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Public Discourse and Online Hate Speech: Anti-Indigenous Racism

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Abstract

Hate speech has proliferated across social media platforms, allowing users to target specific groups and spread racist and discriminatory messages to prospective audiences all over the world. The context of online hate speech is consequential for marginalized groups, including the Indigenous Peoples of Canada. This research study therefore addresses the need to investigate more comprehensively the public discourse, as it is posted on the YouTube social media site, corresponding to Indigenous-settler relations. Using a discourse analysis approach, the study discusses anti-Indigenous frames of reference from selected posts that capture discriminatory tones of incredulity and cynicism. When considered from a social constructionist framework as both independent statements and a collection of comments, the posts reflect a sense of moral fatigue on the part of commentators that draw upon exaggerated and misconstrued truths that appeal to already disillusioned viewers.

Keywords: Cyberhate, Social Media, Discourse Analysis, Hate Speech

1. Introduction

1.1 Extremist Views and Social Media

Hate speech continues to be an emerging reality across social media platforms that allows users to target specific groups and spread racist and discriminatory messages (Brant & Hulin, 2023; Mathew et al., 2021). Hate speech encompasses discriminatory comments and criticisms directed at specific groups (Wong et al., 2015). The online environment allows anyone with access to social media channels to communicate their opinions and perspectives. Users can post their views on various social, political, and economic current events and thereby contribute to the cyberculture discourse (Sacristán, 2013). In fact, cyberhate is experiencing a heightened prominence across Southeast Asia, India, Africa, Europe, and North America (Jakubowicz, 2017). Social media platforms, as they exist across various virtual channels, facilitate the communication and interaction of hateful and discriminatory content that may also include extremist views that encourage radical ideologies in their messaging (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012; Rone, 2022). There has been a rise in intolerant and extremist views expressed across the internet cyberculture, including on social media sites that have an extensive reach for prospective audiences and users. The

racist and discriminatory viewpoints have significant adverse consequences for targeted groups in society (Author; Daniels, 2009) and can enable radicalized communities of individuals that define themselves as defending so-called traditional values and nationalistic beliefs to direct their hate against those groups and/or members in society who do not share these potentially deleterious ideologies (Freilich et al., 2009).

YouTube, an online sharing electronic platform, allows viewers to watch, create, and comment on videos. An estimated six billion hours of video are watched on a monthly basis (Algonquin College, n.d.). Generally speaking, users can post comments on each respective video site to communicate their thoughts with others. This open communication platform can be a venue for the dissemination of hate-filled comments. Cyberhate is defined as discourse involving the use of electronic communications technology to share racist content and extremist ideologies that advocate for discriminatory views and practices by attacking the identity of the targeted group (Anti-Defamation League, 2010; Isasi & Juanatey, 2016).

1.2 Contextual Framework

The context of online hate speech is consequential for marginalized groups worldwide. As examples, consider the hateful speech across social media platforms that was an outcome of the 2019 Christchurch terrorist attacks in New Zealand (Tan, 2022), or in Indonesia where hate speech is often associated with socio-political issues that adversely implicate people's religious beliefs (Magfirah & Saputra, 2021; Sazali et al., 2022). Like Australia, Indonesia has also experienced a rise in Islamophobia among virtual communities and social media channels (Kastolani, 2020; Pohjonen & Udupa, 2017). Consider, too, the prominence of hate speech in Japan, where, similar to Indonesia, hate narratives in social media contexts propagate discrimination and ideological aggression (Akuzawa, 2016; Ash-Shidiq & Pratama, 2021; Septiana et al., 2025). Highly diverse populations in Sri Lanka are also subject to the emergence of cyberhate in social media that targets religious communities and ethnic groups (Perera et al., 2023).

Hence, the Indigenous Peoples of Canada are no exception to being targets of cyberhate. Racist and discriminatory comments directed towards Indigenous persons are often the source of social division and give rise to pre-existing false assumptions (e.g., see Abraha, 2017; Yimam et al., 2019). Online posts are often typical of misinformation that only polarizes the impending social and political circumstances of the targeted population by bringing to light the apparent injustices of government and social initiatives that invest in matters of social justice at the expense of the interests of Canadian nationalists (e.g., see Public Safety Canada, 2025). This research study, therefore, addresses the need to investigate more comprehensively the public discourse, as it is posted on the YouTube social media site, in relation to Indigenous-settler relations. The research focuses on this online space where socio-political and socio-economic perspectives are readily shared and exchanged among users and in the process contribute to a divisive and dangerous social reality (Kopytowska, 2017).

YouTube is one of various online video channels that have become social media platforms to access and participate in hate speech and distribute far-right ideologies (Caiani & Parenti, 2016; Marwick & Lewis, 2017). Of note to the study under discussion are the social posts related to specific videos shared on YouTube platforms that focus on Indigenous Peoples' rights and socio-political circumstances. The posts reflect settler colonial sentiments that in themselves are often normative constructs based on Eurocentric hegemonic traditions at the peril of Indigenous Peoples' conditions (e.g., see Moreton-Robinson, 2015; Moreton-Robinson et al., 2008). The comments are typically highly subjective and, as some scholars suggest, characteristic of shifting levels of harm protected by the principles of free speech (Ayele et al., 2024; Madukwe et al., 2020). The social posts can range from moderate levels of stereotyping to direct appeals for violence against the targeted population (Ayele et al., 2024; Beyhan et al., 2022).

This paper is a component of a larger research study that recognizes that the various and recent Canadian government public commissions and apologies to Indigenous Peoples for the consequences of the residential school system (see Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996; Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada [TRC], 2015) and the brutal tribulations experienced by Indigenous women (see National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, 2019) "coexist with a denial of Canadian settler colonialism"

(Mudde, 2020, p. 48). As stated in previous studies (Author), the social posts across various social media platforms situate Indigenous Peoples' realities in the context of a colonial historical interpretation (Smith, 2021), despite the awareness of the injustices they experience having been brought to public attention. The discriminatory sentiments of Canadian nationalists can be positioned as a justification to racialize Indigenous Peoples by their difference and racial inferiority (Burton et al., 2010).

2. Method

Discourse analysis, as a qualitative method, was used in this and the related studies on the topic. The discourse of the social media posts shared on two YouTube sites is the object of analysis (da Silva & de Castro e Silva, 2020; Orlandi, 2012). The method facilitates an examination of language as it is used in the specific field of social posts to better understand the nature of communication amongst users (Vine, 2023).

For this study, two YouTube videos downloaded from a major Canadian newscast (CityNews and Global News) were selected. The videos, entitled *Human Rights Report Highlights Canada's Violation of Indigenous Rights* and *Canada Still Failing to Address Indigenous Rights*, describe a Human Rights Watch (2023) report that outlines Canada's violations of these rights. Twenty-two comments and 3,071 views were recorded for the CityNews video, and 81 comments and 6,300 views were recorded for the Global News video since their respective postings in January 2023. The analysis sorted the top comments as identified by the YouTube platform. In total, 13 and 31 comments that connotated and/or denotated anti-Indigenous sentiments from the respective videos were selected for analysis.

The methodology used in this study considers knowledge as an extension of the social realm and reflective of reality (Dunn & Neumann, 2016). It understands meaning to be an outcome of the construction of a particular discourse—in this case, the conversation in response to the two YouTube videos of national news broadcasts that focus on the same topic. Language, in this way, is very much social because subjects and material realities are attributed specific meaning and assume certain identities (Hansen, 2006). The written texts and posts are considered data and represent a phenomenon that is relevant beyond an individual person, as the language itself captures the emergence of certain conventions in the broader relationships of the conversation (Taylor, 2013). It is important to note, then, that the language is not understood as explaining the world but, rather, facilitating the production of it (Dunn & Neumann, 2016).

The aim of the study, thus, is to examine the discourse to better perceive the construction of reality and the subsequent versions of truth. According to Bartelson (1995), the discourses under examination are statements that organize specific practices, allowing the researcher to “focus on continuity, change, or rupture within specific discourses, either within a specific historical moment or comparatively” (Mutlu & Salter, 2013, pp. 113–114). The investigation is focused on the interaction of communication to describe the social practice of the collective, and then the respective beliefs, values, and social identities of the membership (e.g., see Gee, 2011, 2014). The analysis lends itself to a social constructionist framework because the commentators' identities are subject to analysis given the language they employ to represent the social world to which they directly contribute (Vine, 2023).

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 News Source 1

The first of two YouTube videos is from a national news source in Canada (CityNews) and provides a journalistic summary of Canada's failure to address fundamental Indigenous rights (as chronicled in the Human Rights Watch report). Users posted their comments in response to the news story on the social media platform for others to read and/or respond.

The discursive frames of reference convey a profound cynicism on the part of most commentators. The rights of Indigenous Peoples are described in a language of incomprehension. One comment, relatively typical of others, presents a misinformed contemporary perspective of the Canadian government's role in addressing the serious

challenges across Indigenous communities as they relate to the accessibility of safe and clean drinking water, sustainable living conditions, and health-related disparities: “I don't understand. [Indigenous Peoples] want nothing to do with us, but yet at the same time, they want our stuff and us to look after them?” The language of the statement suggests that Indigenous Peoples seek no relationship with settler Canadians, yet the hallmark Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1996) and TRC (2015) reports were both widely publicized as strategic initiatives to strengthen and promote reconciliatory and equitable relations. The same comment falsely positions Indigenous communities in a rhetoric of dependency, implying that their welfare and sustainability hinge on the stewardship of mainstream Canadians, thereby neglecting the rich history of Indigenous Peoples that existed across Turtle Island far before first contact.

A different post uses an incredulous tone already established across a number of posts to belittle the serious and detrimental living conditions of some Indigenous communities discussed in the YouTube news broadcast. The Human Rights Watch report brings to light the various consequences for some Indigenous communities that are forced to tolerate dilapidated living conditions. Yet, the commentator readily dismisses such claims: “If a house has windows, then why would it have a problem with poor ventilation?” The post ignores the destitute housing predicaments and instead offers a resolution couched in simplistic terms to further underscore what is described as Indigenous Peoples’ lack of self-sufficiency.

The rhetoric across the posts frames a social reality that positions Indigenous communities as undeserving of further support and consideration from what is implied to be a historically generous Canadian public. Commentators refuse to discuss the violations of Indigenous Peoples’ rights and instead focus on particular issues that they believe have obvious and basic solutions. The implication of this rhetoric is the connotation that Indigenous communities cannot recognize these fundamental resources. As a result, commentators readily reject the apparent false claims as they relate, in this instance, to the accessibility of clean drinking water: “Don’t be mad ... the rest of the country gets lead pipes running to their homes.” The tone is clearly condescending. The user sets aside the glaring statistics and first-hand video of the newscast that describe Indigenous communities’ difficulty accessing clean drinking water. The cynicism embedded in the rhetoric that appeals directly to the same Indigenous communities experiencing these challenges is inappropriate and harmful. The commentator’s attempt to console Indigenous Peoples is insincere. The suggestion is made that non-Indigenous communities also experience challenges with accessing clean water. The rhetoric frames a social reality whereby Indigenous and non-Indigenous persons share a common adverse circumstance and, in the process, implies that Indigenous communities should have little to no priority in mainstream society’s attention to these matters.

A similar tone is represented in posts that offer a comparative viewpoint, persuading viewers to recognize the unfairness of catering to Indigenous rights. A commentator writes, “And everyone else [has] rights ... ahem ... vaccine mandates, the emergency act, travel mandates etc. etc.” The language evokes frustration. The post implies that despite the circumstances that trouble Indigenous communities as documented in the video, the rights of Canadians should be at the very least of equal priority. There is no mention of the historical wrongdoings of colonial practices that continue to jeopardize a sustainable and healthy way of life for Indigenous Peoples and communities. Instead, the post underpins colloquial frames of reference to redirect viewers’ attention from the video to the equally pressing concerns of all Canadians’ rights. The commentator cites the social and health restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic as examples of rights violations. The discourse shifts attention immediately from the disconcerting images of the video to what many Canadians believe to have been an unfair imposition of their civil liberties during the pandemic. By citing the example of the social and health restrictions, the commentator incorporates what may be a tangible and understandable perspective for most viewers, unlike, one might surmise, the less-relatable issues that plague Indigenous communities that are discussed in the news broadcast.

A different post confuses the concept of rights, stating that Indigenous Peoples “want separate ‘rights’ [but] human rights are just fine.” Note that Indigenous Peoples’ claims are situated in a language of privilege. Comments like this one imply that the rights to which Indigenous Peoples are entitled and embedded in treaty agreements are superior to the rights afforded to all Canadians. The discourse is very much a negation of difference. For this user,

and others like them, the historical and contemporary plight of Indigenous communities (despite the telling conditions and statistics described in the Human Rights Watch report) is not worthy of distinction.

For some users, the apparent historical record of financial investments on the part of the Canadian government simply contributes to what is clearly a sense of moral fatigue. Commentators readily note the extensive funding on the part of the federal government to improve the living conditions of Indigenous Peoples living on reserve lands that has, according to these viewers, resulted in few positive outcomes. Consider the following post as one example: “They have been given billions [of dollars], yet the bands steal the money instead of spending it on infrastructure like every other community!” The tone is dramatic. The discourse evokes connotations of a sizable amount of public financial support and uses the rhetoric of blame to make the case that Indigenous community leaders exploit the funding for self-serving interests at the peril of the tax-paying public at large. The issue of limited access to clean water on some Indigenous reserves, as one example featured in the news report, is summarily dismissed by laying blame on the Indigenous communities themselves. The user transitions the dramatic and accusatory rhetoric into a direct comparison with Canadian mainstream communities that seemingly are far more prudent in distributing sources of funding to cater to most citizens. One senses the moral fatigue in the rhetoric of this post, and others like it, that imply a lack of patience with the continued funding to improve Indigenous communities’ living conditions.

Note also how the dramatic and blameful rhetoric formulated in a sense of moral fatigue appeals to like-minded readers who may share these misinformed opinions. The posts present a subjective and misguided interpretation of social truth. For those Canadians already disgruntled by federal and provincial political agendas that support Indigenous Peoples’ welfare, these posts invite them to consider how such programs undermine their own welfare as Canadians. The posts appeal to those already bothered as they do to individuals who may have been harboring the same sentiments but have not located a place and space where these views are readily shared. The hateful rhetoric, in these instances, affirms the sense of moral fatigue that may be attributed to having spent financial resources on Indigenous communities that remain encumbered by the same issues the funding was meant to resolve. It is interesting how Indigenous communities are framed in a discourse of difference set apart from “every other community.” The identities between Indigenous Peoples and non-Indigenous Canadians in this construction of social reality are quite striking. The latter assumes an identity of superiority whose generosity and goodwill have been exhausted.

The rhetoric of blame is sustained by subsequent posts and is an example of how one sentiment fuels other hateful comments. The frames of reference falsely situate Indigenous Peoples as bearing the fault of their own misfortune. In the process, the language seems to absolve Canadians of their treaty obligations and other responsibilities to Indigenous Peoples. As this post states, “This is the fault of native leaders, who refuse to dig the earth to lay proper pipes and instead choose to have reservoirs full of still water. Modernize or die.” Here, too, Indigenous community leaders are criticized, and in this instance for their refusal to agree to what is positioned as the more prudent decision to engage in pipeline construction. The comment, and others like it, bring no attention to the spiritual and cultural significance of the land and Mother Earth that are honored by Indigenous Peoples and traditions. Instead, Indigenous community leaders are critiqued for not succumbing to the apparent priority to abide by the terms of progress established by some non-Indigenous interests. The post aims to appeal to a degree of common sense to persuade viewers that the alternative to pipeline construction is to maintain an unsustainable, dangerous, and unhealthy option—“reservoirs of still water.” The implication in these discursive frames of reference is that Indigenous Peoples are deliberately choosing to disregard more viable options to better their living conditions.

Such positions are situated in frames of reference that discount Indigenous worldviews. One wonders: is the latter commentator confusing the construction of industrial pipelines to transport oil across Indigenous territory to various ports in Canada with the building of plumbing infrastructures for communal water distribution? Regardless of its intentionality, the object of the discourse (pipeline construction) takes center stage in the post and may contribute to the negative public sentiment against those Indigenous groups that rallied against the oil pipeline construction across Canada (e.g., see CBC News, 2021; Gaglione, 2023). In a brutal and blunt concluding statement, the commentator offers Indigenous Peoples a ludicrous ultimatum: they can either abide by settler

priorities captured in the language of modernization or simply cease to exist. The concept of modernization is understood in settler-colonial terms and readily negates Indigenous worldviews and beliefs.

The rhetoric, perhaps a consequence of the moral fatigue across this and other posts, is emotionally based and entices conclusive outcomes meant to foster the impatience and intolerance of Canadian nationalists. It is an example of hate-filled discourse in one cyberspace platform. The language is extremist and appalling. It seems, moreover, intentionally situated to dismiss the violation of Indigenous Peoples' human rights and, in the process, raise the temperature of viewers to create an equally strong and passionate tone. Canadians, it would imply, should not feel shameful for Indigenous Peoples' circumstances despite the realities depicted in the video and noted in the Human Rights Watch report.

3.2 News Source 2

The second video under analysis and posted on YouTube relates to Canada's response to the various issues that challenge Indigenous Peoples, including violence, poverty, and social and health inequities. There were 31 comments selected for analysis.

There is a strong sense of resentment across most of the selected posts. Commentators readily dismiss the profound challenges experienced by Indigenous Peoples that are presented in the Human Rights Watch report and instead express their frustration with the perceived privileged treatment of Indigenous Peoples by the Canadian federal government. The frustration is often framed by a rhetoric of cynicism. One comment suggests that "taxpayers will continue to pay for everything they can, buy housing for everyone, and let everyone out of jail" on condition that Indigenous Peoples care for their property and abide by the law. The commentator uses a sweeping and false statement of citizens paying for Indigenous Peoples' needs in an attempt to influence readers' preexisting grievances. The comment relies on a misdirected sense of the lack of accountability in the Canadian justice system that supposedly favors Indigenous Peoples' interests. The rhetoric implies that Canadians, and not Indigenous Peoples, are treated inequitably. Equally apparent is the damaging tone throughout the discourse that suggests a lack of appreciation on the part of Indigenous Peoples for the taxpaying public's generosity. The discourse is hyperbolic and creates a social phenomenon that is unsustainable for mainstream Canadians.

In other comments, individuals criticize federal government policy that is "failing to address all human rights issues for everyone [and] not just Indigenous people." The commentator couches the blame in a rhetoric of victimization, including the mainstream public. The suggestion is that all Canadians experience the same challenges as Indigenous community members. Note how the language essentially erases the unique ordeals of Indigenous Peoples that are rooted in colonial oppression. Interpretations based on settler colonial perspectives remain the controlling narrative to describe the social phenomenon. Interestingly, though, the discourse does not implicate the violation of Indigenous Peoples chronicled by the YouTube video but instead serves to establish a counter social practice whereby injustice is not exclusive to Indigenous Peoples.

In the same way, and equally significant, the rhetoric inherent in some comments points to what is best described as moral fatigue. In several posts, commentators assume the stance of speaking on other people's behalf. One post stated that "this story is making less sense to more people the more we hear about it." Here, too, the discursive frames of reference reflect a tone of utter frustration by suggesting that the masses, the larger collective of Canadian society that are separate and distinct from First Nations people, are becoming increasingly dismayed by the seemingly constant reports of the injustices against Indigenous Peoples. The commentator constructs a distinct identity characteristic of Canadian nationalist ideologies. In fact, the rhetorical tone suggests that the heightened exposure to Indigenous Peoples' challenging conditions and rights violations essentially serves to confuse Canadian consciousness only further—as if the contemporary realities of Indigenous Peoples could not be comprehended to begin with. Relatedly, the oversimplification expressed in a rhetoric of ignorance draws public attention to the financial commitments invested in Indigenous affairs, as one post stated, "Money, money, money. More handouts based on lies." The commentator uses repetition to accentuate the prolonged commitment that the Canadian public has already made to address Indigenous community concerns, identifying in the same sentiment the economic investments as mere unmerited donations in response to false truths. The rhetoric represents a denial

of the very realities that confront Indigenous Peoples and communities and implies that colonial history is the accepted truth in the construction of the social world characteristic of anti-Indigenous sentiments. The discursive frames of reference suggest that the claims, statistics, and realities that confront Indigenous communities are mere dishonest representations to further solicit support and draw from an already burdened taxpaying public.

The rhetoric across the commentaries is unmistakably one of moral fatigue. Commentators readily speak on behalf of all those who subscribe to Canadian nationalist ideals to convey their weariness of experiencing less privilege than Indigenous Peoples. The discursive frame of reference is one of intolerance. The appeal is very emotionally based:

Same rights as any Canadian, plus no property taxes to pay, plus income from activities that are illegal for other Canadians such as selling cigarettes or big game hunting out of season ... plus a cheque for \$20K per commune member every time someone mentions “residential schools” or “murdered and missing.”

Commentators invite readers to consider the apparent injustices related to the processes and procedures that concede certain privileges to only Indigenous community members. The frames of reference position Indigenous Peoples as exploiting the interests of Canadian nationals since they are exempt from taxes and can reap the benefits of otherwise illegal activities. The language creates a seemingly intolerable social phenomenon. The rhetoric is meant to give viewers pause for concern. For nationalists who feel already underserved by political agendas, the rhetoric of this post (and those like it) invites a comparison of social and economic welfare. Note, too, how the federal commissions that garnered widespread national media interest and attested to the cultural genocide of residential school practices and the disparate casualties of Indigenous women (e.g., see National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, 2019; TRC, 2015) are readily dismissed by false claims of compensation. The profound realities and social practices captured in both reports are formulated in a vocabulary that gives no credence to the first-hand testimonies of Indigenous Peoples who are directly connected to the cruelties.

Especially telling is the post that identifies in most candid terms the hate speech captured across the communication of this social media platform: “Every single person commenting has hate towards indigenous people in this commenting section.” It is important to distinguish, however, that none of the posts are necessarily in violation of the Canadian Digital Charter. The Government of Canada instated Canada’s Digital Charter that includes the expectation that digital platforms will not shelter hateful and extremist ideologies (Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada, 2019). But in all instances, however, the posts harbor connotations of extremist hate rhetoric. Moreover, these same discourses are readily available to anyone who accesses YouTube, regardless of age. The digital platform is very mainstream. The posts include rhetoric that embraces hate and extremist views and celebrates nationalist principles reflective of settler colonial historical narratives. For this reason, it is not uncommon to read posts in which commentators take it upon themselves to embody the identity of all Canadian nationalists: “Natives care, the citizens don’t. Give it a rest already; this is getting really old. Just give them another billion dollars. That will make them go away for a while again.” The frames of reference are extremely damaging. The hateful rhetoric is embedded in a narrative of moral fatigue while affirming for other like-minded individuals that their intolerance towards the supposed injustices of Indigenous Peoples is legitimate. Again, those with preconceived grievances towards Indigenous communities may experience a sense of affirmation in knowing that others, too, perceive the government’s unfair treatment of Canadian nationals.

In the same light, the rhetoric of other posts seeks to console any feelings of guilt that Canadians may be experiencing watching the video of Indigenous rights violations. One post uses discursive frames of reference to justify a social construction of reality that absolves Canadians of further obligation:

Natives right[s]? They already get money from us for drugs. Clean water? Without us, they wouldn’t have water to drink at all. What do they want? In reality, always the most useless people are the most dependent people

Note the oppositional language of us versus them to distinguish the noble commitments of Canadians that stand in direct juxtaposition to the overwhelming dependency of Indigenous communities. Canadians, in this and similar

posts, are positioned as benevolent in their commitment to the apparently despondent Indigenous communities. Using rhetorical questions, the commentator invites readers into the critical conversation intended to persuade them of the fact that Canadians have essentially exceeded expectations in caring for these marginalized populations. Here, too, the sense of moral fatigue is interwoven in the discourse. The discourse attempts to position a seemingly conclusive and convincing statement in response to the questions. Readers are left to wonder what Indigenous Peoples could possibly want more in response to Canadians' generosity. The final statement is reminiscent of a far more forceful tone and is positioned in the diction of "reality." The commentator can apparently speak from a position of expertise given that they have established an irrefutable argument. In deprecating frames of reference, Indigenous Peoples are described as supremely inadequate given their reliance on Canadians to support their well-being.

The respective posts seem to fuel a collective momentum characteristic of hate-filled discourse. Consider the following:

Never mind the Indigenous communities: non-indigenous peoples are stuck with a federal government that doesn't give two cents about the rights of Canadians. Period. There's no need to perpetuate the "victim mentality" and "racist treatment" always referred to by one part of the population: every elderly person, disabled individual, or run-of-the-mill Caucasian continues to pay for what other people—those who were completely unrelated to them from every angle—did to indigenous persons of yesteryear. ... God forbid if you're white in Canada today. You have to apologize for being white, even when you have done nothing to apologize for. Young white men are at the bottom of the totem pole. Period.

The appeal to those Canadians who are already disgruntled by government initiatives to remedy the challenges experienced by Indigenous Peoples is striking. Distinct to the rhetoric are feelings of moral fatigue experienced by Canadians who are unwilling to tolerate conversations that espouse the interests of Indigenous peoples. Note, too, how the commentator absolves all nationalists of feeling remorseful for past harms to Indigenous communities. There is neither acknowledgment nor tolerance for the contemporary violations to Indigenous Peoples documented in the video that are rooted in colonial practices. Moreover, the specific reference to "young white men" is also quite telling. The literature suggests that young people can be especially susceptible to extremist ideologies, particularly when they perceive little hope for their future and feel separated from the traditions, beliefs, and cultural identities of their nation, and as a result succumb to a sense of moral panic (see Donaldson, 2017; Author). The post states in unequivocal terms that white males in Canada have been relegated to a significantly inferior status and appropriates the totem pole—an Indigenous symbol to commemorate individuals and events—to underscore the comparison.

4. Conclusion

Social media platforms have become a venue for hate speech around the world. It is a cyberculture discourse that entertains comments from users about social, political, and economic current events and can be a virtual location to spread discriminatory and racist views. YouTube, an online sharing platform, permits users to post comments regarding each of their videos. This investigation analyzes the public discourse corresponding to Indigenous-settler relations in Canada in the broader context of key federal government initiatives and responses to the historical realities that have negative implications on Indigenous Peoples' contemporary living conditions and social welfare. Using a discourse analysis approach, the analysis discusses the frames of reference from selected posts that capture a tone of incredulity and cynicism from anti-Indigenous perspectives. The posts, then, when considered from a social constructionist framework, reflect a sense of moral fatigue on the part of commentators who rely on exaggerated and misconstrued truths that appeal to already disillusioned viewers. The rhetoric is hateful and extremist. It dismisses the violation of human rights experienced by Indigenous Peoples and communities that are documented in the videos and in the Human Rights Watch report.

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