MPC MAJOR RESEARCH PAPER

Upsettling Canada in 140 Characters:
Race Relations in the Twittersphere

CAROLINE CARTER

Joanne DiNova

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Abstract

This paper is a qualitative content analysis of public tweets made during the Indigenous social movement, *Idle No More,* containing the #upsettler and #upsettlers hashtags. Using settler colonial theory coupled with previous literature on Twitter during social movements as a guiding framework, this study identifies how settler colonial relations were being constructed on Twitter and how functions of the social networking tool such as the hashtag impacted this process. By examining and analyzing the content of 278 tweets, this study illustrates that Twitter is a site where conversations about race relations in Canada are taking place and that the use of the hashtag function plays a vital role in expanding the reach of this online discussion and creating a sense of solidarity or community among users.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Introduction

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The *Idle No More* movement emerged at the end of 2012, igniting a surge

of First Nations social activism that initially started on social media channels and

then moved to the street in the form of protests, blockades, and flash mobs. The

movement stemmed from a reaction to the Conservative Government's, Bill C-45,

which contained proposed legislation seen by Indigenous communities across

Canada to violate treaty rights. This legislation included plans to open up

previously protected Canadian waterways to industry and development and an

overall failure to consult with First Nations regarding the use of their land (as

required by their treaties. Twitter, in particular, became one site where discontent

over these treaty violations was vocalized. As a result, numerous hashtags

emerged intended to promote certain ideas around settler colonial relations in

Canada and to mobilize solidarity among movement supporters. Much like the

Idle No More blockades taking place on highways, Twitter became a site where

language was used in creative ways in an attempt to block or fight back against

the stereotyping of First Nations people. It also became a site where power

relations within Canadian settler colonial society were being challenged by a

marginalized group of people who had discovered a way to share their voice.

In addition to the #idlenomore hashtag, which became the namesake of

the movement, two other heavily used hashtags emerged: #ottawapiskat and

#upsettler. The #ottawapiskat hashtag, which is a portmanteau of Attawapiskat

and Ottawa, was created to critique Canada's government with the same language of superiority that supporters of *Idle No More* claimed was used to discuss First Nations communities. The hashtag was frequently used in tweets that criticized Ottawa as if it were a First Nations village and attacked Stephen Harper's actions as if he were a corrupt First Nations Chief. Also heavily in use was the #upsettler hashtag: a play on the words "upset" and "settler" which was intended to expose and critique settlers (or non-Indigenous residents of Canada) who expressed anger or denial at being implicated in the colonial process.

As the movement gained momentum online and offline, the explosive use of these hashtags was documented and commented on by mainstream media. On December 31st, *The Globe and Mail* published an article analyzing the use of the #idlenomore hashtag from December 23rd to 29th. The article revealed that the hashtag had been mentioned on Twitter over 144,000 times during the six days ("The hashtag uprising", 2012). On January 21st, Tim Querengesser (2013) of *The Huffington Post* published an article outlining the key memes and hashtags of the *Idle No More* movement, including #ottawapiskat and #upsettler, claiming that *Idle No More* was "entering the subversive territory that the Occupy Movement, through the popular meme of the #99%, successfully employed to raise awareness about a larger message of inequality" (para. 2).

Figure 1.0 and 2.0 are graphs taken from the website Topsy, an online software program that archives the amount a hashtag has been used on a daily basis. Each graph shows the extent to which a hashtag was used each day over

a period of several months. Figure 1.0 looks at #idlenomore and is included as a reference to demonstrate the extent Twitter was being used during this social movement and the popularity of this hashtag. Figure 2.0 maps the use of both the #upsettler hashtag and the plural version #upsettlers. This study will examine the use of the #upsettler and the pluralized #upsettlers hashtags. Figure 2.0 maps their use for the period of my analysis: January 1st to March 31st, 2013.
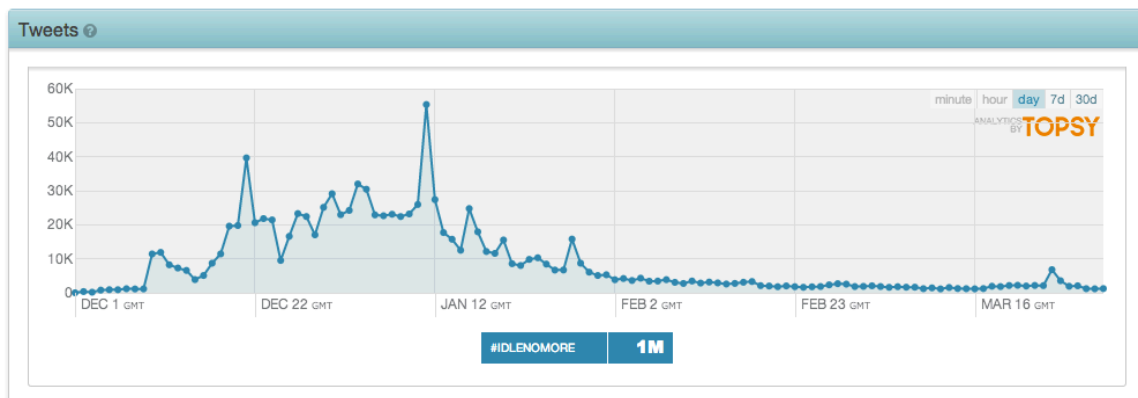

Figure 1. Tweets containing #idlenomore from Dec 1st, 2012 – March 31st, 2013
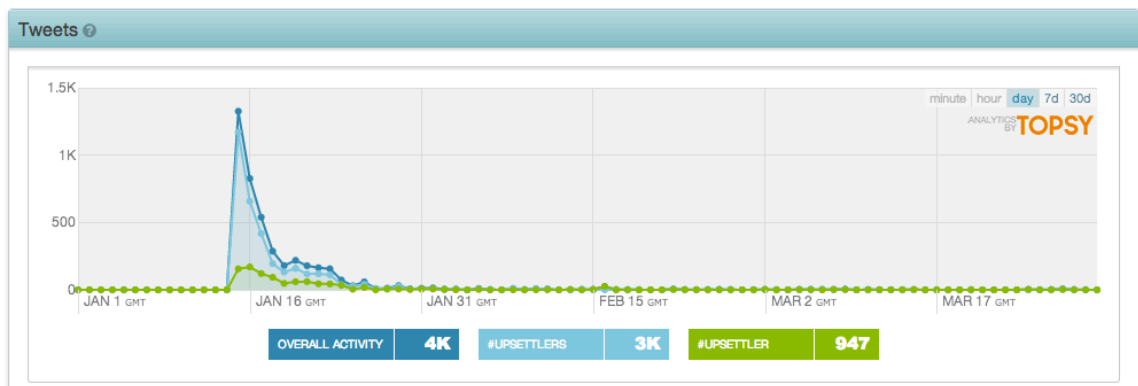

Figure 2. Tweets containing the #upsettler and #upsettlers hashtag from January 1^{st,} 2013- March 31st, 2013.

The #upsettler hashtag was created by Tobold Rollo, a PhD student from the University of Toronto uses the Twitter handle @settlercolonial. A self-proclaimed settler, Rollo created the hashtag to expose and critique somebody who becomes indignant when implicated in the colonial process: "upsettlers refuse to admit their privileged positions in a colonial system, and quite often they will complain about how they have been sorely victimized by the mere accusation" (Querengesser, 2013, para. 12).

The content of #upsettler tweets could be seen to perpetuate or challenge ideas around First Nations and settler identities in Canada. The use of the hashtag can also be seen to play its own role in terms of dictating the content of tweets and as a tool to link individuals to broader conversations around the *Idle No More* Movement and racial relations between First Nations and settlers in Canada. As a result, the use of social media in the *Idle No More* movement, and the use of the #upsettler and #upsettlers hashtag specifically, are a locus of exploration for me.

Recognizing the strategic use of satire and humour in the #upsettler and #upsettlers tweets is essential to this study. Rossing (2013) writes, "by holding a fun house mirror to contemporary culture, humour distorts, exaggerates, and reframes in ways that invite audiences to see themselves and society from new vantage points" (p. 46). Taken out of context or at face value, the content of many of the #upsettler tweets could be viewed as racist. Many of the tweets make sweeping generalizations about settler behavior similar to the stereotyping

found in racist tweets towards First Nations. Settler colonial theory will

demonstrate that racist attitudes towards First Nations are deeply entrenched

and prevalent in Canadian society. By using humour to mimic the racism

expressed towards First Nations people and redirect it towards settlers, the

#upsettler hashtag has the potential to highlight some of the power imbalances in

Canadian society.

In this study, I will critically examine tweets, which include the #upsettler and

#upsettlers hashtags made from public Twitter accounts. By looking at the

content of these tweets and drawing on a mixture of settler colonial theory and

existing literature on Twitter use, I explore how the settler identity in Canada is

being constructed and framed on this social media platform and how the use of

the hashtag impacts this process. I will also be looking more broadly at the

medium of Twitter and the implications of this discussion or stream of content

taking place on this site. While research and previous literature exists on the use

of Twitter during social and political movements and previous literature can also

be found examining settler colonial theory, a research gap I intend to explore is

how race relations between First Nations and settlers in Canada are being

examined on Twitter and how functions of Twitter, such as the hashtag, are

enabling and impacting this process.

The research questions guiding this study are:

1.) **How is the settler identity being framed and constructed within**

 content of #upsettler and #upsettlers tweets.

2.) How is the hashtag functioning in this process?

The findings of this study will be important in demonstrating the power of social media, and specifically, the use of hashtags to form solidarity among users by providing a medium through which to share ideas and connect to a broader conversation around race relations in Canada. Analyzing the way settlers and race relations are being defined in this space, as well as how the use of the #upsettler hashtag is integral to perpetuating this conversation, may give insight into the power of Twitter to engage a broad spectrum of Canadians in a conversation about race and racial tensions. It may also shed light on ways to overcome the divide between two groups of people occupying the same land.

My interest in this topic stems from my background in First Nations studies and my interest in social media. As a former journalist for a First Nations media outlet and a self-recognized settler, I am interested in race relations in Canada and exploring how these are being discussed on social networking sites. In conducting this study, I would like to recognize that I come to this work as a non-Indigenous researcher and as such recognize my unique relationship to the content I am examining and the position from which I am examining it. While I have done my best to remain unbiased, my background and position of privilege, which feeds into the style of language and method of research I am conducting, must be acknowledged in relation to the material I am examining.

Twitter as Social Media:

A brief examination of the communications channel, Twitter, is integral to this study. Twitter is a micro-blogging site, which was founded in 2006. Micro blogging is similar to blogging; however the entries made by users on micro-blogs are required to be 140 characters or less, unlike traditional weblogs. By encouraging shorter posts, micro-blogging allows users to create more frequent updates and lowers "the requirement of time and thought investment for content generation" (Java et al, 2007, p.56). Most micro-blogging applications share the following in common: short text messages, instantaneous message delivery, and subscriptions to receive updates (Small, 2011, p. 874). While there are numerous micro-blogging applications on the web, Twitter is the most popular with 19% of all Internet users utilizing the site (Lovejoy et al., 2012, p. 313).

Murthy (2012) distinguishes between social networks and social media in describing social media as a "medium where ordinary people in ordinary social networks (as opposed to professional journalists) can create user-generated 'news'" (1061). Unlike other social networking sites such as Facebook, where users must follow each other to see one another's content, unless a Twitter profile is set to private, anybody can read or follow the tweets of users. This holds true especially when hashtags are used to index an individual's tweets and connect them into a content stream (or series of related tweets connected by this feature).

Another technological affordance of this medium includes its potential for quick replication of content and rapid dissemination of information. The original design of Twitter to have updates in 140-characters or less was so the site could be updated from a mobile device easily through SMS messaging. As such, tweets can be updated in the moment and very quickly in reaction to real-time events. While the 140-character limit does mean there are constraints in terms of how much can be said, it also means that updates can be made quickly due to there being a limit on characters and how much one can write. The ability to quickly and instantly update information to Twitter from any location, has led to its use becoming heavily associated with social movements and discussions around political, social and current events (Baym, 2010, p. 91). This is a concept that will be explored at greater length in the literature review portion of this MRP.

Literature Review

The literature surveyed in this MRP includes key concepts of my study including settler colonial theory with an emphasis on what defines settler power and how is it upheld. There is also an examination of literature on social movements and Twitter with an emphasis on the role of the hashtag.

Theoretical Orientation: Settler Colonial Theory

Settler colonial theory seeks to understand the political and social climate of countries that have been more recently colonized such as New Zealand, Canada, Australia and South Africa. Settler colonial theory often examines the colonial systems these countries have in place, which are designed to marginalize, assimilate and make Indigenous peoples invisible (Veracini, 2010, p.2). Lorenzo Veracini (2010) describes settler colonialism as "a global and transnational phenomenon, and as much a thing of the past as a thing of the present" (p. 2). While post-colonial studies examine cultures under the assumption that colonialism is a thing of the past, settler colonial studies recognize the ongoing process of colonization, which manifests in laws, language and the continued subordination of Indigenous peoples in specific regions. Veracini (2010) argues that national and imperial histiographies, colonial studies and post colonial literature have developed interpretative categories that are not suited for an appraisal of settler colonial circumstances (p. 2). The settler colonial scholarly field is still in the process of becoming more established, and contributions to it are interdisciplinary, and disciplines include: history, law,

genocide studies, Indigenous studies, historical geography, economics, politics, sociology, international relations, political science, cultural and gender studies, and philosophy. For the purpose of this study, I have examined the work of settler colonial theorists in defining the role and behaviors of settlers as the tweets I am examining set out to define settler behavior.

Disavowal/Distancing from Colonial History

Lorenzo Veracini's (2010) book *Settler Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview* provides a framework by which to understand the difference between colonialism and settler colonialism. Veracini outlines the settler colonial situation, positioning settler identity as somewhere in between Indigenization and Europeanization. Settlers see themselves as people who were born in a "new" colonized land, which gives them a perceived sense of belonging, but have not entirely abandoned their association to their former heritage. The concept of disavowal is a key theme in addressing how settlers reduce blame or responsibility for colonialism. Veracini argues that settlers hide behind numerous circumstances and structures in order to justify their place in a colonized society. For example, hiding behind the original colonizer to redirect responsibility for colonization away from them (Veracini, 2010, p. 14). As a result, "settler colonialism can be seen to obscure the conditions of its own production" (Veracini, 2010, p. 14).

While providing an excellent overview of settler colonial theory, Veracini does not examine individual or local variations of settler colonialism. His

approach is more broad and theoretical and does not capture the nuanced

concepts of identity that occur in different regions. This is where the work of

Paulette Regan (2010) fills a gap in examining the idiosyncratic nature of settler

colonialism in a particular context, which, in her case, is Canada.

Perpetuating the Myth of the Benevolent Settler Government

Regan's work deals specifically with Canada undergoing the process of

"Truth and Reconciliation" with First Nations Peoples and how this process is

both flawed and still influenced by colonial ideology. Regan self-identifies as a

settler and begins her work by asking how non-Indigenous researchers confront

the history of colonization and recognize their own role in the colonial process as

settler. To do this she puts forward the idea of deconstructing "the Canadian

historical narrative and the foundational myth of the benevolent peacemaker" or

what she refers to as "the bedrock of settler identity" (Regan, 2010, p.11). This

myth suggests that unlike America, Canada was colonized peacefully with

treaties and civil, diplomatic interaction. As a result by believing in this myth,

settlers are denying the undertones of cultural superiority and racism that shape

the laws we still live under today. This version of the story enables settlers to

ignore or look past the darker and disturbing side of Canadian history including

detrimental assimilation policies, such as residential schools, that have

contributed to a legacy of suffering among many Indigenous people. Regan

(2010) argues the way the "Indian problem" is currently framed in the language of

the media, government, and more broadly in Canadian society, positions First

Nations at an inferior level to the government and non-Indigenous members of society. This is through the frequent use of language that discusses concepts like bringing First Nations "up" or "raising their standard of living" in order for them to reach certain standards, which are ultimately defined by the settler colonial values (p.11). An example of this would be initiatives geared around increasing First Nations employment rates: while these seem altruistic or benevolent at face value, embedded within the language of programs like these is the fundamental belief that Westernized modes of employment or work are the only valuable ones instead of living off the land or pursuing a traditional way of life.

Naturalization of Settler Occupation

In addition to disavowal and perpetuating the myth of Canada as a benevolent peacemaker, a third theme that emerges out of the settler colonial literature is the idea of naturalization. Adam Barker (2012) argues "beyond the colonial accumulation of wealth and power, settler people remain preoccupied with naturalization […] and that this necessitates the erasure of Indigenousness from place" (p.330). Both Barker and Veracini (2010) explore the idea that Indigenous land and ways of life are either appropriated or obliterated by settlers through a process of naturalization. In doing this, all Indigenous people become "Canadian" and the cultural significance of artwork, land and traditional knowledge is eclipsed or subsumed into a multicultural settler polity. Alfred and Corntassel (2005) explain the reason for this naturalization of Indigenous land, culture, and identity:

Contemporary settlers follow the mandate provided for them by their

imperial forefathers' colonial legacy, not by attempting to eradicate the

physical signs of Indigenous peoples as human bodies, but by trying to

eradicate their existence as peoples through the erasure of the histories

and geographies that provide the foundation for Indigenous cultural

identities and sense of self. (p. 598)

Alfred and Corntassel (2005) suggest that one way First Nations or

Indigenous populations can reject future encroachment on their way of life is a

return to traditional practices and cultural values (p.599). Part of this process

involves retaining a sense of pride and community, a concept that will be

explored further in this study when examining the role of Twitter and its power to

connect ideas and individuals.

While ample literature exists on settler colonialism, there is very little

written about these particular themes and the power struggles they represent in

Canadian society within the context of the use of social media. As a result, an

analysis of the current literature on the micro-blogging site Twitter and the

different functions of the hashtag feature can provide valuable insight into how

this medium was used during the Indigenous social movement, *Idle No More*,

and in online discussions around settler and First Nations relations in Canada.

Twitter and Social Movements

The ability to quickly generate, share, and replicate content on Twitter

(and reach a wide audience) is one reason this tool has become heavily used in

social movements and during protests. Nancy Baym (2010) writes, "Twitter has

emerged as a means for people to organize flash mobs in order to protest" and

cites the 2009 political protests in Macedonia as an example, when mobs and

protests were organized quickly through the social networking site (p. 91). Twitter

was then banned in the country indicating the extent to which this

communications tool was seen as a powerful catalyst for political action rather

than just a substitute for real action (Baym, 2010, p.91).

Another technological affordance of Twitter is the ability to add hyperlinks

to tweets or reference outside information that moves beyond the constraints of

the 140-character limit. In their study of Twitter's impact on the protest ecology,

Sergerberg and Bennett (2011) argue that hyperlinks play an important role

within hashtag streams, "not just with respect to information flow but also in their

role as organizing mechanisms, and more abstractly as windows on surrounding

players and links among diverse information flows" (p. 203). This means the use

of hyperlinks can provide insight into the position of the Twitter user as well as

their perspective on certain social issues. The use of hyperlinks also presents the

potential to connect users to outside information that does not fit within the 140-

character constraints of this medium. Accessing extra information outside of

Twitter in the form of other websites, images and videos could impact or alter

users' perspectives in relation to certain issues or social movements.

Twitter has the potential to allow users with access to the Internet to

rapidly disseminate and replicate information. The medium includes a variety of

internal functions such hashtags, which can be used in different valuable ways including indexing, facilitating community formation and contextualizing the content of tweets. As all of the *Idle No More* tweets were connected to certain hashtags including the tweets that will be examined for the purpose of this study, an exploration of this particular function will be covered in the next section of this literature review.

Indexing

The role of the hashtag, or the placement of a number sign in front of key words and names on Twitter, was originally invented as a tool to index, collate, or make tweets searchable. The role of the hashtag as an indexical or curatorial feature is explored in the work of Tamara Small (2011) in her research on Twitter and Canadian politics. She presents the idea that the use of a hashtag makes tweets searchable not only to Twitter users but also in search engines such as Google. This indexing function of hashtags is also commented on by Michele Zappavigna (2011) who discuses it in relation to the concept of collaborative tagging, which she refers to as a social form of verbal indexing (p. 791). The idea is that by using hashtags, which are user generated and not pre-determined by Twitter, tweets become searchable through their inclusion of certain keywords that make up the hashtag itself. This allows Twitter users who are interested in certain topics to utilize these hashtags to join the conversation or have their own tweets added to that index.

Community Forming

A second theme in the literature is the concept of hashtags providing easy means as way to group tweets, in turn creating ad hoc social groups or sub-communities. Michele Zappavigna (2011) explores how hashtags can be used to demonstrate affiliation within groups in her exploration of #Obama tweets in the 2008 election. She argues that "interpersonally-charged tweets invite with their hashtags an ambient audience to align with their bond […] and the 'hypercharge' of the hashtag involves the tweet in a larger bond network of values" (p. 801). Bruns and Burgess (2011) also explore hashtags as community forming and their potential for "cultural generativity" either in the form of memes and jokes or the coordination of ad hoc issue publics (p.3).

Bruns and Burgess (2011) expand on this idea in looking at what hashtags do for the formation of online communities arguing what can be seen emerging is:

> "not simply a fragmented society composed of isolated individuals, but instead a patchwork of overlapping public spheres centered around specific themes and communities which through their overlap nonetheless form a network of issue publics that is able to act as an effective substitute for the conventional universal public sphere of the mass media age." (p. 6)

This argument also puts forward the idea that the online communities that form around social issues or politics provide an alternative source of information in terms of looking at how the public is responding to or reporting on certain

events. The idea is that mainstream media is not the only voice represented in

social networking sites, and that online communities present a forum to engage

with different voices and perspectives.

The notion of the formation of communities on Twitter is interesting in that

it presents a counter-argument to the idea that social media provides users with

exposure to a multiplicity of opinions. While in theory, Twitter does provide a

forum for people from different political, ethnic, and social backgrounds to

generate and engage with different content, Baym (2010) writes that there is a

concern that political interaction on new media serves to polarize opinions rather

than facilitate discussion and that people are increasingly engaged in "small

groups, which affirm one another's perspective" (96).

Contextualizing

Andre Brock (2012) presents the idea that while the hashtag was initially

intended as a curatorial feature, the symbol quickly evolved into an expressive

modifier to contextualize tweets. Using a semiotic framework, Brock (2012)

argues that the hashtag plays a role as a signifier, sign, and signified, "marking

the concept to be signified and the cultural context within which the tweet should

be understood" (p. 537). This means that hashtags become associated with

certain meanings, context, and ideas themselves, thus connecting the other

content of the tweet with a larger context such as a preexisting social movement

or a set of ideas. Alternatively, if a hashtag was created to make a specific social

commentary, such as the use of the #99% hashtag during the Occupy

movements or the #upsettler hashtag during *Idle No More*, the content of the

tweet can interpreted to a certain extent through the inclusion of that hashtag.

The hashtag contextualizes what is being said in a broader framework.

Methodology
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To execute this study, qualitative content analysis was conducted with the

incorporation of settler colonial theory and previous literature on the role of the

hashtag in Twitter usage as a guiding theoretical framework for the creation of

several categories and codes. Hsieh and Shannon (2005) define qualitative

content analysis as "a research method for the subjective interpretation of the

content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and

identifying themes or patterns"(1278). The methodology used in this study falls

under the umbrella of deductive or directed qualitative content analysis as

previous knowledge of settler colonial theory and literature on Twitter usage was

used to determine codes and categories in order to extract information from the

data set. Hsieh and Shannon (2005) argue, "the goal of a directed approach to

content analysis is to validate or extend conceptually a theoretical framework or

theory" (p. 1281). Mayring (2000) adds to this argument claiming that pre-existing

theory or research can not only help guide research questions but also provide

predictions about variables of interest or the relationships among variables to

help to determine the initial coding scheme or relationships between the codes"

(p. 2).

While content analysis examines the words within text, it does so in a

contextual framework in that it looks at both inferred and direct communication

contained within the data: "content analysis analyzes not only the manifest

content of the material, but themes, and main ideas of the text as primary content

and context information as latent content" (Mayring, 2000, p. 2). In this study, an example of latent content would be external factors such as the *Idle No More* movement. In other words, content analysis is not just looking at the words these tweets contain, but the context in which they were tweeted.

As mentioned, a guiding framework informed by settler colonial theory and literature on hashtags was used to examine the content of #upsettler and #upsettlers tweets. While using pre-existing theory to develop a coding framework can help direct the study, it can also pose some potential limitations. As Hsieh and Shannon (2005) explain, "researchers approach the data with an informed, but nonetheless, strong bias […] hence, researchers might be more likely to find evidence that is supportive rather than non-supportive of a theory" (p. 1283). Allowing for the development of codes for themes that emerge which might challenge the pre-existing theories is an effective way to mitigate this bias.

Qualitative content analysis has been used in the context of studying tweets prior to this study. In Hambrick et al's (2010) article, "Understanding Professional Athletes' Use of Twitter," content analysis was applied to a selection of tweets pulled from a third-party website and coded according to motives predictive of online sport consumption in two different studies" (Hambrick et al, 2010, p. 460). This is an excellent example of previous theory or research being used to create categories and codes in order to extract information from a data set of tweets.

Data Collection

A total of 278 tweets were collected for the purpose of this study from the Jan 14, 2013, when the hashtag was created until the end of March 2013. Tweets were collected using Twitter's search function on March 28th. Due to the use of both the #upsettler and #upsettlers hashtag during this timeframe, both of these hashtags were searched and archived in an Excel document. To avoid redundancy and for the scope of this MRP, retweets were not included in the data analysis. The personal details associated with each Twitter account were not included in this study but 271 unique accounts. Accounts were listed as being located in each province and territory in Canada. Five tweets came from accounts listed as being located in the United States. Archived tweets included the date tweets were posted but any identifying factors were not included in the content analysis including @replies and mentions of individuals.

One limitation of doing data collection with Twitter is that, after time, some tweets are deleted. The data collection occurred on March 29th and as such the tweets used in this study were still listed on Twitter's history at that time. Since the time of this study it is possible that some of these tweets may have been deleted or are no longer searchable by their hashtag exclusively using Twitter's search function.

To conduct the analysis, columns were created beside each tweet in the master Excel sheet and codes were applied in each column. Each column was color coded to make it easier to differentiate from the others. Then the data-

sorting function was used to organize all the codes, making them easy to count alongside the numbered rows of tweets.

Data Analysis

Several categories were created to analyze the data, which were informed by previous literature and theories. The table below lists the codes that were created:

	Category 1 – Definition	Category 2- Community Formation	Category 3 – Other Indexing Factors	Category 4- Contextualizing Factors	Category 5- Explicit Calls to Action
Code	Denial (DEN)	Humor (H)	#ottawapiskat	Referencing Idle No More Movement (IDM)	Settler Action (SA)
	Appropriation (APP)	Sentence Structure (SS)	#idlenomore	Hyperlink (Inter-textual) (HL)	First Nation Action (IA)
	Superiority (SUP) Sub code: Government/Law References			Hashtag Movement (Meta-textual) (HT)	
	Stereotyping First Nations (STER)				
	Refutations (REF)				

Table 1. Coding Framework for Data Analysis

Category 1: Definition

Since the #upsettler and #upsettlers hashtag was initially created by Rollo to critique and expose settler behavior, many tweets fell into the category of defining settler actions, reactions, and behavior. As such tweets in the definition category were coded according to themes that emerged in terms of what account holders were claiming was typical settler behavior.

The following subcategories were identified in the definition category:

Code	Subcategory	Notes
DEN	Denial of privilege and participation in colonialism	
SUP	Possessing an attitude of cultural superiority	A sub code came out of superiority tweets as many of them referenced laws or colonial policy to justify the privileged position.
STERO	Stereotyping First Nations	
APP	Appropriation of First Nations culture, land, or traditions	
REF	Refutations	The refutations code was added after the initial coding session as it was a theme that emerged in the data where several tweets appeared to be contesting the settler designation demonstrating sites of tension in the Twitter stream.

Table 2. Definition Subcategories

Several other categories were created when looking at the tweets, particularly in looking at different ways the hashtag was functioning as described in the literature on Twitter and social movements.

Category 2 – Community Forming

Tweets were coded according to how they demonstrated the concepts of the hashtag being used to index, contextualize, and form solidarity or a community. For example, signs of commonalties between tweets indicating a sense of community or shared understanding were assessed. Subcategories that emerged out of the community category were:

Code	Subcategory	Notes
H	Tweets that used humour	
SS	Tweets that contained the same sentence structure	

Table 3. Community Forming Subcategories

Category 3 – Indexing

Tweets were coded for their indexical and contextualizing features. For example the use of multiple hashtags associated with the social movement to connect the tweet content to a broader conversation were analyzed and codes that emerged out of this category were tweets that contained the following commonly associated hashtags.

Code	Subcategory	Notes
#OTT	tweets that contained the #ottawapiskat hashtag	
#IDM	tweets that contained the #idlenomore hashtag	

Table 4. Indexing Subcategories

While there were other hashtags mentioned in the tweets, #ottawapiskat and #idlenomore were by far the most frequent. For the scope of this study, these were the only other hashtags coded.

Category 4 – Contextualizing

Tweets that contained hyperlinks, reference to the physical *Idle No More* protest and those that referenced the hashtag movement were also coded.

Code	Subcategory	Notes
HL	Tweets that contained hyperlinks	
IDM	Tweets that referenced *Idle No More Protests*	Tweets that made explicit or implicit reference to what was happening with the movement on the streets.
HT	Hashtag (online movement)	Tweets that referenced the impact of any of the IDM hashtags in use.

Table 5. Contextualizing Subcategories

All three of these subcategories demonstrate how tweets with this hashtag were part of a larger, meta-conversation and broader social movement taking place.

Category 5 – Calls to Action

A final category was created which consisted of calls to action. These were tweets which contained explicit instructions or solutions geared at working towards improved relationships between settlers and First Nations or ideas to educate more Canadians on these issues. While these calls to action did not necessarily fit into the previous literature, this was a noticeable theme that had to be accounted for in the development of a coding framework.

Code	Subcategory	Notes
SA	Settler calls to action	For example: Calls to action directed at settlers with contents encouraging them to educate themselves on First Nations issues in Canada.
FA	First Nations calls to action	For example: Calls to action directed at First Nations to stick together, keep challenging power relations, keep supporting the *Idle No More* Movement.

Table 6. Call to Action Subcategories

_____

The first section of coding examined how settler behavior was being

defined in #upsettler and #upsettlers tweets. Of the 278 tweets that were coded,

169 tweets or 61% fell into the Definition category. While this category was

further broken down into individual subcategories of what users defined settler

behaviour or attitudes as, the broad category itself demonstrated that the hashtag

was being used in a very similar way in over 50% of the tweets.

Denial

Denial was by far the most consistent theme in the Definition category with 121

tweets or 44% making reference to settlers being in denial of the settler colonial

situation. The content of these tweets contained reference to settlers not being

willing to take responsibility for their relationship to colonialism, their position of

privilege in Canadian society, the existence of systemic racism in Canada, or

their own (even if unintentional) racist attitudes:

> **EXAMPLE 1 –** *#Upsettlers argue that we live in a post-racial*
> *society where everything is based on merit but claim they are*
> *victims of racism.*

The theme of denial that ran through these tweets relates closely to the

concept of disavowal explored in the literature review on settler behaviour. These

results suggest that denial was the most commonly expressed assessment of

Canadian settler behavior among users of the hashtag. Tweeters suggested that

settlers refuse to acknowledge the inherent power imbalance and colonial history

that has afforded them their current place in society. As explored in the literature review, Veracini (2010) argues that this process of disavowal or distancing oneself from colonial actions and history allows the settler to justify his or her position in settler colonial society (p 14). Mentions of settlers distancing themselves from colonialism were consistent among the tweets as were mentions of settlers taking on a victim role as the targets of racism from First Nations people and *Idle No More* supporters. This appears to extend the concept of disavowal, in which settlers not only deny their own relationship to colonialism, but by claiming victim status for themselves, strip First Nations of their right to confront or challenge the atrocities of the past. In other words, settlers allege they are the victims, not First Nations people.

Cultural Superiority

In the definition category, 96 tweets, or 35% of all tweets, contained statements that suggested tweeters felt another hallmark of settler behavior was exhibiting an attitude of cultural superiority. Tweets that were coded for this attribute contained contents that either explicitly or implicitly suggested that settlers believe they are more civilized, competent, and superior to Indigenous people in Canada:

> **EXAMPLE 2 –** *Given their supposed devotion to "rule of law" and "paper trails" #upsettler disregard for treaties is baffling and embarrassing #ottawapiskat*

Example 2 demonstrates an air of superiority perceived by the tweeter to be characteristic of the settler. The contents of the tweet suggest that settlers rely

solely on their own definition of appropriate governing practices such as

recording actions on paper (not through traditional First Nations practices such as

oral tradition) and adhering to certain laws that are defined by colonizers. It also

suggests, as does settler colonial theory, that settlers do not acknowledge

inherent rights belonging to First Nations afforded to them through the

constitution and treaty process, implying that settlers adhere to the laws that suit

them and ignore the ones that do not. The critiques of settler behavior contained

within Example 2 provide further evidence of the pervasiveness of the cultural

superiority identified in settler colonial theory.

Of the 96 cultural superiority tweets, 42 contained reference to settlers

referring to government policy or colonial legislation to justify their position.

Example 3 makes reference to the "Rule of Law" in reference to *Idle No More*

protestors breaking the law during protests:

> **EXAMPLE 3 –** *Now the #Upsettlers led by their war chief @ezralevant are starting their chant: "Rule of Law! Rule of Law"*

Example 3 and the other tweets that make reference to settler reliance on

colonial legislation to justify their position, relate closely to the theme of Canada

as "the benevolent peacemaker" explored in Regan's (2010) work. Regan (2010)

argues that the perception of Canada being peaceful and having laws serving to

help others conceals the reality that many of these laws are rooted in colonial

ideology and were not enacted peacefully (p. 11). The tweets also reveal a

perception that settlers lack an understanding of the history of these colonial

policies (such as the "Indian Reserve" system) or the Indian Act in perpetuating

the subordination of First Nations people in Canada. In this example, the "Rule of Law" is being referenced as a proposed barrier to *Idle No More* protestors, while ignoring the fact that many of Canada's laws have been responsible for the subordination and abuse of First Nations people.

Stereotyping First Nations

Stereotypes around First Nations way of life or First Nations people in general were also present in 15 tweets or 5% describing perceptions of common settler behavior. These included tweets talking about how settlers accuse First Nations people of needing to get a job or wanting more government funding:

> **EXAMPLE 4 –** *#UPSETTLERS DO NOT UNDERSTAND WHY FNS DON'T JUST PICK THEMSELVES UP BY THEIR BOOTSTRAPS TO MEET THE #UPSETTLER DEFINITION OF SUCCESS!!!*

Example 4 suggests that tweeters think settlers want First Nations to pick up their bootstraps or "fix themselves" in order to live up to settler standards. Settler colonial theory discusses the racist ideology deeply embedded in government language towards First Nations people in Canada (Regan, 2010, p. 11). In looking at the tweets that contained reference to settlers making negative stereotypes about First Nations, what was implied was the perception that there is a "right" way and a "wrong" way to do things or the privileging of one way of life over another on the part of the settler. This recalls the notion of cultural superiority that was present in 96 of the other tweets. The tweets containing reference to settlers making stereotypes about First Nations way of life and behavior also can be seen as indicators of the marginalization and discrimination

experienced by First Nations in contemporary society. By making stereotypes about First Nations being lazy or not having jobs, settlers could be seen to exhibit a lack of recognition for some of the systemic reasons (relating back to colonial policy) that have contributed to difficulties in First Nations securing employment. There is also a lack of recognition for those of First Nations ancestry, who are gainfully employed. Finally, embedded in statements like those being mimicked Example 4 is the assumption that First Nations should want to participate in a European capitalist system, ignoring their traditional way of life or placing it in a lower category than the settler understanding of accomplishment through employment.

Appropriation

Appropriation in regards to either culture or environment was the third code that emerged from the Definition tweets. Similar to the concept of naturalization explored in the literature review, these tweets make reference to the concept of settler colonial "space" or how areas become so urbanized that they become naturalized. This means that the former occupation of these spaces by First Nations people is superseded or made invisible. This process of either appropriating space physically or conceptually (in the form of adopting First Nations cultural items as "Canadian items") was mentioned in 25 or 8% of the Definition tweets in the data set:

> **EXAMPLE 5 –** *#Upsettlers feel entitled to take over sacred symbols like headdresses, while protecting their sacred capitalism symbols (malls) vehemently.*

Example 5 shows a settler being defined by the tweeter as having the privilege to take over First Nations cultural property while simultaneously defending their own cultural property and colonized space from *Idle No More* protestors. Like the Indigenous stereotypes code, the Appropriation tweets reveal existing power structures, which enable one group to have the authority or right to do something to another marginalized group. These tweets also reveal anxiety and fear on the part of the tweeters about the occupation or encroachment on First Nations space and culture by settlers.

The results from the analysis of the definition category show that despite settler colonial theory being confined to the realm of academic discourse, the lived experiences and colloquial comments found on Twitter reiterate the theoretical descriptions of what constitutes the settler colonial situation. These tweets provide a platform for users to display their understanding of typical settler behavior.

Deductive qualitative analysis uses preexisting theory to examine content, which will ultimately prove or disprove the validity of that theory. Settler colonial theory provides an explanation as to the way things are "out there." The tweets in the #upsettler and #upsettlers Twitter stream are reiterating these concepts, which suggest the theory is born out of the lived experiences of others. Twitter can be seen to be providing real life testimony to the descriptions and assessments of the settler colonial situation found in academic literature. The existing literature on settler colonialism places denial or "disavowal" at the core of

settler behavior and the results from the deductive qualitative analysis show this

behavior was also the most commented on in Twitter, suggesting the lived

experience of the tweeters is aligned with settler colonial theory.

Refutations

Of the 169 tweets containing content that defined settler behavior, only six

tweets contained content that refuted the #upsettler designation. The idea that

Twitter (and social media sites more broadly) can lead to increased polarization

of opinions or the formation of strongly socially or politically aligned communities

will be explored later in this this analysis, but there was some evidence of a

discursive struggle taking place in the #upsettler and #upsettlers content stream

as six different account holders contested the #upsettler designation. The irony of

the Refutation tweets was that in denying being an "upsettler" the account

holders actually enacted the initial intention of the hashtag which was to reveal

the denial, racist attitudes and sense of cultural superiority that the majority of

users suggested were typical of settler behavior:

> **EXAMPLE 6 –** *I've decided that if #idlenomore protestors think its cool to call a group of people #upsettlers, I'm going to call them leeches.*

In Example 6, the account holder is making a comment about First Nations

people living off government funding without acknowledging the legacy of

colonialism and treaty guarantees that led to First Nations receiving government

funding and being in the position of relying on federal assistance to repair their

communities.

EXAMPLE 7 – *#Upsettlers: Insulting to those who arrived with nothing, & near starving, dug themselves out of poverty to tame the land and feed the WORLD*

Example 7 is rich with behavioral indicators described in the settler colonial literature. In addition to distancing the settler from the colonial objective (to discover the new world and stake a claim in it) and completely looking past the detrimental assimilation policies such as residential schools, the tweet is steeped in cultural superiority. It neglects to acknowledge Canada's history of colonialism, and, again drawing back to Regan's (2010) concept of Canada as "the benevolent peacemaker," puts the settler in the position of being the kind benefactor who takes care of the world by taming the land (naturalizing settler occupation) and feeding everybody.

Community Formation

The above analysis provided insight into the first research question of how the role of settler is being framed and constructed within the content of #upsettler and #upsettlers tweets. An analysis of the different functions of the hashtag can provide further understanding into how this tool was used to drive the online discussion around settler colonialism in Canada and settler/Indigenous relations during the *Idle No More* movement. While definitions of "online communities" can be varied, for the purpose of this study, tweets that contained similar features from different account holders were seen to be indicators of a community forming in the sense that multiple Twitter accounts were utilizing the hashtag in a very

similar function. Tweets containing the #upsettler/#upsettlers hashtags were coded for similarities both in tone and sentence structure.

Humour

Of the 278 tweets examined, 69 tweets or 24 % were coded for taking a humourous approach to the discussion of settler behavior and racial relations in Canada. These results demonstrate Bruns and Burgess' (2011) contention that the use of hashtags has the ability form online communities due to their potential for "cultural generativity" either in the form of memes or jokes (p. 3). The consistent use of humour among these tweets to define settler behavior or make light-hearted commentary on an uncomfortable discussion around racial tensions in Canada also demonstrates the idea of users being in on the same joke. The account users who have chosen to use this type of humour are taking part in an inside joke and contributing to a sense of solidarity or being "in the know" of something subversive, humourous, and powerful. The use of #upsettler and #upsettlers in this case could be seen as an example of Zappavinga's (2011) theory on the "hypercharge" quality of the hashtag and its ability to link the tweet to a larger bond network of values (p. 801). In using the #upsettler hashtag, the account holder is making the choice to take part in the inside joke and link her or his contributions to it to others following the content stream.

Sentence Structure

Also indicative of this memetic, community forming aspect of the hashtag were 76 tweets or 27% that contained nearly identical sentence structure. These

tweets all began with #upsetter or #upsettlers, followed by verb, and then a description:

> **EXAMPLE 8 –** *#Upsettlers are agitated by what they call 'reverse racism', which is like real racism only without a history of genocide and colonialism.*

This copula structure made up of subject, verb, and complement was in noticeably heavier use after the initial creation of the hashtag, with the bulk of tweets composed using this structure occurring between January 14th and 18th. Similar to the humourous tone of the #upsettler and #upsettlers tweets, the commonalities between these tweets indicate account holders becoming aware of a prescribed way to participate in this conversation stream about racial relations in Canada. Results indicate that the initial definition tweet could perhaps be viewed as a template that subsequent users took and filled in with their own anecdotal experience of settler behaviour.

Indexing

As Zappavinga (2011) points out, the use of the hashtag can be seen as a form of verbal indexing. What this means is that tweets, which include certain hashtags, are searchable and curated within certain content streams. As a result all 278 tweets could be coded in the indexical category, as all 278 tweets contain the #upsettler and/or #upsettlers hashtag and are searchable using those keywords. However, what the findings from data set also demonstrate is that this hashtag was used in conjunction with several others, linking the #upsettler tweets not only to the #upsettler content stream but also to the #idlenomore content

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stream and the #ottawapiskat stream. Of the 278 tweets, 32 tweets or 11%

contained the #ottawapiskat hashtag, and 66 or 24% contained the #idlenomore

hashtag:

> **EXAMPLE 9:** *If you don't find #Ottawapiskat funny, you might be an #Upsettler.*

Through the inclusion of these hashtags, tweets containing the #upsettler

hashtag were potentially linked to a wider audience of people following the

#idlenomore Twitter stream as well as those following #ottawapiskat. The

inclusion and frequent use of these hashtags also contributed to the

#upsettler/#upsettlers hashtag being associated with other memes from the *Idle*

No More movement and, through association, the *Idle No More* movement itself.

It is this association that contributes to the contextualizing aspect of the

hashtags, a category explored next in this study.

Contextualizing

The role of the hashtag in contextualizing tweets was analyzed in several

ways. As Brock (2012) argues, the hashtag was initially intended as a curatorial

feature but the symbol quickly evolved into an expressive modifier to

contextualize tweets (p. 537). The inclusion of certain hashtags can be seen to

impact how the content of tweets is perceived by placing the tweet in a broader

context through association. To analyze this category, tweets that made

reference to contextual circumstances were coded to see if any themes emerged.

Referencing Physical Idle No More Movement

Of the 278 tweets that were coded, 69 or 24% contained reference to the

Idle No More movement in terms of what was happening on the streets with

blockades and protests:

> **EXAMPLE 10 –** *#Idlenomore coming to wake up #Upsettler 's on a highway or mall near you soon Canada #canpoli*

The use of the #upsettler and #upsettlers hashtag becomes associated with the

Idle No More movement which was taking place at the same time. Since many of

the tweets contained reference to the *Idle No More* movement -either directly with

the #idlenomore hashtag or indirectly by mentioning protests, blockades, and

other physical aspects of the movement- the #upsettler hashtag became an

indicator or marker of tweets that were related to this social uprising. Through

consistent explicit and implicit references to *Idle No More,* tweets that use the

#upsettler hashtag become linked to this social movement in the same way that

the #99% hashtag during the Occupy Movement indicated the content of the

tweet was connected to the broader context of the Occupy Wall Street protests.

While Brock describes this contextualizing function of the hashtag as a

semiotic shift where the hashtag becomes its own sign with its own signifiers and

signified, a more simplified explanation is that the hashtag becomes its own

"brand" with certain values and viewpoints associated with it. By using the

hashtag, the account holder can be seen to be aligning himself with the *Idle No*

More brand. This contextualizing feature requires a proliferation of tweets so that

associations can form through repeated use. It also provides an explanation of

how hashtag use shifts over time. In this data set, the hashtag shifts from simply

describing settlers to engaging in a broader conversation about *Idle No More.*

Referencing Online Movement

The data set was also coded for tweets that referenced the trend of using

Idle No More related hashtags. A total of 29 tweets or 10% were coded as

making references to the emergence of the #upsettler and #upsettlers hashtags

and the online-specific social movement taking place on Twitter:

> **EXAMPLE 11 –** *If you haven't scrolled through*
> *the #Upsettlers hashtag yet, you're missing out. #IdleNoMore*

These tweets show a self-referential use of the hashtag, where its power and

humourous nature are being commented and reflected on. The majority of these

tweets contained content telling others to follow the #upsettler and #upsettlers

hashtag and the impact it was having in terms of creating interesting dialogue

around race relations in Canada. These tweets contribute to the understanding

of the hashtag and deepen its association with certain values and viewpoints.

Hyperlinks

The third subcategory in the contextualizing category was inter-textual

tweets, or tweets that contained hyperlinks. The use of hyperlinks became more

prevalent around January 18th, after four days of the hashtag being heavily in

use. As the #upsettler and #upsettlers hashtag became increasingly associated

with the *Idle No More* movement through both the content of tweets as well as

the indexical references discussed above, account users began to bring in third-

party information that went beyond the limitations of Twitter's 140-character limit:

Example 12 – *An #upsettler, might you be, if you refuse to acknowledge your privilege. Watch this video: http://youtu.be/w5OkHysPNog #idlenomore#cdnpoli*

A total of 55 tweets or 20% contained hyperlinks to outside resources and materials. As a result, these documents, photos and videos are linked to an already developed information stream and engaged audience through the use of the #upsettler and #upsettlers hashtag. In this situation, the hashtag is being used not only to make commentary on settler behavior or a specific issue, but to connect users actively using and following the hashtag to a broader range of ideas, materials, and ideas through links to outside resources. There is a symbiotic relation between the hashtag and the hyperlinks occurring: on the one hand the hyperlink contributes to certain values which have come to be associated with the hashtag, and on the other hand, the hashtag suggests to people viewing the tweet what the outside resource is about. Using the #upsettler hashtag in tweets that contain hyperlinks indicates that the outside content being shared is related to either *Idle No More or* settler behavior and reactions.

Calls to Action

The final section of analysis examines tweets, which contain calls to action. It should be noted that one can see the inclusion of a hyperlink as a subtle call to action in and of itself. By including a hyperlink, the user is inviting people following the #upsettler hashtag to read something, watch a video or look at an image, and in doing so, is asking that they make an effort to move beyond the

medium of Twitter to engage with new content centered around settler and Indigenous relations.

Tweets that contained calls to action directed towards settlers or Indigenous people were coded because they showed yet another way the hashtag was being used in the discussion around settler behavior and race relations in Canada. While the definition tweets could be seen as creating a more polarized community by alienating settlers by defining their behavior in a pejorative sense, the calls to action provided a more solutions-oriented approach to the discussion of race relations in Canada:

> **EXAMPLE 13 –** *#upsettlers who are annoyed that First Nations people don't pay taxes need to read this. http://fb.me/24VombiSc*

A total of 11 calls to actions tweets were coded, nine of which called for either First Nations movement supporters to educate settlers on their hypocrisy and the legacy of colonialism, or directed settlers to educate themselves. Of the remaining call to action tweets, one was directed at supporters to critique settlers and attack them verbally. The second was directed at both movement supporters and settlers to work together in addressing the inequalities in Canadian society.

These call-to-action tweets provide insight into how the use of the hashtag evolved from a humourous tool to critique settlers into a way to engage an established audience in potential solutions to address racial inequality in Canada. Like the information gathered from the data set, these tweets present a possible solution and show how Twitter can be used not just as a place to make a joke or issue a status update, but also provide direction to an established audience on

an important social issue. Recalling Baym's (2010) contention that Twitter has been recognized as a powerful tool in relation to social protests, calls to action could be seen as the tweets that have the potential for real impact in terms of mobilizing Twitter users to take action outside the medium in addressing social inequality.

Limitations

Despite the wealth of information available on sites like Twitter, this study had several limitations. Twitter's archiving function made it difficult to analyze every single tweet that included the #upsettler or #upsettlers hashtag. Gaining access to that data for future analysis could provide deeper insight into the exact reach and contributions in this hashtag stream. It could also further demonstrate the indexing, community forming and contextualizing function of the hashtag within a more comprehensive and expansive data set. The same could be said for Retweets, which were not examined in this MRP.

Content of all hyperlinks included in the tweets was not examined in depth or an individual basis. This could be another area for exploration in looking at what were common types of resources and external materials were linked into the content stream and if there were commonalities among them.

Finally, Twitter is only one social media site that saw a surge in activity during the *Idle No More* movement. Facebook was another social network that could be examined in terms of how settler colonial relations were being commented on by account holders. While Facebook did not offer the hashtag function at the time of this MRP, the increased character limit permitted for posts on that site might yield more in-depth results in terms of looking at users' experiences of racism or marginalization in Canada.

Conclusion

Settler colonial theorist, Taiaike Alfred, asks how First Nations can resist further dispossession and disconnection when the effects of colonial assaults on their existence are still so pronounced and present (Alfred and Corntassel, 2005, p.599). To answer this question, Alfred (2005) proposes a return to traditional values, reengaging with culture and Indigenous spirituality, and refusing to let traditional values be obliterated by colonial policy and attitudes (p.600). While the scope of this study could not determine what policy changes will occur out of the *Idle No More* movement or accurately document a shift in First Nations attitudes through their participation in the movement, the findings provide insight into public experiences of racism within the settler colonial context and potential solutions to address these racial differences.

As the findings of this study illustrate, Twitter was a site where content was shared that made explicit and implicit commentary about settler colonial relations in Canada. The use of the hashtag enabled content to be shared with a wider audience and expand the reach of the commentary. This was made especially clear in looking at the use of other popular *Idle No More* hashtags such as #ottawapiskat and #idlenomore. By cross-referencing tweets with these verbal indices, #upsettler and #upsettlers tweets were linked to a wider discussion around First Nations activism in Canada relating to a particular social movement.

The majority of those who contributed to the #upsettler and #upsettlers content stream, identified denial in regards to Canada's colonial history and

continued colonial practices as the most common behavioral trait of settlers. The data also indicated that the bulk of definition tweets cited an attitude of cultural superiority as a common character trait among settlers. This superiority was often coupled with the concept of naturalization of settler appropriation of Indigenous land and culture.

The presence of similarities in the sentence structure and tone of the tweets indicated that users who were contributing to this content stream were making a choice to participate in a certain style of commentary and participate in what appeared to be an inside joke. The sense of community formed from taking part in a shared cultural joke or understanding may be valuable to engendering a sense of solidarity and power among marginalized people and providing an outlet to relieve racial tensions. The #upsettler and #upsettlers tweets could be seen to provide one part of the solution to Alfred's suggestions towards rejecting further colonization: pride in one's culture and a sense of self and belonging. However, the potential for education or reeducation in looking at what the tweets reveal about the lived experiences of racism in Canadian society provide more of a proactive solution in addressing racial difference in Canada.

The results of this study, including the refutation tweets denying the definition of settlers, indicate Twitter has become a site of discursive struggle that may be a viable resource for examination of racial tensions in specific regions. While previous social movements have taken place in locations from letters to the editor to protests in the streets, this study shows that Twitter has also become a

site where a battle over cultural privilege is taking place and power imbalances are being challenged. What was happening on the Twittersphere demonstrates the definitions of settler behavior as defined by settler colonial theory but was also a reflection of an existing social movement that was taking place during the time these tweets were being shared. The struggles against colonization, which were a driving force behind *Idle No More,* are continuing to happen in the "real world" but have also moved into this new realm where communication is taking place. This has the potential to have an impact on settler colonial relations as Twitter provides evidence of what has been argued in settler colonial theory but also offers a venue or platform for education or reeducation.

The findings of this study contain valuable information about what users identified as major threats to First Nations ways of life in terms of settler attitudes and behaviour. If the majority of tweets spoke about the issue of denial in settler behavior, the results indicate that a focus on education may be the step forward to improving the settler colonial situation by making others aware of the complexities of living in a settler colonial society and raising awareness about the legacy of colonialism in Canada.

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