnell et al., 2011; Perley, 2009; Walmark, 2010; Whiteduck, T., 2010; Whiteduck et al., 2012). In particular, First Nations are increasingly using broadband networks and ICT to share information and support social movement activities (Hancock and O'Donnell, 2009; O'Donnell et al., 2009; Perley, 2009).

Since internet use became widespread, journalists, researchers, and activists have been considering its radical and alternative potential. Since the mid-1990s researchers have been analyzing the internet as a potential site for alternative media and discourse, i.e. an alternative public sphere (McKelvey & O'Donnell, 2009). These alternative media have been linked to social movements.

Italian sociologist Alberto Melucci (1996:179) argues that the world media system "operates basically as the manufacturer of master codes at the world scale," with gatekeepers deciding the

language used, selecting and organising the information broadcast and published, making decisions about the popular culture market, controlling the languages of computers and other information and communications technologies, and generally organising the minds of people. Social movements, Melucci believes, have the power to reverse the symbolic order, through their alternative use of symbolic codes. Melucci highlights several ways that the process of producing, exchanging and disseminating messages on the internet could play an important role in maintaining a social movement. Alternative media production within social movements can support community, primary relations, and collective values, as well as its symbolic function to challenge the dominant codes.

Melucci's analysis suggests how to disrupt mainstream media messages. Another aspect to account for is how media has changed the way people manage the presentation of messages broadcast via media. Producing content to be shared through various mediums, like everyday interaction, is fundamentally performative. Before the widespread use of the internet, First Nations peoples were not able to escape the institutionalized framework of the portrayal of their cultures. With a more unfettered access to audiences via online media, we can begin to explore the nuances emerging as a result of these developments.

Meyrowitz (1985) applied Goffman's dramaturgical concepts (1959; 1967) and McLuhan's media theory (1964) to develop a theory of how media has changed how people present themselves in their everyday lives. For example, political careers can be furthered or undermined by mistakes made in a *front stage* situation, i.e. Nixon and Watergate. With online developments, we have seen many situations where a politician or other authority has misspoken and seen their words echo in the public sphere online.

Similarly, social media producers are also becoming savvier about the importance of presenting their messages effectively in all online formats, including videos. The effective management of the front stage performance - consciously performing for an audience - has become the primary concern when presenting identity online. As Meyrowitz (1985) notes, prior to electronic media, social situations previously were tied to physical places and established patterns of information flow. Evolutions in media restructure the relationship between physical place and social place by altering the ways in which we transmit and receive social information.

Meyrowitz argues that social movements and disruptions since the late 1950s may be due to adjustments in "behaviour, attitudes, and laws to match new social settings. Many of the traditional distinctions among groups, among peoples at various stages of socialization, among superiors and subordinates were based on patterns of information flow that existed in a print society. The new and "strange" behaviour of many individuals or classes of people may be the result of the steady merging of formerly distinct social environments" (1985: 308-309). ICT has provided one such avenue for First Nations to change their behaviours: instead of having limited access to audiences due to capital requirements, online tools now provide the potential to access audiences previously restricted, and at lower costs, and share materials more widely than before.

3 Sharing and viewing online videos

The proliferation of video sharing websites has been discussed as an aid to many social movements and advocacy groups. Broadly, these online videos are referred to as short videos shared on the internet that can be accessed by anyone with an internet connection and adequate bandwidth. The excitement generated when YouTube exploded onto the internet in 2006 was arguably due to the realization that, for the first time in history, the powerful medium of video was available to ordinary people through a simple user interface to broadcast to a potentially

global audience. Online videos could use this medium to share messages and perspectives alternative to mainstream, commercial fare.

In relation to First Nations issues, Perley (2009) has explored how online videos have been used to represent First Nations women. Perley's study provides insight into how these women use this technology to challenge mainstream media assumptions of their lives. On similar lines, Hancock and O'Donnell (2009) examined the potential for these new media tools to provide remote and rural First Nations communities an avenue to challenge mainstream representations of First Nation identity.

The promotion of civic engagement is a significant concern within the social media debate. Obar, Zube, and Lampe (2012) surveyed 169 people from 53 advocacy groups, and found that all groups felt that social media aided their goals. The authors were skeptical about the impact of social media on political and ideological change but suggest that future research could build upon this finding. The present study attempts to provide some evidence to nuance their findings.

In particular, our exploratory study focuses on how online videos about First Nations issues are viewed and received by the general public. Very little is known about how millions of ordinary people react to online videos. The popularity of YouTube and other video-sharing websites has highlighted the need for research but very little has been published about users of these video sites in the communications literature (Molyneaux et al., 2012). The information in online videos is much richer than other types of online information, such as text and graphical information. Previous research on users' reactions to text, graphics, static images or other types of online content does not necessarily apply to videos.

Viewing user-generated online video is similar in some ways to viewing television which has been studied by audience research, an important field in media and communications studies. One of the most influential in this field is Stuart Hall, whose theory of "encoding and decoding" of television discourse remains one of the most referenced works in the field (Hall, 1999). Hall's central argument is that although creators of a visual image may have a message in mind when they create or "encode" it for viewers, it does not necessarily follow that the viewers will "decode" the message the way it was intended. Viewers actively construct meanings rather than passively receive them. Both encoding and decoding are socially constructed activities, and Hall's theory stresses that visual messages will be constructed differently in different social and cultural contexts.

Researcher David Morley used Hall's theory in a seminal study of the audience of Nationwide, a popular British news and current affairs television program on the BBC. Morley (1980) found that the interpretation of the television program varied systematically in relation to the socio-cultural background and group identity of the viewers. Since the Nationwide study, numerous other audience researchers have explored how different social groups respond differently to broadcast visual images. We believe that the concept of encoding and decoding can help us to understand how online videos about and by First Nations are viewed and received in society. While the producers of an online video may intend a specific ideological decoding, the reception by various audiences is subject to cultural interpretation. As such, decoding by an audience is also an ideological act.

4 Study methodology

To explore these issues we analyzed data from an earlier, larger study conducted in Fredericton in 2009 of how people are using video communications in their everyday lives (Milliken et al.,

2012; Molyneaux et al, 2012). Part of that larger study involved showing short videos about First Nations languages to a wide range of people and asking about their reactions to the videos. We also wanted to know their general knowledge level and interest in First Nations languages before viewing the videos, and to find out if the experience of viewing the videos had any impact on them. The participants responses to the First Nations videos discussed in this paper had not been previously analyzed.

This current analysis incorporates dramaturgical, media, and social movement elements to take into account how the presentation of self and the reception of such a performance changes in relation to the medium through which it is presented as well as who is in primary control of the sending of the message. We analyzed participants' perspectives on the effectiveness of the videos and how online videos generally can be made more effective or useful for people with an interest in First Nations languages. This would help inform what aspects of both presentation and the audience influence the reception of these videos. The videos were presented in random order and the two First Nation videos were interspersed with four unrelated videos to reduce the possibility that all participants would be comparing one video to a previous one in the study.

The methodology for the larger 2009 study involved recruiting 62 participants living in the Fredericton region, all of whom had to have previously viewed online videos to be eligible to participate. They were recruited through posters around the city and on the university campus, an article in the local newspaper, a university e-newsletter and networks of acquaintance. The research protocols were reviewed and approved by the research ethics board of the researchers' home institution.

Participants were invited to take part in two phases of the study: a survey with multimedia content (62 participants) that included watching six randomly ordered short videos on three themes, one of which was First Nations languages; and a structured interview (30 of the survey participants) that included questions about the videos they had just watched.

The two videos about First Nations languages were produced as part of a different research project (www.videocom.ca) and were available online at the time of the study. One video was made by a graduate student with no video production training and the second video was made by a professional multimedia producer working with the research team.

5 Study participants and their responses to the videos about First Nations

5.1 Profile of participants

Researchers achieved their goal of recruiting a broad socio-demographic spectrum of Fredericton adults in the study. The 62 participants were 50% female and 50% male. The age ranges were 43% aged 18-34, 31% aged 35-54, and 26% aged 55 plus. The participants in the study had a higher-than-average level of formal education.

Before viewing any videos, the study participants completed a survey including questions about their levels of interest in and knowledge about the three different themes on which the videos focused, including First Nations languages. They responded to several statements, scored on 5-point Likert scales with end points *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree.* The analysis found that most participants (74%) reported they were interested in First Nations issues. Less than half (40%) considered themselves knowledgeable about Native languages as an issue for First Nations, and less than a third (29%) had strong opinions about Native languages.

5.2 Participants' responses to user-generated video interview with Mi'qmaw Elder

One of the six online videos viewed by the study participants was a user-generated video (i.e. not professionally produced) of an interview with a Mi'qmaw Elder from Nova Scotia. The video comprised highlights of an interview conducted by a graduate student. In the video, the student and the Elder are seated at a table in a room in front of a glass window looking into another room in which people are busily walking back and forth. The sound quality is not great but both the interviewer and interviewee's voices are audible. The student is dressed in dark clothes and the Elder is wearing a white shirt and a patterned vest; a large cross hangs around her neck. There is no significant post-production involved in the video. It is simply a recording which has been cut to highlight key aspects of the interviews. The video begins with the student asking for clarification on something that the Elder said in a previous discussion, that technology can potentially both support and erode First Nations languages. The Elder responds:

> *"... using technology to preserve the language, there's a positive in that, because you can record that and preserve it in packages and you know it's always there, it's not lost until such time as it deteriorates into nothingness which I hope never happens… I think at the same time I want to point my finger at technology and say 'hey you, because of you I am losing my language.' I think technology, the way it is today, you've got television and it's all in English. You turn on your computer and everything in the computer is in the English language and if you try to put in a few things in the Mi'kmaq language, it won't go anywhere, so it's of no use. So if I want to use the computer I have to use the English language, if I watch television, it's all in the English language, if I go to my school it's all in the English language. But I think basically, technology is not helping me to preserve my language and promote my language. It's, as a matter of fact, it is hindering my language."*

Participants were asked to report on their reactions to the video responding to several questions scored on 5-point Likert scales with end points *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*. While approximately two-thirds of the participants (62%) thought the video was interesting, less than half agreed that they felt a sense of connection to the person in the video (46%), or that the video influenced their opinion (40%) or that they learned something from the video (40%), and less than a third (32%) would recommend the videos to others.

The interview responses demonstrate the wide range of reactions by participants to the video. The four responses below from different interviews illustrate the range of reactions to the Elder:

> *"She had her opinion on the language being eroded away by English but she didn't really back it up with any real information. It was just almost theoretical." (Male age 25 to 34)*

> *"The first one was a woman talking to someone about the sort of double-edged sword of technology for preserving the language. I really like that one. She was an older person and she was the one talking… so just the way she spoke was calm and it was very serious. It really came (across) as a serious issue… she presented both cases really well. It really intrigued me. It made me think about that." (Male age 25 to 34).*

> *"The interviewee was promoting a point of view that I probably just don't relate to at all. Essentially, she was saying this is how the technology should work or this is what the impact of the technology should be… I mean, language exists to serve a purpose. You*

change the culture, the purpose is gone, the language is… So you feel sorry for the people whose culture has gone on, but too bad." (Male age 55-64).

"I hadn't really thought about that perspective before, where really most technologies are based in the English language and so … if they're advancing learning through technology in the schools, then they're eroding their own language. So anyway, I thought that was an interesting perspective that I hadn't really considered." (Female age 35-44).

The video had more impact on participants who were already interested in First Nations issues. Participants who, before watching the video, reported having strong opinions about Native languages were also likely to report a sense of connection to the person in the video (r=.27, p<.05). For example, a 69-year-old man who strongly agreed that he had strong opinions about First Nations languages also strongly agreed that he had sense of connection to the person in the video. His comment on the video was: *"The video clearly showed the problem affecting minority language groups. Preservation is important."* A 40-year-old woman who somewhat agreed that she had strong opinions about First Nations languages also somewhat agreed that she had a sense of connection to the person in the video. Her comment on the video was:

"I thought it was interesting that the sister spoke of herself and the influence on her, not the younger generation nor her peers – she was very specifically speaking of technology and its role in her life. She also saw potential but didn't seem to see how or if that potential was being explored. I never thought about how everything would be in English. I think of the French/English debate but not the First Nations vs English."

In a similar way, participants who, before watching the video, reported they were interested in First Nations issues were likely to report that the video had influenced their opinion (r=.37, p<.01) and to report that they would recommend the video to others (r=.25, p<.05). For example, a 39-year-old woman who somewhat agreed she was interested in First Nations issues also strongly agreed that the video had influenced her opinion and somewhat agreed that she would recommend the video to others. Her comment on the video was: *"Background noises were distracting in the video, but the interview style was interesting to watch and the topic was interesting."* In another example, a 41-year old man who somewhat agreed he was interested in First Nations issues also somewhat agreed that the video influenced his opinion about the topic and strongly agreed that he would recommend this video to others. His comment was:

"The subject matter of the video was compelling to me, and [the Elder] is a great interview subject. Much more could have been done with camera angle and interview setting to highlight [the elder] to focus more attention on what she has to say."

5.3 Participant responses to professionally-produced video about using technology to support Oji-Cree language

The second video viewed by participants - "Sharing Native Language Resources by Videoconferencing in Remote Communities" - was produced by a professional multimedia producer. The video summarizes an event that took place in a remote First Nation in Northwestern Ontario. The event was a workshop that used multi-site videoconference for a discussion among teachers in several First Nations communities and staff of an Oji-Cree language resource centre in Sioux Lookout. The discussion was about resources for Oji-Cree language teachers in First Nations schools. The video includes images of the event, teachers and young pupils in a classroom learning Oji-Cree, an interview with a language teacher and advocate, and a voice-over narration telling the story of the event. The sound quality is good, much better than the

previous user-generated video, and the visual quality of the video and the video overall demonstrate much higher production values. The narrator or the person interviewed speak throughout the short video. Here is a sample of the narration:

> *"Language is the core of our culture. Our language enables us to express who we are as a people. Our language is a vehicle for passing on our culture to our children.* [Cut to interview] *'We are losing our language and we need to research and be able to sit down with the old people and say 'how do we say this," and "why do we say that." And "where did it come from." And be able to document and record what the old people have to say about that."*

Participants responded much more positively to this video than to the previous one discussed. Most participants (90%) thought the Oji-Cree video was interesting (62% for the Elder video), most (66%) agreed that they felt a sense of connection to the person in the video (46% for the Elder video), most (71%) said the video influenced their opinion (40% for the Elder video), most (89%) said they learned something from the video (40% for the Elder video), and most (85%) would recommend the videos to others (32% for the Elder video).

Similar to the Elder video, there was a wide range of responses by participants to the Oji Cree video, although as noted the responses were overwhelmingly positive.

Also similar to the reactions to the Elder video, the participants responded more positively to the Oji-Cree video were those who were previously interested in First Nations issues. First, participants who, before watching the video, reported they were knowledgeable about Native languages as an issue for First Nations people were, after watching the video, likely to report a strong sense of connection to the person in the Oji-Cree video ($r=42$, $p<.01$). For example, 40-year old woman age who strongly agreed that she was knowledgeable about Native languages as an issue for First Nations people also somewhat agreed that she felt a sense of connection to the person/people in the video. In her comment, she said that: *"Images of Aboriginal people make them relatable – esp. the range of ages from the elderly woman to the children singing at the end."*

Again, participants who, before watching the video, reported they were interested in First Nations issues were, after watching the video, likely to report the video was interesting ($r=.37$, $p<.01$) and to report that they had a sense of connection with the person in the video ($r=.27$, $p<.05$) and to report that the video had influenced their opinion ($r=.26$, $p<.05$) and to report that they would recommend the video to others ($r=.31$, $p<.05$). For example, an woman age 54 who strongly agreed that she is interested in First Nations issues also strongly agreed that she thought the video was interesting and somewhat agreed that she felt a sense of connection to the persons appearing in the video, that the video had influenced her opinion and that she would recommend the video to others wanting to learn more about the topic. In her comment she said: *"The content of the video gave a snapshot of the issues of preserving the language. It certainly provides opportunity to expand on what can be done. I am aware of the efforts of the aboriginal community in preserving their language."* A 29-year-old man who strongly agreed that he was interested in First Nations issues also strongly agreed that he thought the video was interesting and that he would recommend the video to others, and somewhat agreed that he felt a sense of connection to the people appearing in the video. In his comments he said: *"Now I want to learn more about the writing system used for aboriginal languages in Canada."*

5.4 Accessibility and effectiveness: the difficulty in creating awareness

In the interviews, participants were asked for their ideas abut using these videos to create awareness. Many of these participants were already interested in First Nations issues, and came to the videos as interested observers. But one theme many mentioned concerned raising awareness through video alone. For instance, several participants commented on the limits of these videos:

> *"I think creating awareness is always good, but… it's the delivery of the video is the issue more than the content, I think. Well, the content's important but … I think in-person-type meetings would be more effective where people that would show up would be interested in talking about these issues. Whereas a video… it's hard to create awareness through a video, I think."*

> *"If the video just exists somewhere, that's one thing, but if someone is brought to the attention that the video is there, that link is put into some other form of marketing or whatever, so that people actually get to the video, then… you know, I wouldn't necessarily go out and do an internet search for language issues for Native culture. So I wouldn't necessarily go looking for that. But if it was part of some other marketing strategy or whatever, then I think that's an effective way of spreading that message."*

For these people who were already interested in First Nations issues, presence online is not enough. This is perhaps not surprising, as the plethora of information on the internet is quite daunting to sift through. While it is important to provide the videos online, it still remains important to bring attention to these resources so they can be tools for creating public awareness.

6 Discussion

The study discussed in this paper is exploratory - as mentioned earlier the authors are unaware of any previous research on audience responses to online videos about First Nations. Although we also consider our findings exploratory in nature, we do believe that they contribute a starting point for further research and reflection. We will make four observations from the study findings.

First, it is clear that online videos about First Nations issues do stimulate, among some members of the general population, responses that can be understood as positive in the context of the overall research. Some people did learn something from the videos, had their opinion influenced and would recommend the videos to others. In the case of the Oji-Cree video, most people who viewed it said they learned something, that it influenced their opinion and that they would recommend the video to others. This finding suggests that outside of the study context, some people who view other online videos about First Nations will also have positive responses.

The Oji-Cree video was viewed more positively. Our second observation is that it is possible that professionally-made videos about First Nations issues will be viewed more positively than user-generated videos. This finding about viewer preferences for professionally-made videos in our study does suggest that the overall quality of the video does have a bearing on the impact the video will have. Obviously, producing a video in a professional context does require more resources than producing a video on ones' own and therefore those with limited resources will be less in a position to produce videos that have a strong impact.

Our third observation is that in our study, people who were already interested in First Nations issues were more likely to be interested in online videos about First Nations. What is not clear is the extent to which videos about First Nations would raise awareness among people who do not

care about the First Nations before viewing the videos. Online video as a medium does provide First Nations communities and groups an avenue with which to publish their work and reach those who are allies.

Our last, related, observation is the obvious point raised by a number of study participants: an online video, however interesting and informative, will only be effective if people actually watch it. Understanding how exactly to draw attention to a particular video or series of videos about First Nations remains an ongoing challenge for anyone who wants to influence people via this medium. To reach people unaware of the issues, online videos are likely best suited as augments to a broader awareness campaign being pushed into the public discourse. The other solution would be for a video to go viral and gain recognition by being spread.

We can make several comments from the study experience related to our earlier discussion about impression management. Meyrowitz (1985) suggested that social situations prior to electronic media were tied to physical places and established patterns of information flow, and that evolutions in media restructure the relationship between physical place and social place. Our study nuances this suggestion - in many cases these videos are still subject to distinct patterns of informational flow as well as methods of "decoding" messages.

The videos in our study were produced by First Nation community members or people working in close association with the communities - an important step towards producing more First Nations oriented content and a First Nations public sphere. Yet there was a distinct difference between the reception and decoding (Hall, 1999) of the Oji-Cree video and the Mi'qmaw Elder video. Performance wise, both videos carried a discussion on the issues of language, but differed in the perceived "professionalism" of the presentation. While one was a recording of an interview, the other one was, arguably, structured more like a news story. This seemed to have a dramatic effect on how both videos were decoded by the participants: while one raised the issue regarding the hegemony enjoyed by the English language even when attempting to preserve Native languages, the "encoding" of the interview affected how "the connection" to the participants was made, participants who, upon admission, was already interested in First Nations issues. In contrast, the video which effectively summarized the events of a videoconference on preserving language evoked a more positive response from the participants.

While Meyrowitz might have been correct to note that emergent electronic media changed the relationship between physical place and social place, the Aboriginal public sphere remains a place within which only those who are interested in the issues will engage with them. Theoretically, the aboriginal public sphere can be global now; but that sphere can only be global when coupled by understanding of the issue, which, given our study, is likely not going to be solved solely by just putting videos online, but through a concerted effort to build understanding.

A point we would like to touch on is the role of ideology and its influence on the participants. As shown above, we found a significant difference in how respondents reacted to the two videos, with more favoring the Oji-Cree video over the Mi'qmaw Elder interview. We suggested the professionalism of the Oji-Cree video may have been one reason for this. Further, we argue this may also be due to the Elder video being more ideologically dense than the Oji-Cree video. The Elder's responses reflected the colonial history surrounding recent Mi'qmaw history, which, we suggest, may have contributed to alienating some participants from the video. The video is critical of the role of English language technologies in preserving First Nations languages, presented to an audience of primarily white English-speaking Canadians.

The Oji-Cree video offered a less ideological and more policy directed discussion regarding the workshop: a videoconference as a potential solution to the problem of Native language revitalization. We suggest that the videoconference as solution to the problem appealed to the participants because of its lack of critical content. Critical content, even in this context, may be difficult to accept even for some sympathizers of First Nations. This analysis leads to our conclusion.

7 Conclusion: Protest, online video, "connection" and the Idle No More movement

Our study explored participant reactions to and connections with several videos about First Nations language. We found that people who were already committed to First Nations issues responded much more positively to the videos than those who previously had no interest in the issues. Further, the presentation format of the videos (unedited vs professionally-produced) played a significant role in determining which videos would be recommended by the participants.

We can make several conclusions. First, online video may be a useful method for reaching already informed and committed people and less useful for informing people unfamiliar with the issues. Second, presentation of the videos is a factor even for people interested in First Nations issues - an unedited video clip was less likely to be recommended than a professionally produced video. We argue that this different is due to the ideological and cultural differences between the videos and the participants - such differences can cause a disjuncture between sympathetic and non-sympathetic audiences, as well as within sympathetic audiences.

An aspect of this research that we would like to see exported concerns the relationship between media and social movements. It is important to understand how various forms of new media are working to generate both an alternative public sphere and awareness of counter discourses among the Canadian public. Protests such as the Arab Spring, Occupy, the Quebec Student protests, and more, now feature alternative media coverage which highlight, for example, the indignant treatment the documenter or others often receive during these events. These alternative media accounts also serve as points of access to the protests for many who are not direct participants in the events.

We want to apply our analysis to the larger social movement of First Nations self-determination - i.e. the Idle No More campaign and the use and reception of online videos about the campaign on the internet. The grassroots Idle No More campaign, led by First Nations people, was a response to the need to protect lands and resources and treaty rights threatened by new policies imposed by the federal government. The campaign appeared in late 2012 and was headline news in the mainstream media until early 2013. During that period, numerous videos sympathetic to the campaign were produced and disseminated, largely on Facebook, Twitter, and other social media. For example, during the 'Ottawapiskat' aspect of the Idle No More protest, Twitter became the more immediate means of spreading the message, while Facebook was a slower, more reflective means of discussing information regarding the movement.

As discussed, our study suggests that prior public awareness is key to using online videos effectively. Studies which explore the use of the internet to help spread the message of Idle No More could start by looking at where most people gained awareness of the movement. Was it via the mainstream media? Was it through contacts through a person's social network? What image or message of the campaign made a lasting impact on the populace? Were those lasting messages from mainstream coverage or the alternative coverage via First Nations alternative media?

Our critical analysis offers a perspective on how people *connect* to videos: presentation of the content as well as the ideology of the video plays a role in whether participants would recommend the video to others. Videos critical of the accepted, mainstream, discourse may be appreciated by sympathetic audiences but less so by audiences uninterested in having their established perspectives challenged. The Idle No More campaign has been fundamentally a political and ideological challenge to the government of Canada. Further research into reaction to Idle No More videos, employing content analysis of comments of videos on YouTube, might provide some illustration as to how people who comment on videos *connect* with them via comments on ideology and politics.

As noted above, Melucci (1996) suggests that social movements have the power to interrupt the symbolic order enjoyed by the mainstream media (i.e. CBC, The Globe and Mail, etc.). He also suggests that alternative media produced can support such social movements by challenging the symbolic order through the production and distribution of works that support community and collective values. Applying our preliminary results to the work done by activists during Idle No More's dominant coverage in early 2013 would suggest a few tentative conclusions.

There appears to be a connection between dominant media coverage of a topic and the production of alternative media such as online video to counter these topics. During the time when the Idle No More campaign was being covered in the mainstream media, alternative media about the campaign proliferated. When the dominant media groups stop commenting on the topic, the alternative media stopped shortly afterward. While the resistance never ceased, and the alternative media produced within the campaign may continue to help keep it alive, it is important to note that the dominant media still holds much sway over shaping the national discourse on a topic, despite the best efforts of alternative media.

This leads to our next tentative observation. While the work done by the Idle No More activists was important, the connection to an audience outside their ideological paradigm may have remained stagnant. We speculate that the Idle No More movement faces a similar challenge than that suggested by the current study - that groups who already have an interest in the topic will pay attention, but there are significant challenges to changing the minds of those who are not already invested in the topic.

Future studies could also employ a discourse analysis of the Idle No More campaign, taking into account some of the discussion points raised in this study. A comprehensive discourse analysis, analysing the genealogy of the Idle No More movement and the discursive environment in which it is situated, would contribute substantially to how the movement has been handled by both the First Nations and the Canadian (and global) media. Our study offers some hints as to how messages are interpreted when a group is made to watch them, as well as the importance of the presentation of those messages regarding how the videos will be interpreted by audiences.

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