

# NARRATIVES IN NEGLECT

**HOW MEDIA ERASURE  
OF CANADA'S FULL STORY  
IS DIVIDING THE NATION**

Prepared for  
Canadian Network for Equity and Racial Justice  
Shree Paradkar  
Journalist  
2025

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION..... 2

WHAT IS REPRESENTATION? WHAT ARE ITS LIMITATIONS? ..... 4

HISTORY WRITTEN IN A HURRY..... 6

    1700-1900..... 7

    1900 ONWARDS .....10

    9/11.....14

THE ARGUMENT OF PRESENTISM.....15

THE “WHO” IN NEWSROOMS.....17

A DECADE OF TUMULT, A YEAR OF HOPE.....21

    THE RECKONING .....22

THE “HOW” OF NEWS COVERAGE AND “WHOSE” PERSPECTIVES .....26

CONCLUSION .....30

    MECHANICS OF OPPRESSION .....30

    IMPACTS OF EXCLUSION .....31

## INTRODUCTION

On a blisteringly cold January morning in 2025, about 100 activists — including student journalists — took to Toronto’s arterial King St East, marched to *The Globe and Mail* office and held a sit-in at the lobby. Members of the Palestine Youth Movement and other groups distributed a newspaper-style pamphlet decrying “*The Globe and Mail’s* bloodstained record,” and unfurled an estimated 40-foot-long scroll that carried the names of Palestinian journalists killed by Israel during the first 16 months of its bloody war on Gaza.

One article they cited as evidence of the newspaper’s support for Israel’s brutal response to Hamas’ violent attacks of Oct. 7, 2023 was a *Globe* editorial<sup>1</sup> published three days later. While it called for restraint, the editorial said: “Israel has the right to defend itself, even if the exercise of that right results in collateral civilian casualties,” and that “Canada “must stand by Israel through to the end”. At the time of the protest, Israel had killed about 46,000 Palestinians. (An article published in *The Lancet*<sup>2</sup> medical journal has estimated Gaza’s death toll as being about 40 per cent higher than official numbers.)

Many experts, including major human rights organizations, have concluded<sup>3</sup> that Israeli actions<sup>4</sup> amount to genocide<sup>5</sup> against Palestinians.

The *Globe* is not alone in being thus castigated. Whether or not one agrees with the activists’ viewpoint, their action highlights one certainty: Canadian media coverage of the ongoing Israel-Palestine crisis has exacerbated Canada’s own existential crisis by challenging the country’s notions of what it means to be a multicultural society, pried open festering fissures in perceptions of media bias and given new wings to long-standing complaints about unrepresentative and unfair coverage of marginalized peoples. As Canadians witness the violence in Gaza being live-streamed on devices held in their palms, many see the media as downplaying that violence and Israel’s culpability for it.

---

<sup>1</sup> Canada must stand by Israel <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/editorials/article-canada-must-stand-by-israel/>

<sup>2</sup> Traumatic injury mortality in the Gaza Strip from Oct 7, 2023, to June 30, 2024: a capture–recapture analysis [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(24\)02678-3/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(24)02678-3/fulltext)

<sup>3</sup> Genocide in Gaza: Analysis of International Law and its Application to Israel’s Military Actions since October 7, 2023 <https://www.humanrightsnetwork.org/publications/genocide-in-gaza>

<sup>4</sup> Israel’s Crime of Extermination, Acts of Genocide in Gaza <https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/12/19/israels-crime-extermiation-acts-genocide-gaza>

<sup>5</sup> Amnesty International investigation concludes Israel is committing genocide against Palestinians in Gaza <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2024/12/amnesty-international-concludes-israel-is-committing-genocide-against-palestinians-in-gaza/>

It's impossible to analyze issues of social justice and representation in the media without specifically acknowledging its handling of Israel-Palestine. The Canadian media coverage of the Middle East underscores its grave delinquency towards urgent issues of representation in the industry, including a consistent tendency to reject the views of community members the Canadian establishment deems "the other."

This is happening as journalists around the world pay a price for reporting - often with their lives. Even in many supposed democracies, this is a period of rapidly dwindling media freedoms.

The mandate of this report is to analyze the current state of representation in the media. Since a denial of the past often feeds into a denial of the present, this report takes a longer view and studies centuries of Canadian media behaviour to consider whether historical patterns are also being reproduced in a contemporary context. It relies on dozens of books, studies and reports, and connects personal experiences with data. This analysis attempts to lift the veil on the societal impact of stubborn media practices and explicitly name the mechanics of oppression found in the industry.

The report establishes a baseline understanding of the term "representation in media" and explains the limitations of the concept of representation. It considers the argument of "presentism" — of judging the past by today's standards — and whether the argument has merit. It considers whether the two watershed moments of the past decade — the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report in 2015 and the global reckoning against anti-Black racism in 2020 — shifted public discourse and changed media practices. Finally, it lays out its conclusions.

For the purpose of this report, "media" is used as a singular term, interchangeable with the English-language news industry that consists of legacy, corporate news organizations as well as public broadcasters such as the CBC. Where the analysis touches upon other media, such as social media, independent news outlets, films or advertising, it will specify them as such. The examples of media coverage included herein are not exhaustive.

The findings from this examination of racial representation in media may also be useful for considering other forms of marginalization, including regional sidelining. It is also applicable to French-language newsrooms, which encounter most or all of the same issues, albeit within a slightly different social context and a framework of universalism.

This report rejects any discourse on the material benefits and rewards of diverse and inclusive workplaces — such as attracting wider audiences or being better for the bottomline — viewing them as discriminatory and demeaning to the intrinsic worth of all

humans. This is evidenced by the fact that white-dominated media spaces don't have to justify themselves in this way.

In the current context of chaos — wars, the climate crisis, migrants in crisis and an American president's stated goal of annexing this country — Canada finds itself on the (Western) frontlines in the defence of an international order based on respect for sovereignty and freedom. The need for the media to break with imperial practices in order to meet the moment is more urgent than ever.

## WHAT IS REPRESENTATION? WHAT ARE ITS LIMITATIONS?

There are various angles and approaches to understanding the term “representation”. Unlike in many sectors, representation in the media is not limited to the composition of its workforce, achieved with hiring journalists from diverse backgrounds and advocating for their rise to senior positions — although that is an important consideration. In journalism, representation also has external-facing elements. One of them is *how* newsrooms cover issues of race, ethnicity, gender, age, ability, sexuality and regional identities: if they afford them priority, prominent placement, context, followup resources, etc. The other function lies in *whose* perspectives the media privileges, evidenced in whom it considers credible experts, and who its sources of information are.

Human beings connect with issues that impact them. When journalists and sources come from a diversity of backgrounds, they automatically carry diverse viewpoints. Those from oppressed backgrounds “have more informative experiences...for understanding the workings of social marginalization, better communal networks for sharing this understanding and prudential interests in obtaining such understanding if it can help alleviate their position.”<sup>6</sup>. They can flag and highlight incidents or sources that may not surface via a homogenous media lens.

Media that gathers and values a wide range of ideas and perspectives simply gives life to its stated core values of accuracy, balance, fairness and journalistic independence. However, when the media repeatedly rebuffs and/or undervalues the viewpoints, concerns and suggestions of journalists, experts and sources from non-dominant groups, and when it does not take their contributions seriously, it discriminates against that representation. Such prejudicial manifestations skew the social power dynamic, rendering non-white people as subordinate supplicants to power rather than equal partners with a stake in building and defending a just society.

---

<sup>6</sup> Is there an epistemic advantage to being oppressed? <https://philpapers.org/rec/DROITA-3> Lidal Dror

There is at least one under-considered outcome of not including different perspectives and not situating a news article fully and accurately in its context. The corporate media has long been perceived as a flawed but reliable source of information. However, when it continues to ignore perspectives that people are seeking, the media ends up creating an information vacuum that allows for mis- and dis-information to flourish. This process further polarizes an already divided populace, which then trusts the media even less. In this way, the media's reluctance to engage in representation poses an existential threat to itself.

Representation is valuable for role modelling.<sup>7</sup> Positive role models open the doors of possibility for youth (as well as adults), validate their identity and potential, help them combat negative stereotypes that might otherwise undermine their self-worth, foster a sense of belonging, and make the media accessible to more people.

Even with these high stakes, representation in media — or any sector — is far from the panacea to social and racial injustices. When representation is made tokenistic, reduced to the act of hiring a few people of colour, it can become almost meaningless. Such checkbox representation is based on the fallacy that individuals from marginalized backgrounds are automatic advocates for their communities and that they arrive armed with fully formed analyses of the systemic factors that drive marginalization. Although lived experience can open the door to insights, an analysis of oppression is not a given even among those who experience it. Rather, it requires study and an awakening of critical consciousness. Anti-oppressional analyses and theories are drawn from sophisticated academic thought and praxis that are based on lived experience and also on historical and contemporary data on the discriminatory and deadly impacts of social systems.

The on-the-ground reality is that journalists of minoritized backgrounds often simply want to work within the system just like white journalists do. They may also be equally capable of putting self-interest above socio-political interests, and as likely as anyone else to run interference for power or pay obeisance to it. They may be non-confrontational individuals. They may not be qualified to recognize stereotyping. They may have internalized a sense of inferiority or come to have believed those negative stereotypes about themselves, or they may let false narratives slide if they feel like their belonging to an institution is conditional on their silence. Merely showing up in a newsroom with melanin in one's skin is not, in itself, community representation.

When media organizations value the hiring of journalists of colour only to the extent that it allows those organizations to brand themselves as multicultural, they further erode the

---

<sup>7</sup> Race, Role Modelling, and Representation in Teacher Education and Teaching  
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/1585791?seq=2> R. Patrick Solomon

concept and value of representation. However, as various quantitative and qualitative data analyzed for this report will show, Canadian media has largely been unable to make room for representation even at this token, checkbox level of proportionate hiring.

Given these limitations, why chase representation in the media? Despite their waning influence in a fractured media landscape, legacy news organizations still set the agenda for establishment actors and policymakers to determine what topics are worthy of discussion and what the frameworks of those discussions will be. News organizations that devote resources to investigations and fact-checking play an essential role as societal watchdogs and are a crucial mechanism for accountability. Media is a vital creator of our collective memory, and the discourse it generates plays a pivotal role in shaping social norms and individual attitudes towards Indigeneity, race relations and human rights.

When reporters and editors lack cultural context, their work leads to one-dimensional portrayals of other communities that harm them.<sup>8</sup> A framework that departs from the norm may challenge the status quo but also makes room for a more broad-minded society.

Done right, representation can be an important first step to repair historical wrongs. It demands that institutions are serious about achieving social, racial and economic justice, and not view inclusiveness as a peripheral reputation-management strategy to shield themselves from criticism. Representation does not only call for the hiring of people who come from non-traditional backgrounds, it insists on recognizing and validating the expertise of those who have developed critical consciousness and providing genuine support for the changes they advocate in the face of inevitable backlash. Such experts don't just surface injustices in their own communities but are able to recognize and advocate for others', and in the process exponentially increase a newsroom's reach and ability. Only when these first steps are taken can there be a chance at overhauling journalistic practices to address systemic injustices.

## HISTORY WRITTEN IN A HURRY

All humans can dehumanize one another, exhibit bigotry and behave prejudicially. In identity-based oppression, a group that has control of, or is aligned with, the state apparatus deems other groups inferior, deviant and dangerous, and in need of being civilized or contained. Fear of "the other" makes oppressive social hierarchies particularly pernicious, because it allows the dominant group to deny its own power and appropriate the very vulnerability it creates in other groups. This allows it to inflate its

---

<sup>8</sup> Diversity in journalism <https://mediahelpingmedia.org/mangement/diversity-in-journalism/>

own “safety,” “security” and perceived victimhood into central societal concerns, dismissing the issues faced by oppressed groups as peripheral.

If journalism is “history written in a hurry,” it should not be surprising that a look at its historical record exhibits a certain thoughtlessness to issues of race and oppression. What is more, as this report will show, Canadian media has historically functioned as an enforcer of the oppressive machinery. To address the current crisis of poor representation *with a view to achieving justice*, it is important to contextualize the exclusionary and racist history of a press that is “strongly associated with the politics of imperialism and colonialism”<sup>9</sup>. Such an overview could help establish a pattern to the intractability of the media’s coverage of social and racial justice issues across time.

None of this is to say that Canadian media’s social function is uniformly, or even predominantly, malicious. Some modern examples of the media tackling systemic oppressions include *CBC* documentaries on Indian residential schools, the *Vancouver Sun* highlighting the intergenerational impact of discriminatory policies on Chinese Canadians and the *Toronto Star’s* “Known to Police” series in the early 2000s on anti-Black racism among police.

Media in Canada has a long and storied history spanning more than two centuries, evolving from small brochures and government proclamations into commercial newspapers and mass-audience dailies and broadcasters supported by advertising and run as corporations.

## 1700-1900

In the 1750s, newspapers began as a tool of government to print and distribute official documents.<sup>10</sup> The white editors and publishers who departed from publishing anything but government announcements were beaten, jailed and charged with seditious libel. This continued until the turn of the 18th century, when journalists attained independence from government interference.

But at the same time as newspapers were gaining the freedom to be critical of governments, they blossomed into a tool of colonial administration, championing policies that stripped Indigenous peoples of their lands and rights. The press foregrounded settler-colonial viewpoints and interests and reinforced racist notions.

---

<sup>9</sup> Politics, Society and the Media, Canadian Perspectives, Peter Nesbitt-Larking

<sup>10</sup> The Rise of the Canadian Newspaper Paperback George Fetherling

In the 1750s, for instance, Canada's first newspaper, the *Halifax Gazette*,<sup>11</sup> published official advertisements encouraging European settlements on supposedly "empty" or "available" land for settlers. It also frequently featured stories about the threat of attacks by Indigenous peoples, chiefly the Mi'kmaq. It was common for papers such as the *Quebec Gazette* and *Upper Canada Gazette* to profit from advertisements about the sale of enslaved people, legally defined as "muebles,"<sup>12</sup> or movable personal property. For instance, a May 16, 1793, issue of the *Montreal Gazette* carried a classified advertisement<sup>13</sup> to sell an "excellent Saddle Horse." Above it, an ad for the sale of "Mulatto Boy, sixteen years old."

For a large part of the 19th century, newspapers were partisan entities, reflecting the political views of the printers, who were financially dependent on a particular political party. Newspapers explicitly served as mouthpieces for political elites. Papers prized advocacy and advanced political causes. Many politicians from George Brown to Wilfrid Laurier started their careers as newsmen.<sup>14</sup> "Objectivity" as a professional norm was not yet a guiding principle.

While there was partisan sniping between Liberal-leaning papers and Conservative-leaning ones, both sides shared an underlying understanding of white-settler superiority. As a result, the press played a key role<sup>15</sup> in often uncritically amplifying racist ideas spouted by leaders, such as first Prime Minister John A. Macdonald, that Indigenous people were "savages" in need of civilization and control.

In the 1840s and 1850s, outlets like *The Globe* (founded in 1844 in Toronto) ran stories about "Indian atrocities" and continued to portray Indigenous groups as threats to white settlers. Such ideas in newspapers underpinned the creation of the heinous Indian Act of 1876, which was used to control Indigenous peoples and communities and attempted to assimilate them into Euro-centric Canadian life and values.<sup>16</sup>

While the 1850-1900 decades are often called the "nation-building period" in Canadian media history, the Canadian imagination of "nation" extended only to European settlers.

---

<sup>11</sup> The Founding of Halifax and the Halifax Gazette, 1749-1753 <https://epe.lac-bac.gc.ca/100/206/301/lac-bac/halifaxgazette-ef/halifaxgazette/h28-2004-e.html>

<sup>12</sup> "To Be Sold: A Negro Wench" Slave Ads of the Montreal Gazette 1785 -1805 <https://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/obj/thesescanada/vol2/QMM/TC-QMM-98920.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/obj/thesescanada/vol2/QMM/TC-QMM-98920.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> From Politics to Profit, Minko Sotiron

<sup>15</sup> Story by Story, Canada's News Media Built Indigenous Oppression <https://theyee.ca/Analysis/2021/06/21/Story-By-Story-Canada-News-Media-Built-Indigenous-Oppression/>

<sup>16</sup> Indigenous foundations

[https://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/the\\_indian\\_act/#:~:text=The%20Indian%20Act%20is%20a%20part%20of%20a%20long%20history,mainstream%20Canadian%20life%20and%20values.](https://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/the_indian_act/#:~:text=The%20Indian%20Act%20is%20a%20part%20of%20a%20long%20history,mainstream%20Canadian%20life%20and%20values.)

“Aboriginals fit in the Canadian colonial project as Others, designated outsiders in their own homeland.”<sup>17</sup>

During this time, the media — along with Canadian politicians and police — linked Blackness or Black “cultures” to criminality, danger and deviance<sup>18</sup>. The media iterated a myth of tolerance by downplaying and only sporadically covering slavery and anti-Black racism in Canada. The Canadian narratives of self were defined by its supposed benignity in comparison to the monstrosities of America. Issues such as segregation and unemployment barriers were rarely framed as racial injustices, but rather as a result of pathologies in the affected communities.

The efforts of pioneering Black papers such as *Voice of the Fugitive*<sup>19</sup> founded by Rev. Henry Bibb and his wife Mary E. Bibb and *The Provincial Freeman* founded by Mary Ann Shadd in the 1850s<sup>20</sup> that advocated for equality and freedom for Black people were not visible in the white-owned media.

The period between 1890 and 1920 marked a vital change in the industry with the commercialization of the newspaper business in response to rapid industrialization leading to growing urban centres, increased literacy and thus increased readership. There was now money to be made through a successful newspaper, and “publishers who were more entrepreneurial-minded came to the fore to found new newspapers or to take control of newspapers from the politicians,” writes Minko Sotiron in *From Politics to Profit*.

As publishers sought to maximize circulation among their predominantly white English- and French-speaking audiences to attract advertisers, they prioritized sensationalism and stereotypes over nuance. It was common to see overtly racist caricatures and editorials in the pages. Newspapers, now run as businesses with a white consumer base, had little incentive to challenge racial hierarchies. In this era when newspapers looked to reach the largest numbers of people, objectivity — or at least non-partisan neutrality — became a guiding value for journalism.

---

<sup>17</sup> Seeing Red: A history of natives in Canadian newspapers, Mark Cronlund Anderson and Carmen L. Robertson

<sup>18</sup> Policing Black Lives, Robyn Maynard

<sup>19</sup> Fugitive Voices: Black-run periodicals in Abolition-era Canada

<https://ourdigitalworld.org/2017/02/22/fugitive-voices-black-run-periodicals-in-abolition-era-canada/#:~:text=165%20years%20ago%2C%20on%20February,of%20the%20Voice%20in%201851>

<sup>20</sup> Black Press in Canada

[https://www.yorku.ca/aconline/l\\_press.html#:~:text=Early%20attempts%20to%20establish%20the,of%20black%20press%20in%20Canada](https://www.yorku.ca/aconline/l_press.html#:~:text=Early%20attempts%20to%20establish%20the,of%20black%20press%20in%20Canada)

In their examination of press content in Canada from 1869 to 2009<sup>21</sup>, scholars Mark Cronlund Anderson and Carmen L. Robertson outline three racist tropes through which the Canadian press cast Indigenous peoples: as epitomizing moral depravity; of being inherently racially inferior; and as mired in an unprogressive and non-evolving past. “Variations on the three perceptions include popular archetypal packaging such as the moribund Native, the savage, the Indian princess, the stoic or noble Native, the childish Native, the intemperate Native (a.k.a. the drunkard), and so on,” they write.

The media did not just reflect the racist norms of the time, they actively encouraged them. In the 1900s, newspapers such as the *Montreal Star* framed the immigration of Black Oklahomans to Alberta and Saskatchewan as a threat to white homogeneity.<sup>22</sup>

In the late 19th century, Chinese immigrants were instrumental in taking on gruelling and dangerous tasks in the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway that connected the east and west coasts. But the *Vancouver Daily World* and *Victoria Daily Colonist* ran stories in the 1880s and 1890s on how these immigrants posed a threat to the economy and culture, using terms such as “yellow hordes” and “oriental menace.” “Orient Still Sends Its Hordes,” read a front page headline in the *Vancouver World* in 1907<sup>23</sup>.

Newspapers also widely accepted the discrimination against Chinese immigrants that led to the Chinese Head Tax, and later the Chinese Exclusion Act<sup>24</sup>.

## 1900 ONWARDS

A historical analysis<sup>25</sup> of media and public opinion of the late 19th and early 20th century found Canadians staunchly opposed to Black migration, even as they “hid behind an outward civility” by claiming, for instance, that racism could be avoided if Black people were kept out of the country altogether. In the 1910s, the *Toronto Globe*, which reflected the views of the white elite, published editorials and reports opposing Black immigration, claiming it would be an economic burden leading to “racial strife” and that Black people were “unsuited” to Canada’s climate.

---

<sup>21</sup> Seeing Red: A History of Natives in Canadian Newspapers

<sup>22</sup> The Oklahoma Migration (Prairie Provinces) <https://www.historymuseum.ca/teachers-zone/early-black-communities/the-oklahoma-migration/>

<sup>23</sup> This Week in History: 1907 The Asiatic Exclusion League is formed <https://vancouversun.com/news/local-news/this-week-in-history-1907-the-asiatic-exclusion-league-is-formed>

<sup>24</sup> Before and After 1923: Chinese Exclusion in Context <https://pier21.ca/before-and-after-1923-chinese-exclusion-context>

<sup>25</sup> North of the color line <https://uncpress.org/book/9780807871669/north-of-the-color-line/>

Black communities were frequently stereotyped as inherently criminal or dangerous, and newspaper articles ignored structural factors such as racism, poverty and policy failures.

In 1936, the *CBC* was created. It was meant to reflect Canada to Canadians but did not have explicit obligations to Indigenous peoples. The collective imaginary of Canada remained limited to the conception of a nation of, and for, European settlers.

Sympathetic portrayals of non-white people often came attached with white saviourism. A 1937 story<sup>26</sup> in the *Toronto Daily Star* titled “Crippled Indian Girl Rescued By Missionary From Torture” described the rescue of six-year-old Emily, a “pitiful Cinderella of the northern reserves” suffering “another of those incredible stories of Indian cruelty.” It claimed a missionary witnessed her being beaten and asked if he could take the child to eventually put her up in a residential school. The pagan family “gladly agreed.” So kind, so good, so Christian was the missionary that “Emily tucked warmly in his sleigh, wondering, with those eyes of dog-like devotion, at the kindness, so strange to her.”

During the World Wars, the media coverage aligned with Canadian national interests, and Canadian residents from enemy countries faced significant discrimination, which was supported and amplified by the media<sup>27</sup>.

The *Canadian Press*, which is supposed to be a neutral, non-partisan agency that supplies news to media of all stripes, ran a story in 1942 titled: “Toronto Refuses to Take Any B.C. J- -s,<sup>28</sup> using a word to describe Japanese people that became pejorative in this time.

The liberalization of Canadian immigration policy in the 1960s saw an increased number of immigrants of non-European origin, who were referred to as “visible minorities” — as in those who were distinct from white people. During this time, the media did often speak up when white supremacy manifested visibly, particularly through the actions of the Ku Klux Klan that attacked Black people, Catholics and Jews, and neo-Nazi groups. *The Winnipeg Free Press*, the *CBC* and the *Toronto Star* were significant and consistent opposers of white supremacy in this form.

The historical legacy of this lopsided coverage was systemic othering. In 1979, Doreen Indra, later a Professor Emerita in Anthropology at the University of Lethbridge,

---

<sup>26</sup> Kamloops residential school discovery challenges the myth of The Good Canadian — again [https://www.thestar.com/opinion/star-columnists/kamloops-residential-school-discovery-challenges-the-myth-of-the-good-canadian-again/article\\_5b679ba7-1f4e-566c-ae89-ff076d3e73a3.html](https://www.thestar.com/opinion/star-columnists/kamloops-residential-school-discovery-challenges-the-myth-of-the-good-canadian-again/article_5b679ba7-1f4e-566c-ae89-ff076d3e73a3.html)

<sup>27</sup> Excerpt from *Of Japanese Descent: An Interim Report* <https://www.historymuseum.ca/teachers-zone/lost-liberties/second-world-war/excerpt-from-of-japanese-descent-an-interim-report/>

<sup>28</sup> Media Representation and the Injustices Against Japanese Canadians During World War II <https://wardmuseum.ca/myarchive/eastasianlibrary/monkman/>

conducted an expansive study of the coverage of ethnic and racial minorities in the Vancouver press from 1905 to 1976,<sup>29</sup> and found the media played a critical role in defining South Asians as chaotic, threatening and intrinsically dirty and unsanitary. She reports finding headlines such as: “Seventy Hindoos spend night in three-roomed shack: Vancouver’s ‘Black Hole of Calcutta,’” on page one of *The Vancouver World* in 1906. Rather than reflecting on inadequate housing and racism that saw South Asians being unable to rent homes, the media sought to blame them. Legacy media created filters that influenced perceptions that then reinforced negative stereotypes and societal divisions.

By the 1970s, the media’s continued commercialization meant it had started to become beholden to corporate interests.<sup>30</sup> Two studies — the Davey Committee’s of 1970 and the Kent Commission’s of 1981 — warned that “concentration of newspaper ownership led to a decrease in the variety of news and views in the daily publications and thus threatened the public’s right to freedom of expression, which they equated with freedom of the press.”

In 1971, in recognition of the cultural diversity of this country, then prime minister Pierre Trudeau announced Canada’s implementation of a policy of multiculturalism within a bilingual framework. The dailies ran news reports, features and letters from the public, reflecting a response that was varied and often touched on concerns of national unity. In 1972, the *Toronto Star* published an editorial that claimed the multiculturalism policy was a “cloudy idea” derived from a “dubious rationale” that could lead to the breakup of the country<sup>31</sup>.

In the 1980s and 1990s, even as growing non-white immigration began to change the demography of the nation and led to renewed racist backlash, multiculturalism policies began to be institutionalized. Canadians’ multicultural heritage was recognized in the constitution with the adoption of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in 1982<sup>32</sup>.

During this time, media outlets that linked crime to minority groups and stereotyped them as incompatible with “white values” fuelled racial panic among the white population they served, contributing to phenomena like “white flight,” or white people leaving their neighbourhoods as they become more diverse. For example, a series of

---

<sup>29</sup> South Asian stereotypes in the Vancouver press  
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/01419870.1979.9993261>

<sup>30</sup> From Politics to Profit: The Commercialization of Canadian Daily Newspapers, 1890-1920  
Minko Sotiron

<sup>31</sup> Early Political and Public Responses to Canada’s Official Multiculturalism Policy, 1971-1972  
<https://pier21.ca/research/immigration-history/canadas-official-multiculturalism-policy#>

<sup>32</sup> Canadian Multiculturalism Background Paper  
[https://lop.parl.ca/sites/PublicWebsite/default/en\\_CA/ResearchPublications/200920E#a2-2-3](https://lop.parl.ca/sites/PublicWebsite/default/en_CA/ResearchPublications/200920E#a2-2-3)

columns in the *Toronto Sun* critiqued the scale of immigration and framed the changes to Toronto neighbourhoods as disruptive to “established” communities. Spikes in crime in Toronto and Vancouver were often simplistically linked to immigrant communities. Opinion pieces and editorials in *The Globe and Mail* questioned whether multiculturalism diluted a “unified” Canadian identity.

Immigrants were routinely described<sup>33</sup> in public discourse as “invading hordes,” “wealthy belly-achers,” a “flood” or an “invasion” across Canada’s “porous border.”

When there were attempts to shed light on systemic racism, the media downplayed their importance. The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples was created in 1991 following the Oka Crisis a year prior, with the mandate to “deal with an accumulation of literally centuries of injustice.” That precipitating event, also known as the Kanesatake Resistance, arose when the Kaniienkehaka or Mohawks near the town of Oka, outside Montreal, formed a barricade to protest the expansion of a golf course onto Indigenous lands and burial grounds. Indigenous scholar Gail Guthrie Valaskakis noted<sup>34</sup> the media’s monolithic representation of the “Warrior” — a bandana-masked, khaki-clad, gun-toting Indian.

“Until the story of life in Canada, as Aboriginal people know it, finds a place in all Canadians' knowledge of their past, the wounds from historical violence and neglect will continue to fester — denied by Canadians at large and, perversely, generating shame in Aboriginal people because they cannot shake off the sense of powerlessness that made them vulnerable to injury in the first place,” reads Volume 1 of the Final Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples<sup>35</sup> in 1996.

Robert Harding, a social work professor at the University of the Fraser Valley, found the emergence of harmful new stereotypes in the ensuing decade, including Indigenous people as incapable of self-governance, and Indigenous peoples as “taking advantage”<sup>36</sup> of “special rights” and entitlements.

The founding of the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN) in 1992 was a landmark moment in media history, marking the launch of the world’s first national Indigenous broadcaster. It highlighted Indigenous-centred news and current affairs, documentaries and drama series.

---

<sup>33</sup> “Invasion” of the “Immigrant Hordes” : an analysis of current arguments in Canada against multiculturalism and immigration policy

<https://open.library.ubc.ca/soa/cIRcle/collections/ubctheses/831/items/1.0055531>

<sup>34</sup> Rights And Warriors: First Nations, Media And Identity

<https://journalhosting.ucalgary.ca/index.php/ariel/article/view/31259>

<sup>35</sup> Looking Forward Looking Back <https://data2.archives.ca/e/e448/e011188230-01.pdf>

<sup>36</sup><https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0957926506058059>

9/11

One event at the turn of the 21st century blasted through the lip service being paid to racial progress and saw the media reprise its World War role of deepening prejudices about people from “enemy” populations: Sept. 11, 2001, the day Al-Qaeda terrorists flew two passenger airplanes into the World Trade Centre and crashed one into the Pentagon, killing nearly 3,000 people.

Within days, columnists began making the case for military action<sup>37</sup> and signalled a willingness to accept collateral damage. The bloodthirsty rhetoric fuelled public support for wars and violations of civil liberties.

The media portrayal of Muslims in the aftermath constituted a “uniquely shameful chapter” in modern history, writes Haroon Siddiqui<sup>38</sup>, editorial page editor emeritus at the Toronto Star. Like the Japanese during World War II, Muslims were deemed fifth columnists (internal enemies) after the acts by a few Muslims were conflated with the deeds of all Muslims. Muslims and Muslim groups faced incessant political, public and media demands to “condemn terrorism.” At the same time, the media often failed to report on press conferences by Muslim groups held to condemn terrorism, leading to the perception that Muslims supported the act.

In 2003, the police arrested 23 Muslims, intimating that there was a plot to fly a plane into the Pickering Nuclear Generating Station near Toronto. The terror allegations were unfounded, and the people were released. In a later study<sup>39</sup>, the academic Felix Odartey-Wellington broke down how *The Globe and Mail* and *National Post* framed Muslims as the “folk devil” and created a moral panic even though “from the very beginning, the state could not conclusively say it had a case of terrorism on its hands.”

A decade later, two watershed moments would force Canadian media to reckon with its practices.

---

<sup>37</sup> Remembering Canadian Media’s Post-9/11 Bloodlust <https://www.readthemaple.com/remembering-canadian-medias-post-9-11-bloodlust/>

<sup>38</sup> My name is not Harry, Haroon Siddiqui

<sup>39</sup> “Racial Profiling and Moral Panic: Operation Thread and the Al-Qaeda Sleeper Cell that Never Was” [https://epe.lac-bac.gc.ca/100/201/300/global\\_media\\_journal/v02n02/0902/v2i2\\_odartey-wellington.pdf](https://epe.lac-bac.gc.ca/100/201/300/global_media_journal/v02n02/0902/v2i2_odartey-wellington.pdf)

## THE ARGUMENT OF PRESENTISM

When the media covered social justice issues such as labour rights, womens' rights, disability rights or sexuality rights, they were largely absent a racial or intersectional analysis.

For example, media stories that celebrated the fierceness of the suffragettes who helped women win the right to vote were in fact marking a victory not shared by all women. Asian women only won that right decades later, and a full and free right to vote for First Nations men and women didn't happen until 1960.

Such coverage showed how the media considered white middle-class sensibilities to be central, valid and noteworthy, with the concerns of non-white people as peripheral. The latter were largely considered so incompetent and inferior that their concerns simply did not register as important enough to matter.

The term "intersectionality" is often misunderstood to simply mean overlapping identities. Civil rights advocate and scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw, who coined the term specifically to clarify Black women's societal locations, uses it to describe how those overlapping identities interact with power to create new and compounding forms of discrimination.

This brings us to one criticism of media diversity that is commonly voiced in public discourse: presentism, or the application of present-day values to judge the past, that purportedly leads to a distortion of that earlier reality. The criticism is: Is it possible that media workers of past eras were just reflecting the times they lived in and simply did not know better?

After all, there are instances in the past where ignorance led to harm. For example, tobacco use — would people in the 1940s have smoked with such abandon if they knew its dangers as people do today?

However, "They did not know better" does not hold true when it comes to issues of colonialism and racial equity. The work of journalists such as Mary Ann Shadd Cary and Sam Ward at *The Provincial Freeman* in the 1850s is one example showing that contrary knowledge existed.

It could be argued, though, that the dominant white groups simply did not realize they were being discriminatory when they sidelined the views of these minority journalists. That the media was simply reflecting and amplifying the socio-political colonial attitudes of its day in a less enlightened era. In other words, was it not possible that Canadian

media was operating at a time when attitudes now considered discriminatory and bigoted were not recognized as such by reasonable people?

In response, it is worth considering not only the existence of alternate viewpoints found among members of oppressed groups but also historical pockets of protest against racist policies from white people, that suggest an understanding that the treatment of people in the margins was not consensual.

For instance, a July 1880 edition<sup>40</sup> of *Grip* magazine carried a cartoon depicting then prime minister John A. Macdonald as an auctioneer selling “the people of the Northwest” to make way for colonial settlement. Another cartoon a few years later in Toronto’s *News* commented on Canada’s westward expansion and the imposition of British law, military and police force to push Indigenous peoples off their land. It depicts Macdonald as a police officer using a baton to threaten a group of Indigenous people with the one hand while waving through a horde of colonial settlers with the other.

One now-known newly recognized hero of resistance was Peter Henderson Bryce<sup>41</sup>. Bryce was the chief medical officer for the Departments of the Interior and of Indian Affairs in 1907 when he raised the alarm on the disastrous state of Indian residential schools, finding student mortality rates ranging from 25 to 69 per cent. His findings were ignored by the government, but he continued to criticize the department and went on to publish his findings in the *Evening Citizen* (now the *Ottawa Citizen*). Funding for his research was withdrawn, and eventually, he was forced out of public service.

When the media ignored issues of structural marginalization, Black-led publications such as the *Canadian Negro* in the 1950s or *Contrast* in the 1970s began to fill the gap by reporting on discrimination and police brutality — but as with independent media today, their reach was limited compared to mainstream press, and the latter did not appear to have treated them as sufficiently credible to include or large enough to be influenced by their perspectives.

The media could not have been unaware of the problems with lack of representation. In 1962, a Parliamentary Committee on Participation of Visible Minorities in Canadian Society issued a report named *Equality Now!*<sup>42</sup> that urged the media to create better awareness of changing demographics and to include non-white people in its television programming. Even if, despite all evidence to the contrary, this report were to accept the

---

<sup>40</sup> Old Chieftain or Old Charlatan? Assessing Sir John’s Complex Legacy through Political Cartoons <https://activehistory.ca/blog/2015/01/06/old-chieftain-or-old-charlatan-assessing-sir-johns-complex-legacy-through-political-cartoons/>

<sup>41</sup> 1906-1910 The Bryce Report <https://www.fnesc.ca/wp/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/IRSR11-12-DE-1906-1910.pdf>

<sup>42</sup> Equality Now [https://parl.canadiana.ca/view/oop.com\\_HOC\\_3202\\_15\\_2/1](https://parl.canadiana.ca/view/oop.com_HOC_3202_15_2/1)

premise of presentism — that media workers were following the norms of their era and simply did not know better — that would still leave this question: Now that the media workers who profess to be detached purveyors and chroniclers of their times *do* know better, how have they changed their practices? Do they recognize structural issues better than before? How has the media changed the *who* among its decision makers, the *how* of its coverage or the *whom* it privileges as sources?

## THE “WHO” IN NEWSROOMS

The establishment of an industry wide-diversity survey was hard-fought and took place only in 2021, after the media came under pressure to do so during the social revolution sparked by the murder of George Floyd by Minneapolis police.

As a crown corporation, the CBC is federally mandated to report on its workforce demographics under the Employment Equity Act. But for a long time, private broadcasters publishers that demanded transparency from public and private institutions offered surprisingly little when it came to information about themselves. There were no published measures of staff diversity or how it was distributed through their ranks. Newsroom demographics have been so disproportionate that most media organizations plainly refused to open up about the makeup of their staff.

By contrast, the News Leaders Association in America has conducted an annual survey since 1978.

One formal attempt to measure demographic diversity in Canadian journalism came in 1994<sup>43</sup>, when the journalist John Miller, then a professor at Ryerson University (now known as Toronto Metropolitan University), conducted a survey for the Canadian Daily Newspaper Association. He sent a national survey to 82 managing editors. Only half responded, but of the 2,620 news professionals in their employ, only 2.6 per cent identified as non-white. This was at a time when the industry was comparatively flush with funds, a point to note because newsroom leaders would later go on to use the lack of funds as a reason for poor representation.

A decade later<sup>44</sup>, Miller asked newsrooms to volunteer new data on their staff breakdowns by race and gender. Some editors returned the survey empty; one scribbled across the page, “I find these questions insulting.”<sup>45</sup>

---

<sup>43</sup> Token Effort <https://web.archive.org/web/20161112125021/http://rrj.ca/token-effort/>

<sup>44</sup> Token effort <https://rrj.ca/token-effort/>

<sup>45</sup> White newsrooms: history repeats itself <https://www.newcanadianmedia.ca/white-newsrooms-history-repeats-itself/>

At this point, Miller's survey covering 2,119 journalists working at 37 papers showed that non-white people made up only 3.4 per cent of those who produced the news.

"The typical Canadian newspaper in 2004 was staffed by journalists who were almost as white as the paper they were printed on. And no one appeared to be concerned about that," he later wrote.

In 2010, academics<sup>46</sup> working on Ryerson's DiverseCity Counts project evaluated leadership demographics in Toronto media organizations and found non-white people held only 3.2% of decision-making positions in Toronto print media.

Efforts by journalists to assess newsroom demographics over the following years — in 2014<sup>47</sup>, 2016<sup>48</sup> and 2017<sup>49</sup> — were met with a reluctance to cooperate and even outright hostility.

In 2019, Toronto Metropolitan University professors Asmaa Malik and Sonya Fatah took another tack to prise this information out of newsrooms. They set up a study to mine a specific kind of information published by newspapers: self-identification by columnists.

Columnists, who are influential in shaping public opinions, often serve a useful function for corporate media because they can give voice to personal opinions, even offensive ones, while allowing their employers to maintain an ostensible distance from their views. Yet, newsrooms retain control of what gets said by limiting or tightly policing the range of views they permit.

This is why the TMU attempt to measure the demography of columnists was particularly significant.

TMU researchers studied 21 years' worth of columns in three of Canada's largest publications, *The Globe and Mail*, the *Toronto Star* and the *National Post*. Using terms of self-identification found in the columnists' own published works and social media posts, they categorized their race and gender by census category.

---

<sup>46</sup> Diversity in Leadership and Media: A Multi-Perspective Analysis of the Greater Toronto Area, 2010 [https://www.torontomu.ca/content/dam/diversity/academic/Diversity%20in%20Leadership%20and%20Media\\_2011.pdf](https://www.torontomu.ca/content/dam/diversity/academic/Diversity%20in%20Leadership%20and%20Media_2011.pdf)

<sup>47</sup> Surprised? Canadian newspaper columnists are mostly male, middle-aged <https://j-source.ca/surprised-canadian-newspaper-columnists-are-mostly-male-middle-aged/>

<sup>48</sup> Are Canada's Newspapers Too White? Most Refused to Say <https://www.canadaland.com/are-canadas-newspapers-too-white-most-refused-say/>

<sup>49</sup> Updated columnist diversity survey shows representation has not improved since 2014 <https://j-source.ca/updated-columnist-diversity-survey-shows-representation-has-not-improved-since-2014/>

They found<sup>50</sup> that not only did the makeup of Canadian columnists not reflect Canada's shifting demographics, but that as the proportion of white people in Canada's population declined, the representation of white columnists increased.

Their study did not examine how many of the small minority of non-white columnists actually challenged the status quo, but it was enough to suggest that Canada's white-owned media was continuing to reinforce viewpoints that aligned with white-settler interests.

"It's impossible for Canada's newsrooms to address a problem they can't see," Malik and Fatah wrote, about the secretiveness of newsrooms on demographic data. "We are concerned that for the many who refuse to co-operate, that just may be the point."

Against this background, the launch of the annual survey of newsrooms<sup>51</sup> by the Canadian Association of Journalists, forced by the reckoning of 2020, came as welcome news.

"It is well past time for these numbers to be made available for our own industry," the CAJ said.

The results of that first survey of 209 newsrooms were published in 2021. It found that "almost half of all Canadian newsrooms exclusively employ white journalists." About nine in 10 newsrooms had no Latin, Middle Eastern or Mixed-Race journalists on staff. About eight in 10 newsrooms had no Black or Indigenous journalists. By contrast, just 3 per cent of newsrooms had no white journalists on staff.

The CAJ invited 636 newsrooms to participate in the survey. While 15 declined, 379 did not even respond, the CAJ said in a statement.

Anecdotally at least, the most commonly offered reasons newsroom leaders gave for poor representation was the financial doldrums the industry was in — and unions. Either hiring was unaffordable or, in their accounting, union seniority rules were an obstacle to laying off older (white) staff and hiring younger ones. And yet, neither a previous era of wealthy nor current hiring practices have made a substantial difference in data.

The latest, 2024 survey,<sup>52</sup> took an accounting of about 5,806 journalists from 270 newsrooms across radio, television, digital and print media in Canada. The CAJ

---

<sup>50</sup> Newsrooms not keeping up with changing demographics, study suggests <https://torontomuresearch.com/newsrooms-not-keeping-up/>

<sup>51</sup> Canadian Newsroom Diversity Survey 2021 [https://caj.ca/wp-content/uploads/diversity\\_survey\\_report-2.pdf](https://caj.ca/wp-content/uploads/diversity_survey_report-2.pdf)

<sup>52</sup> Canadian Newsroom Diversity Survey 2024 [https://caj.ca/wp-content/uploads/Diversity\\_Survey\\_Report\\_2024\\_EN.pdf](https://caj.ca/wp-content/uploads/Diversity_Survey_Report_2024_EN.pdf)

published a tepid finding that news outlets were, “generally, somewhat representative of the communities they serve.” The survey of racial and ethnic backgrounds found about 77 per cent of journalists identified as white (compared to about 70 per cent of the Canadian population, per the most recent census), some 3.5 per cent journalists identified as Indigenous (compared to 5 per cent to the population<sup>53</sup>) and 19.5 per cent of newsroom staff identified as a member of a visible minority (compared to a little over 26 per cent of the population<sup>54</sup>).

It is worth noting that the idea that the makeup of a newsroom should proportionally reflect the larger population arises in unofficial discussions only when including people from oppressed groups in newsrooms, when some want to argue the limits of diversity. It does not feature in surveys or disturb media ownership and publishers when newsrooms are disproportionately white.<sup>55</sup>

The discrepancy is most acute at larger outlets. While a vast majority of the population lives in urban centres, where the large-sized newsrooms reside, those populations are not necessarily reflected among their staff and even less so among their decision makers.

“While overall, it appears that diversity has decreased slightly since the beginning of the survey (in 2021), small- and medium-sized media outlets have increased their share of non-white journalists in 2024,” the CAJ said in a statement. “Media outlets with smaller staff had a higher proportion of non-white journalists than media outlets with large staff.”

---

<sup>53</sup> An update on the socio-economic gaps between Indigenous Peoples and the non-Indigenous population in Canada: Highlights from the 2021 Census <https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1690909773300/1690909797208>

<sup>54</sup> Canada at a Glance, 2023 <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/12-581-x/2023001/sec2-eng.htm>

<sup>55</sup> Canadian media failing Diversity 101 and you are paying the price [https://www.thestar.com/opinion/star-columnists/canadian-media-failing-diversity-101-and-you-are-paying-the-price/article\\_292d0493-075d-521e-803a-6b58e50e4d74.html](https://www.thestar.com/opinion/star-columnists/canadian-media-failing-diversity-101-and-you-are-paying-the-price/article_292d0493-075d-521e-803a-6b58e50e4d74.html)

## A DECADE OF TUMULT, A YEAR OF HOPE

The 2010s marked the rise of social media as an alternative platform to traditional media. It empowered advocates of marginalized groups to disseminate their perspectives to the world. Traditional media found itself under relentless and unprecedented scrutiny, and as long-repressed sceptical readers used digital platforms to fairly (and unfairly) critique, criticize and even mock the work of mainstream media, newsrooms slowly lost their grip on their information-gatekeeping function.

In 2012 and 2013, social media played a crucial role<sup>56</sup> in launching the Idle No More movement into a global rallying cry, allowing the movement to connect urban and remote communities, quickly mobilize, share information and raise awareness of Indigenous issues.

The movement entered into the public view late in 2012 as a grassroots response to Canadian federal legislation Bill C-45, an omnibus bill that eroded environmental protections of lands and waters<sup>57</sup>.

In the 2010s, citizen journalism began to claim a vital role in forcing legacy media organizations to take note of issues they had ignored. Videos of police violence, particularly from the U.S., began to shock citizens and newsrooms alike into sharing and amplifying them. In keeping with its historical pattern, Canadian media focused on the horror as an American spectacle, and would presumably have continued to do so had it not been for interventions by Black activists, notably those with Black Lives Matter<sup>58</sup>.

In 2016, members of BLM's Toronto chapter staged a high-profile 30-minute sit-in that halted the city's Pride Parade, demanding, among other things, for police floats to be barred from future Pride events. While this led to consternation among traditional media pundits, it advanced the social discourse on racial justice.

Still, the media fell short in responsibly tackling issues of racism. While overt forms of racism were still as socially unacceptable as in decades past, when photos of Justin Trudeau in blackface, from a time before he was prime minister, emerged during the 2019 election, instead of simply calling his actions racist, the media narrative — despite

---

<sup>56</sup> Social media helps drive Idle No More movement [https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/social-media-helps-drive-idle-no-more-movement/article\\_d173eefe-9b1e-5000-bdf8-163fef02a9b5.html](https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/social-media-helps-drive-idle-no-more-movement/article_d173eefe-9b1e-5000-bdf8-163fef02a9b5.html)

<sup>57</sup> How to Discredit a Social Movement: Negative Framing of “Idle No More” in Canadian Print Media [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/329628511\\_How\\_to\\_Discredit\\_a\\_Social\\_Movement\\_Negative\\_Framing\\_of\\_Idle\\_No\\_More\\_in\\_Canadian\\_Print\\_Media](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/329628511_How_to_Discredit_a_Social_Movement_Negative_Framing_of_Idle_No_More_in_Canadian_Print_Media)

<sup>58</sup> Black Lives Matter and the struggle for racial justice in Canada <https://humanrights.ca/story/black-lives-matter-and-struggle-racial-justice-canada>

Trudeau's own apologies — overwhelmingly framed it as a question: Was Trudeau racist? Because Trudeau in blackface was passing off as Aladdin, an Arabian fairy tale character, the media referred to it as “brownface” which is essentially a meaningless term. Much of the criticism against Trudeau came from partisan sources on social medias. Overall the online conversation dramatically declined within three days, research found<sup>59</sup>.

Among other examples: A *CBC* headline after a Somali-Canadian with mental health issues died after being violently arrested by Ottawa police in 2016, that read “Man dies in altercation with police,” thus obscuring police violence and dehumanizing the victim, Abdirahman Abdi.

Postmedia news outlets running a racist cartoon to portray Indigenous people<sup>60</sup>.

A victim-blaming *Globe and Mail* headline<sup>61</sup> that proclaimed the murdered Indigenous teen Tina Fontaine “had drugs, alcohol in [her] system when she was killed.”

What changed in this decade was the pushback. Each of these instances was publicly shamed, which sometimes led to changes and in the case of the cartoon, an apology.

## THE RECKONING

The first major reckoning of media practices took place in 2015 with the release of the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). The Commission was established in 2008 as a result of the largest class-action lawsuit in Canadian history, to address the legacy of residential schools in Canada and to document the experiences of survivors before, during and after their time in the schools. Its final report included three specific calls to action for the media: to reflect Indigenous perspectives, to incorporate Indigenous history in journalism schools and to increase Indigenous representation in newsrooms.

The second reckoning crash-landed in 2020, following the murder of George Floyd at the hands of police in the U.S. The reverberations from that act were sparked not by investigative journalism from big corporate media but by one citizen journalist. It was a teenager by the name of Darnella Frazier who took out her phone and recorded the event. (She was subsequently awarded a special citation by the Pulitzers)

---

<sup>59</sup> Fact checking, blackface and media <https://ppforum.ca/articles/ddp-research-memo-5/>

<sup>60</sup> ‘This is over-the-top racism’: ‘Tonto’ newspaper cartoon sparks outrage, apology [https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/this-is-over-the-top-racism-tonto-newspaper-cartoon-sparks-outrage-apology/article\\_703452fb-0fc0-5033-b04b-3b5092acaa45.html](https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/this-is-over-the-top-racism-tonto-newspaper-cartoon-sparks-outrage-apology/article_703452fb-0fc0-5033-b04b-3b5092acaa45.html)

<sup>61</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/takenthese/series/posts/if-you-have-concerns-with-this-headline-and-its-relevance-to-the-murder-of-15-ye/1125329657604413/>

It came during the COVID pandemic, which had sideswiped societies globally. Early media coverage that linked COVID to China — with terms such as “China virus” and “Wuhan virus” — stigmatized Asian communities in Canada, harkening to the dark era of the “yellow peril” in the centuries prior. It led to an explosion of anti-Asian racism<sup>62</sup>. Prior to the institution of population-wide lockdowns and travel restrictions, parents called for students who returned from China to Canada to be isolated but made no such petitions for students returning from the U.S., the UK or France, which had the highest transmission rates into Canada<sup>63</sup>.

Chinatowns across the country<sup>64</sup> saw business plunging. or people demanding Chinatowns be shut down<sup>65</sup>.

When media coverage focussed on the racial and economic disparities among those impacted by the virus, many reports failed to contextualize<sup>66</sup> them within systemic issues such as overcrowded housing or overrepresentation in frontline jobs or inequities from privatization of long-term care facilities and their underfunding.

As with the South Asians in the 1900s, the media once again downplayed systemic, structural obstacles to equality by deferring in the broad strokes to public officials’ narratives such as “we are in this together.”

Amid the vulnerabilities thus created, and building on the years of advocacy by Black and Indigenous movements, the 2020 reckoning led to an explosion of Black, Indigenous and racialized journalists giving voice to long-bottled experiences of racism in Canadian newsrooms: of being treated as being indistinguishable from one another, of the valid story pitches that were dismissed, of the daily microaggressions and humiliations that would go unpunished, of being overlooked for deserving promotions, of being pushed out.

Many journalists spoke out publicly<sup>67</sup> about their newsroom leaders challenging their professionalism by making negative assumptions about their capacity for neutrality on

---

<sup>62</sup> Surveys find more than 1,000 self-reported incidents of anti-Asian racism since start of pandemic: report <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/asian-racism-hate-canada-pandemic-1.5959788>

<sup>63</sup> The epidemiology of COVID-19 from January to March 2020

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/reports-publications/canada-communicable-disease-report-ccdr/monthly-issue/2020-46/issue-7-8-july-2-2020/covid-19-epidemiology-january-march-2020.html>

<sup>64</sup> Stop the Potential spreading of the Novel coronavirus in schools of York Region, Ontario. <https://www.ipetitions.com/petition/stop-2019nCoV-spread-in-york-region-school>

<sup>65</sup> ‘Chinatown is bleeding’: Misguided COVID-19 fears hit Asian American businesses. <https://globalnews.ca/news/6563834/chinatown-restaurants-suffering-coronavirus>

<sup>66</sup> Spin Doctors: How Media and Politicians Misdiagnosed the COVID-19 Pandemic, Nora Loreto

<sup>67</sup> Calls grow for news outlets reporting on systemic racism to address own failures

<https://toronto.citynews.ca/2020/07/08/calls-grow-for-news-outlets-reporting-on-systemic-racism-to-address-own-failures/>

issues that affected their communities — that they were seen as too close to an issue. But white journalists were seen as impartial arbiters, even on issues that impacted them. While these leaders extended sympathy to journalists covering COVID, seen as “reporting on a house fire from within,” such understanding was not often extended to non-white, and particularly Black, journalists reporting on racism.

“I didn’t understand how painful it would be to spend a decade standing on jagged edges of disappointment, knowing that even when I achieved some of the wide-eyed goals I had in school, they would be crushed under the weight of anti-Black racism and a system that was never designed for us to *really* succeed,” wrote Kathleen Newman-Bremang<sup>68</sup>.

Anishinabe/Mohawk reporter Kim Wheeler said on social media she had left her job at the CBC after a network manager said she would never be a senior producer at the show she worked on.

Egyptian-Canadian journalist Pacinthe Mattar wrote a groundbreaking piece on the myth of “objectivity” as a core value in journalism, grounding it in her experiences at the CBC. She gave examples of differential standards, the “added burden of proof, for both journalists and sources, that accompanies stories about racism.”

Mattar wrote: “There is the lack of trust toward the Black, Indigenous, and other racialized people whose stories we are supposed to cover as a reflection of the world we live in. Then there is the mistrust of the Black, Indigenous, and other racialized journalists who try to report on those stories. Our professionalism is questioned when we report on the communities we’re from, and the spectre of advocacy follows us in a way that it does not follow many of our white colleagues.”<sup>69</sup>

The Canadian Association of Black Journalists (CABJ) and Canadian Journalists of Colour issued a report<sup>70</sup> with seven calls to action demanding better representation in newsrooms and more consultation with racialized communities.

Other journalists, academics and social activists called out crime coverage that pathologized communities instead of examining how societal structures criminalized behaviours and created conditions for criminality. They pointed to research showing that media was exonerative<sup>71</sup> when accused mass killers were white — often citing mental

---

<sup>68</sup> For Black Women In Media, A “Dream Job” Is A Myth <https://www.refinery29.com/en-ca/2020/07/9878117/systemic-racism-canadian-media>

<sup>69</sup> Objectivity Is a Privilege Afforded to White Journalists <https://thewalrus.ca/objectivity-is-a-privilege-afforded-to-white-journalists/>

<sup>70</sup> Canadian Media Diversity: Calls to Action <https://j-source.ca/canadian-media-diversity-calls-to-action/>

<sup>71</sup> Implicit bias within Canadian media often means providing excuses for white accused

illness as a possible explanation for the alleged crimes — and noted the double standard<sup>72</sup> when people of colour were accused of crimes, they were linked to terrorism or gangs.

Comprehensive, peer-reviewed research on the impact of the TRC and 2020 reckoning is not available, so this report relies on news reports and formal discussions on journalism panels.

The TRC impressed the need for reparations on the collective Canadian conscience, which impacted some media practices — particularly, for example, at the CBC, whose Indigenous unit now produces more content highlighting Indigenous voices, and at journalism programs such as those at TMU and the University of British Columbia, that have integrated Indigenous history in their courses to align with the Calls to Action. Even so, in 2019, when the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls inquiry report concluded that Canada’s tolerance for violence directed at Indigenous women and girls amounted to an ongoing genocide, the media dismissed the label on the grounds that it was legalistic overreach, linguistically imprecise or “alienating” to wider society<sup>73</sup>.

On increasing Indigenous representation in newsrooms as well, newsrooms failed miserably, as the data above showed<sup>74</sup>.

During the 2020 reckoning, a few newsrooms began to diversify sourcing<sup>75</sup> and track it. Journalists typically rely on their own networks for people whom they can contact for a quick quote. To help them expand that Rolodex, a worthwhile initiative named Informed Opinions<sup>76</sup> released an updated and handy database of diverse experts for journalists to use as sources. There was a great deal of publicity around the #DiversityYourSources campaign when it launched in 2021. The site is still being updated. However, when speaking to journalists today, it appears that many have lapsed to old defaults of relying

---

<https://theconversation.com/implicit-bias-within-canadian-media-often-means-providing-excuses-for-white-accused-162887>

<sup>72</sup> ‘Ultimate authority. Ultimate power.’ What the Nova Scotia mass shooting tells us about toxic masculinity [https://www.thestar.com/opinion/star-columnists/ultimate-authority-ultimate-power-what-the-nova-scotia-mass-shooting-tells-us-about-toxic-masculinity/article\\_e52111b0-a384-5e6a-b369-20cc6538dd25.html](https://www.thestar.com/opinion/star-columnists/ultimate-authority-ultimate-power-what-the-nova-scotia-mass-shooting-tells-us-about-toxic-masculinity/article_e52111b0-a384-5e6a-b369-20cc6538dd25.html)

<sup>73</sup> Jesse Wentle on the mainstream media’s odious defence of genocide <https://nowtoronto.com/news/jesse-wentle-missing-and-murdered-indigenous-canada/>

<sup>74</sup> Canadian Newsroom Diversity Survey 2024 [https://caj.ca/wp-content/uploads/Diversity\\_Survey\\_Report\\_2024\\_EN.pdf](https://caj.ca/wp-content/uploads/Diversity_Survey_Report_2024_EN.pdf)

<sup>75</sup> Normalizing diversity in newsrooms is how we’ll tackle racial equity in the media <https://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/february-2021/normalizing-diversity-in-newsrooms-is-how-well-tackle-equity-in-the-media/>

<sup>76</sup> <https://informedopinions.org/>

on already-established networks and going by word-of-mouth or with a person another organization has used. Sometimes, norms are too entrenched and require dedicated commitment from the top to change. Other than the CBC, it's not clear how many are continuing their efforts.

One change from these reckonings is still holding: the framing of racism as being largely an American problem has receded and there is more use of Canadian context. A move beyond stereotypical framing — such as discussing Black communities only in the context of crime — and toward more nuanced storytelling also continues in some newsrooms.

But where some American media such as the Los Angeles Times, Kansas City Star and Philadelphia Inquirer published retrospective investigations on their own historical racism and made commitments to change, Canadian publications balked at a deep dive into their archives. While the Canadian Geographic examined its archives for self-reflection in 2018, in response to a similar reckoning by the National Geographic that year, there is little evidence of comprehensive public self-examination beyond piecemeal critiques, even while the media was mired in the language of “listening and learning.”

## THE “HOW” OF NEWS COVERAGE AND “WHOSE” PERSPECTIVES

If journalists in the past didn't do better because they didn't know better, and if engaging with the 2020 reckoning didn't lead to an urgent overhaul of hiring practices, did it at least impact standards of media coverage? Is contemporary Canadian media upholding its stated values of accuracy, fairness, reliability and independence in its coverage of all communities? Is it open to correcting what senior leaders commonly refer to as blind spots — errors of ignorance rather than ill intent — when it comes to colonial and race-based oppression?

In May 2021, an open letter<sup>77</sup> to Canadian newsrooms written by journalists and signed by more than 2,000 people was circulated online.

“This past year, Canadian media has reckoned with and acknowledged the lack of diversity and nuance in covering issues of human rights...Why shouldn't Palestinians be afforded the same nuance?”, they asked, in the context of the 2021 Israel-Palestine crisis, sparked in part by the impending eviction of 300 Palestinians in the East

---

<sup>77</sup> An open letter to Canadian newsrooms on covering Israel-Palestine  
[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1tp0pdwR\\_s\\_a1dJ27SpiovwvPckApr6awlzRfeVgCD0A/edit?tab=t.0](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1tp0pdwR_s_a1dJ27SpiovwvPckApr6awlzRfeVgCD0A/edit?tab=t.0)

Jerusalem neighborhood of Sheikh Jarrah to make way for Jewish settlers. Their note, referencing the censorship and severe scrutiny of journalists pitching stories on this region, and the one-sided coverage that downplayed Israeli violence and the occupation, had one ask: fair and balanced coverage that included historical and social context. Many journalists faced repercussions<sup>78</sup> for signing this note.

The latest crisis in the region since 2023, provides a ready-made barometer to gauge media sincerity about its own professed values.

Social media — by now an intrinsic, if toxic, component of the public discourse — allowed Israel’s industrial-scale slaughter of Palestinians in Gaza to be live-streamed to millions of Canadians, exposing them to a massive disparity between what they were seeing with their own eyes and how mainstream media was portraying it.

Generally from the main news were descriptions of Israeli policies as apartheid or genocide. At the time of writing this report, 19 months into Israel’s unrelenting violence in Gaza, there continue to be examples of headlines that avoid blaming Israel for its atrocities, of stories that disproportionately favour the Israeli narrative and a coverage that tones down criticisms from international organizations.

Meanwhile, independent media outlets have carried out damning investigations on legacy media coverage.

In December 2023, for instance, *The Breach* found that *CBC’s* flagship news program *The National* featured more Israeli voices than Palestinian ones, even as Palestinian casualties rose. And that the senior manager of journalistic standards justified<sup>79</sup> the use of differential emotive language to describe killings based, not on the scale of atrocity, but on attackers’ physical proximity to their victims. In this thinking, words such as “murderous,” “vicious,” “brutal,” “massacre” and “slaughter” were applied to Hamas’s attack during which 1,200 Israelis and foreign nationals were killed, while words such as “intensive,” “unrelenting,” and “punishing” were appropriate for Israeli bombings that had by then killed more than 20,000 Palestinians.

It found *CTV* forbade<sup>80</sup> the use of the word “Palestine,” suppressed critical stories about Israel and that its *National News* (Canada’s most-watched national news broadcast)

---

<sup>78</sup> CBC Journalists Told They Can’t Cover Israel-Palestine After Demanding Fairer Coverage <https://www.vice.com/en/article/cbc-journalists-told-they-cant-cover-israel-palestine-after-demanding-fairer-coverage/>

<sup>79</sup> CBC says killing of Palestinians doesn’t merit terms ‘murderous,’ ‘brutal’ <https://breachmedia.ca/cbc-palestinian-deaths-dont-merit-murderous-vicious-israel/>

<sup>80</sup> CTV forbids use of ‘Palestine,’ suppresses critical stories about Israel <https://breachmedia.ca/ctv-bell-media-forbids-palestine-suppresses-criticism-israel/>

featured 62 per cent more Israeli voices than Palestinian ones in the month following Oct. 7, 2023. Some 41 percent of Palestinian speakers were not identified by name, while Israeli speakers almost always were.

Notably, a *CBC* whistleblower account described deep-seated anti-Palestinian racism within the newsroom referencing cancellations of Palestinian guests and double standards in scrutinizing sources.<sup>81</sup>

A *Policy Options* analysis<sup>82</sup> of 365 opinion columns published in 2024 by the *Toronto Star*, *Globe and Mail* and *National Post* found that, rather than the papers playing a constructive role, “humanitarian arguments — such as reasoning that people should not be killed regardless of politics — made up only a small fraction of the articles across all three publications.” It also found that professional newspaper columnists were less likely than the authors of contributed op-eds to call for peace, ceasefire, reconciliation, hostage and prisoner exchange or tolerance.

Israel prohibits international journalists from entering Gaza, except on controlled expeditions, but instead of filling the information vacuum with the work of Palestinian journalists and citizen journalists reporting from the ground, Canadian media has generally ignored them, with the exception of the *CBC*<sup>83</sup> that worked with a freelance videographer in Gaza.

Amid famine and displacement, journalists in Gaza have been covering a devastation that cannot be captured in words, with their press jackets often serving as targets for the Israeli military. According to the Committee to Protect Journalists, 172 Palestinian journalists and media workers have been killed since Oct. 7, 2023, with more than a dozen confirmed to have been deliberately targeted by Israel, in addition to 96 journalists reported injured, and 86 reported arrested<sup>84</sup>. Israel often levels accusations of links to terrorism against these journalists, often without evidence, the CPJ says. More journalists and media workers have been killed in Gaza than in the two World Wars, and the wars in Vietnam, Yugoslavia and Afghanistan combined<sup>85</sup>.

---

<sup>81</sup> CBC has whitewashed Israel’s crimes in Gaza. I saw it firsthand <https://breachmedia.ca/author/molly-schumann/>

<sup>82</sup> Canadian media need to more carefully consider op-eds on the Mideast <https://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/march-2025/news-opinion/>

<sup>83</sup> <https://www.cbc.ca/news/world/author/yasmine-hassan-1.4736637>

<sup>84</sup> Palestinian journalists since start of Israel-Gaza war <https://cpj.org/2025/02/arrests-of-palestinian-journalists-since-start-of-israel-gaza-war/>

<sup>85</sup> The Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs’ Costs of War project. <https://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/papers/2025/Journalists>

However, news and journalism organizations that had voiced public outrage over Russia's killing of 16 journalists in Ukraine<sup>86</sup> remained silent. Instead, newsrooms warned<sup>87</sup> domestic journalists not to once again sign petitions in support of their Palestinian colleagues, claiming that doing so would malign their organization's reputation for balance and objectivity.

When four Canadian journalists organized a vigil<sup>88</sup> early in 2024 for all the reporters killed since Oct. 7, no newsroom leaders attended, despite being invited. In May 2025, despite the deaths of Palestinian journalists, a CBC host appeared to discredit their professionalism in Metro Morning when he said it was difficult to gauge the extent of the humanitarian crisis because "so few independent journalists exist within Gaza"<sup>89</sup>.

Prominent Israelis and their supporters in Canada have described Palestinians and their supporters as "savages," "darkness" or terrorists with impunity. But the media has continued to be suspicious of non-white journalists who have advocated for Palestine. Outspoken journalists, disproportionately non-white, have often been punished — pushed out, frozen out of story assignments or otherwise disciplined. Many were either blamed for harming the company's reputation or unjustly accused of antisemitism. The influence of pro-Israel lobby groups and the pressure they put on media brass cannot be ignored.

The establishment narrative reflected in media has also framed the unrelenting protests and protestors against Israel as barbaric, sympathetic to terrorism and antisemitic.

The asymmetric power imbalance between Israel and Palestine has been all but elided. Propaganda material such as claims that Hamas beheaded 40 babies found a sympathetic audience. At the same time, eyewitness testimonies of international doctors on the ground that drones and quadcopters picked off Palestinian children one by one, grotesque visual evidence of parents collecting children's body parts in plastic bags, children gathering their parents bodies together, the frozen unseeing eyes of a dead child and newborns on ventilators left to die have been absent from — or in any case

---

<sup>86</sup> 16 journalists killed in Ukraine

[https://cpj.org/data/killed/all/?status=Killed&motiveConfirmed%5B%5D=Confirmed&type%5B%5D=Journalist&cc\\_fips%5B%5D=UP&start\\_year=2022&end\\_year=2025&group\\_by=year](https://cpj.org/data/killed/all/?status=Killed&motiveConfirmed%5B%5D=Confirmed&type%5B%5D=Journalist&cc_fips%5B%5D=UP&start_year=2022&end_year=2025&group_by=year)

<sup>87</sup> As a journalist, I'm crushed by my industry's silence on our Gaza colleagues

[https://www.thestar.com/opinion/star-columnists/as-a-journalist-i-m-crushed-by-my-industry-s-silence-on-our-gaza-colleagues/article\\_d8944128-afcf-11ee-93fc-ff6cec20f50a.html](https://www.thestar.com/opinion/star-columnists/as-a-journalist-i-m-crushed-by-my-industry-s-silence-on-our-gaza-colleagues/article_d8944128-afcf-11ee-93fc-ff6cec20f50a.html)

<sup>88</sup> A vigil held in honour of our fallen colleagues <https://reviewofjournalism.ca/journalists-for-journalists/#:~:text=The%20vigil%2C%20co%2Dorganized%20by,Creative%20School%20on%20February%201>

<sup>89</sup> CBC airs pitiful interview with former ambassador to Israel

[https://www.cjpmemap.ca/alert\\_2025\\_05\\_06\\_cbc\\_news](https://www.cjpmemap.ca/alert_2025_05_06_cbc_news)

not made it to the front and centre of — Canada’s daily newspapers or broadcast media. They apparently did not warrant enough outrage.

Such coverage suggests that despite noteworthy changes to improve relations with Indigenous peoples at home, Canadian media reveals its hand when it comes to foreign policy, yielding its hard-fought independence by falling in lockstep with the government position. It recommits to ideologies of domination that birthed Canada through the mechanics of colonization, forced displacement, plunder and racism.

## CONCLUSION

Media stories have sometimes been described as “framing events through strips of factual occurrences”<sup>90</sup>. This report shows that while each story may be individually defensible, media organizations wash their hands off examining the overall impact of their body of work, leaving it to outside agents such as academics or researchers, whose findings rarely impact day-to-day newsroom policies. This means a single story may not point to the whole, but the whole picture offers insights into certain trends in how the media works.

## MECHANICS OF OPPRESSION

In connecting Canadian media to its history, a few patterns emerge on some of the mechanics by which the mainstream news reinforce identity-based oppression:

- The media traditionally downplays structural oppressions in its stories; the asymmetry in power between marginalized groups and dominant groups remains obfuscated.
- Story framing often associates people of non-European ancestry with crime, deviance and the threat of invasion.
- The media closely gate-keeps the range of acceptable debate and opinion, historically prioritizing the comfort of white audiences over the truth.
- Disagreements between liberals and conservatives do not negate shared underlying assumptions about Western superiority over non-white people.
- The media continues to exclude or not take seriously non-white journalists and sources, who are not seen as dispassionate experts on a range of topics, including their own conditions.

---

<sup>90</sup> [https://central.bac-lac.gc.ca/.item?id=TC-QMG-8032&op=pdf&app=Library&is\\_thesis=1&oclc\\_number=1033220592](https://central.bac-lac.gc.ca/.item?id=TC-QMG-8032&op=pdf&app=Library&is_thesis=1&oclc_number=1033220592)

- It shows a persistent lack of attention to issues of deep concern to other communities, and at the same time,
- It displays the “searchlight phenomenon<sup>91</sup>”: intense, brief attention to sensational, crisis-related stories on Indigenous communities followed by indefinite neglect.
- It treats with open suspicion the motives of “the other,” deemed as threatening to Canadian or Western interests.
- It often aligns with the state on laws and policies harmful to marginalized peoples and dismisses or discredits advocacy for social and racial justice.
- It has turned the notion of objectivity, which was introduced as a form of neutrality or non-partisanship to be palatable to the most number of readers, into a cudgel with which to restrain and restrict voices of minoritized journalists.

## IMPACTS OF EXCLUSION

- A media that ignores and erases voices and viewpoints of non-dominant groups breaks trust with significant swathes of the population. Trust is a key indicator of democratic health.
- Inadequate and discriminatory representation stifles press freedom and free expression, both of which are fundamental civil liberties.
- Failure to include and contextualize different perspectives creates an information vacuum that allows for mis- and dis-information to flourish.
- A news industry that falls in lockstep with government positions on foreign policy issues raises serious concerns about imperial bias, self-censorship and true media independence.
- By not broadening its idea of what constitutes Canada, the media fails in its nation-building goals and polarizes an already divided populace.
- Poor representation creates an invisible workload on the journalists who advocate for equality and fairness, extracting a psychological toll that can lead to burnout, pushout and worse.

Society is now in a “post-truth” era. Post-truth refers to the socio-political phenomenon of a blatant disregard for factual evidence in claims that are usually accepted publicly as facts. This has led to a rise in echo chambers, or bubbles of information whose like-minded members dismiss opinions they do not agree with, including those of sectors that specialize in fact-finding, such as medical and scientific communities, academia and the media.

---

<sup>91</sup> What the Canadian Public is Being Told about the more than 1200 Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women and First Nations Issues: A Content and Context Analysis of Major Mainstream Canadian Media, 2014-2015 <https://danieldrache.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/SSRN-id2758140.pdf>

Echo chambers are by definition the antithesis of good journalism, a core tenet of which is sifting and sorting verifiable facts from rumour and agenda, and pursuing the truth in a push to hold power accountable. Despite notable exceptions, the media's consistently and stubbornly inadequate, misguided or even malignant representation of the marginalized, its reluctance to diversify its ranks and its inability to view journalists and sources from marginalized backgrounds as credible are suggestive of dangerous echo-chamber characteristics. A lack of representation translates into a lack of checks and balances in coverage, suppresses free expression and ultimately acts against the industry's own interests.

Overall, while there have been some changes, this report finds that the media in Canada has failed to structurally reform itself in any meaningful way. It finds that while the modern role of the media is to hold the government and societal institutions and power-holders to account, when it comes to systemic issues such as racial injustices, it has largely aided and influenced policies that harm people whom it marks as the other.

Newsrooms are still struggling to integrate diverse voices and are rapidly losing trust with the public at various places along the ideological spectrum. Preserving trust requires a media that is able to stand on principle and offer a robust defence of truth and human rights. If journalists today know better than those of the past, but still don't do better even with that accumulation of knowledge, their actions lead to one logical conclusion: They don't *care* to do better.

This report therefore concludes that Canadian media as a whole is indifferent to its racism and to the harms it enacts on marginalized populations. Recommendations for improvement are therefore pointless, unless newsroom leaders first decolonize their minds, introspect and resolve on whether they really want newsroom practices to change and whether they would have the will and courage to act on them.

