

“The Media Party”: Analyzing Media Criticism of the Canadian Far-Right

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ABSTRACT: Far-right media networks regularly engage in media criticism to undermine the legitimacy of mainstream news. These critiques work to challenge the authority and power of mainstream news while establishing far-right media as journalistically superior. While constructive media criticism is necessary within any society, far-right news tends to frame mainstream media as an elitist and exclusionary institution that purposefully spreads misinformation to its users. In Canada, numerous far-right media sites have emerged over the past decade but have been relatively under-examined within academic literature. In this context, my paper analyzes the types of critiques Canadian far-right media use to question the legitimacy of mainstream Canadian news. This study uses qualitative analysis to examine 65 articles published by two Canadian far-right media outlets: *Rebel News* and *True North*. Guided by previous literature surrounding far-right media critiques, I identify four commonly used critiques that the Canadian far-right media employ; the Media Party position, the Disinformation position, the Citizen/Taxpayer position, and the Expert position. Through my analysis, I argue that far-right Canadian media employ these specific strategies of criticism to present their discourse as authoritative over legacy media in Canada.

KEYWORDS: Media, Far-right, Canada, Journalism, Media criticism

Introduction

Over the last decade, there has been a significant increase in the global presence of “far-right” or “alt-right” media online. These far-right media networks have emerged as an alternative to legacy, or mainstream media, challenging their authority and power (Figenschou & Ihlebæk, 2019).

Characterized by their “vocal mistrust of political and cultural elites and what they perceive as the left-wing bias of the mainstream media” (Figenschou & Ihlebæk, p. 1223), far-right networks have become increasingly vocal within the media sphere. This shift has mounted an explicit challenge to the legitimacy of mainstream journalism, as the far-right regularly engages in media criticism.

Positioned at the extreme right of the political spectrum, the “far-right” is typically characterized by nationalist, racist, and xenophobic political thought (Mudde, 2002). These ideas form the ideological core of far-right media; however, not all sites are explicit in this messaging. Far-right media often downplay the hateful tendencies of their rhetoric to “bridge” readers from the mainstream into these extremist ideologies (Hawley, 2018). By engaging in media criticism, the far-right aims to undermine the trust of mainstream news (Holt & Haller, 2017) while attempting to establish their own reporting as a superior source of information.

While constructive media criticism is necessary within a democratic society, it can take on less productive forms. Criticism grounded in media skepticism can create feelings of “alienation and mistrust towards the mainstream news media” (Tsfati, 2003, p. 67) that are not entirely justified. Far-right networks often use these tactics to portray the mainstream media as inherently biased, untruthful, and pursuing a “woke” or overly progressive agenda that is out of touch with reality. Rather than engaging in legitimate critiques, the far-right often frames the media as an elitist and exclusionary institution that purposely spreads misinformation to its consumers. Holt and Haller (2017) argue that media critiques from these far-right networks cannot be brushed off as inconsequential, as they represent perspectives increasingly echoed by the political elite. For example, right-wing politicians like Donald Trump and Pierre Poilievre, often critique mainstream media in similar ways as the far-right. Poilievre often refers to mainstream Canadian media as “Trudeau’s media”

– claiming that their reporting is unfairly biased against him (Poilievre, 2023). Similarly, Donald Trump has claimed that mainstream media in the United States is “fake news” and is “the true enemy of the people” (Trump, 2018). By portraying the mainstream media as untruthful and biased, it undermines the journalistic integrity of the news, which allows alternative sources of information (like far-right media) to attract those who are skeptical. Therefore, it is important to understand how such critiques work.

Although the rise of far-right media is a global trend, it has been significant in the Canadian sphere. In Canada, this type of media activity has increased over the past decade, which has seen several far-right media outlets emerge and gain popularity. Canadian far-right media has grown alongside the increasing participation of Canadians in right-wing activities, highlighted by the 2022 Freedom Convoy. This event marked a notable shift in the legitimacy of Canadian far-right networks, a topic I will explore further in this paper.

In Canada, the most prominent far-right networks include *Rebel Media*, *True North*, *The Counter Signal*, *Blacklock*, and *The Bureau*, all of which have established themselves as alternatives to traditional media sources. These far-right networks participate in regular criticism of mainstream Canadian media for its belonging to what the far-right refers to as a “Media Party”: The belief that Canadian mainstream media acts more like a biased political party than with impartial journalistic integrity (Rebel News, n.d.). This paper aims to explain the Canadian far-right’s media critiques, through research on the specific tactics that they employ to undermine legacy news.

Due to its relatively recent emergence there is little scholarship regarding the operation of Canadian far-right media outlets. In the hopes of bridging this academic gap, my paper will analyze how Canadian far-right media operates through the framework of existing scholarship on the far-right. To supplement my hypothesis I will introduce a framework of far-right media critiques developed by Norwegian researchers Figenschou and Ihlebæk. Through the use of this existing framework I will help answer the research question of my paper (RQ): What tactics do Canadian far-right media employ to criticize mainstream media? To conduct my research I will use content analysis to analyze two Canadian far-right

networks, *Rebel News* and *True North*. I chose these sites because they were relatively popular, frequently reported on Canadian news, did not restrict their content behind a paywall, and had strong right-leaning biases in their reporting. With this content analysis I aim to understand how Canadian far-right media criticizes legacy media, and what media outlets are most heavily criticized by the far-right.

Hypothesis

Far-right networks engage in media criticism to challenge the authority of mainstream media. A study from Figenschou and Ihlebæk (2019) argues that far-right media claim specific positions of authority in their reporting to delegitimize mainstream news. Their study conducted a qualitative analysis of Norwegian far-right media that identified five positions of media authority. These positions are summarized in Table 1. While their study focused on media from the Norwegian far-right, Figenschou and Ihlebæk argue that their findings are relevant in other national contexts due to the transnational nature of the emerging global far-right movement (Figenschou & Ihlebæk, 2019). Far-right movements across the globe are often considered “transnational” as they share similar positions and ideologies and engage in similar tactics to spread their ideas. I use Figenschou and Ihlebæk’s framework to build my hypothesis on how Canadian far-right media operates.

Table 1 *How the Far-Right Criticizes Legacy Media*

Insider Position	Claim knowledge of the professional journalistic field. Often far-right journalists are formerly employed by the legacy media.
Expert Position	Factual legitimacy is built on reporting their own statistics and facts.
Victim Position	Experiential legitimacy as a media victim. (Far-right media constantly victimizes itself by claiming to be “attacked” by legacy media.)
Citizen Position	Representing the people. (Legitimacy from the people who perceive legacy media as out of touch with reality.)
Activist Position	Claims legitimacy through confrontation and active resistance.

Note: Adapted from (Figenschou & Ihlebæk, 2019).

Canadian far-right media employ specific strategies of criticism that focus on presenting their discourse as more authoritative than legacy media by claiming that Canadian mainstream media is biased and untruthful. Guided by Figenschou and Ihlebæk’s (2019) theoretical framework, I believe that Canadian far-right media will frame their critiques in similar ways to those seen above in Table 1. By claiming

positions of authority in their reporting, Canadian far-right media aims to legitimize their journalistic integrity over that of Canadian legacy media. I further hypothesize that media criticism from the far-right will specifically target publicly funded Canadian mainstream media (E.g. CBC News) due to what the far-right perceives as mainstream media’s biased connection to the government.

This paper will proceed as follows: First, I will conduct a brief literature review that explores the origin and rise of far-right media. Second, I will introduce my cases and methodology. Finally, I will proceed to a discussion of the results and conclusions of this study.

Origin of “Far-Right” Media

The terms “far-right” and “alt-right” media are used interchangeably within the literature to describe the emergence of far-right alternative news outlets (Faris et al. 2017; Marwick & Lewis 2017). Common characteristics of these sites include distrust of political elites, unfavourable perceptions of “left-wing” mainstream media, anti-immigration and anti-Islamic sentiments, and a tendency to present alternative interpretations of information that align with extreme right-wing ideologies (Holt & Haller, 2017). The core of these ideologies is typically fueled by white nationalism, racism, and xenophobia; however, as mentioned, not all sites are explicit in this messaging. By downplaying the hateful tendencies of far-right rhetoric, these sites can “bridge” readers from the mainstream into far-right ideologies (Hawley, 2018). While it is difficult to pinpoint the exact origin of this media, it is closely related to the growth of Internet use by far-right movements.

Since its creation, the Internet has been a powerful tool for far-right movements to spread hateful rhetoric and normalize their ideology within a broader community. Far-right actors have utilized the Internet to recruit, communicate, and spread ideas to an audience online, building a highly radicalized base. The Internet’s ease of access and anonymity meant that far-right groups could quietly radicalize people who were unlikely to interact with extremists face-to-face (Hawley, 2018). Websites, forums, and blogs were instrumental in this radicalization and were quickly adopted as tools by the far-right.

Early Internet forums were the first instances of far-

right activity online and were instrumental in growing the popularity of this type of extremism. Far-right forums can be traced back to the creation of the Internet, with the website Stormfront one of the earliest cases of far-right activity online. Created in 1995 by former KKK leader Don Black, Stormfront was primarily used as a public message board to connect white nationalists (Hawley, 2018). On the site, people could discuss various topics relating to race and politics, while also accessing information about white nationalism (Conway et al, 2019). The creation of Stormfront, combined with its massive popularity, inspired several other far-right actors to capitalize on the Internet's power. From the 2000s onwards, the far-right became "increasingly reliant on web forums to facilitate movement expansion by spreading propaganda and connecting with like-minded individuals" (Conway et al, 2019, p. 4).

While forums acted as an important tool for far-right actors to spread ideological messages, traditional websites also played an important role in the dissemination of far-right ideas. These websites included the creation of alternative news media that intended to spread perspectives not found within the mainstream. The first self-described "alternative news" websites emerged as early as the 1990s, with sites like *National Vanguard News* and *Life Site News* being established (Conway et al, 2019). While these sites were not as popular as far-right forums like Stormfront, they still played a crucial role in normalizing far-right discourse by presenting far-right ideas through the guise of "news". It was not until the late 2000s that far-right media sites became a widely used (and widely popular) tool of the far-right.

Far-right media was largely popularized within the United States with the creation of *Breitbart News* <breitbart.com>. This website was founded in 2007 by conservative journalist Andrew Breitbart who was "committed to the destruction of the old media guard" (ABC7, 2012). The creation of *Breitbart* was not initially connected to extreme right-wing ideologies but this changed after Breitbart died in 2012 (Davis, 2019). Under the leadership of Steve Bannon, who took over the site, *Breitbart* "established itself as a rallying point for ... white supremacy, anti-feminism, anti-Islamic, and anti-Semitic extremism" (Davis, 2019, p.244). The site was pushed into the mainstream in 2016, as Bannon was recruited to work

for Donald Trump's campaign. While *Breitbart* was not the first far-right news site, it did play an essential role in popularizing alternative news media. With its close ties to Donald Trump, *Breitbart* became highly influential within the conservative media sphere in the United States (Roberts & Wahl-Jorgensen, 2022). *Breitbart's* influence, combined with its frequent attacks on mainstream media, exemplified the power far-right media could hold.

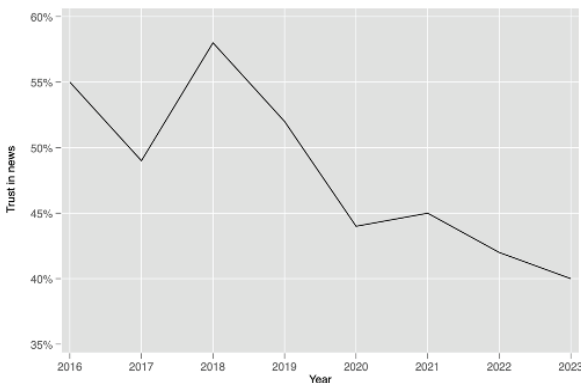
Rise of Canadian Far-Right Media

In Canada, the increase in far-right media activity has occurred most notably over the past decade, which saw several far-right media outlets emerge and gain popularity. Sites like *Rebel Media* (est. 2015) <www.rebelnews.com>, *True North* (est. 2018) <www.tnc.news>, *The Counter Signal* (est. 2020) <www.thecountersignal.com>, and *The Bureau* (est. 2023) <www.thebureau.news> have all established themselves as alternatives to traditional media and participate in regular mainstream media criticism. Despite recently emerging, these outlets have grown considerable influence within the Canadian media sphere. Instead of focusing on traditional forms of media, like radio, television, and print, Canadian far-right media has grown its audience online through social media platforms such as X (formerly Twitter), YouTube, and Facebook (Elmer & Burton, 2022). A study by Elmer and Burton (2022) found that Canadian far-right personalities and their media outlets, "at least on popular Internet platforms, ... are reaching audiences almost as large as those of legacy broadcast news media" (p. 4). As audiences begin to rival those of the Canadian mainstream news, these far-right media outlets pose a significant challenge to the legitimacy of legacy media.

One factor contributing to the rise of popularity in Canadian far-right media has been the public's declining trust in mainstream media. While decreasing trust in mainstream media is a global phenomenon (Newman et al, 2023), Canadian media has seen a considerable drop in trust in the past eight years. Figure 1 shows the decline in Canadians' overall trust in mainstream news between 2016 and 2023, dropping a total of 15 percentage points. Data from the 2019 Canadian Election Study shows how this overall news distrust is directed toward mainstream media within the Canadian market. Data from Stephenson, et al

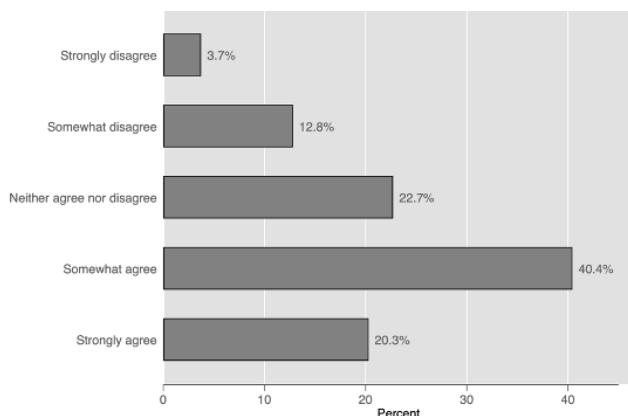
(2019) shows that 60 percent of Canadians believe that the mainstream media is largely controlled by elite interests, as shown in Figure 2. Although this data does not directly reflect Canadians' perceptions of trust toward mainstream media, it does show that many Canadians are largely skeptical of news narratives produced by the mainstream media.

Figure 1 Canadians' Overall Trust in Legacy News (2016-2023)



Note: The percentage of overall trust in news by Canadians. Graph created in Stata. Adapted from (Brin & Charlton, 2023).

Figure 2 Belief That Mainstream News Media is Largely Controlled by Elite Interests



Note: The percentage of Canadians who see the mainstream news media as controlled by elite interests. Sample size N = 9929. Graph created in Stata. Data from (Stephenson, et al, 2019).

As Canadians' trust in mainstream news decreases they are likely to turn to other sources of media for information. Decreased trust in mainstream media has been associated with increased alternative news

orientation, and vice versa (Andersen et al, 2021). Far-right media sites allow people distrustful of mainstream media to find information "that gives a different picture of reality" (Andersen et al, 2021, 834). This different reality is often one that fits certain people's worldview, ideology, and social identity better than what the mainstream media represents to them.

The 2022 "Freedom Convoy" marked a notable shift in the legitimacy of Canadian far-right media networks, as their favourable coverage of the protests provided Canadians with a different picture of reality. The "Freedom Convoy" began in 2022 to protest the removal of a COVID-19 vaccine exemption for truckers but it quickly evolved into a national protest that demanded the end of all COVID-19 restrictions. Protesters argued that the Liberal government was overreaching their boundaries and ruling through tyranny because COVID-19 mandates were restricting "freedoms" (Roy & Gandsman, 2023). The protest movement had explicit ties to far-right ideologies because its organizers, Tamara Lich, Benjamin J. Dichter, and Patrick King, were linked to white nationalist, racist, and Islamophobic groups (Canadian Anti-Hate Network, 2022). Additionally, far-right extremist symbols were visible during many of the protests (Nicholson, 2022). Despite this, most Canadians involved in the protests were considerably less extreme.

Mainstream media largely framed those involved in the "Freedom Convoy" as "un-Canadian", "racist", "white nationalist", and part of a "fringe minority", while it disregarded any grievances the protesters held (Roy & Gandsman, 2023). A study by Roy and Gandsman (2023) found that between 75 and 90 percent of mainstream media's coverage of the "Freedom Convoy" depicted protesters negatively. This was in sharp contrast to the narratives emerging from far-right news sources, who were overwhelmingly supportive and encouraging of protesters. During a speech at the "Freedom Convoy", Ezra Levant of *Rebel News* addressed protesters: "The government says you're racist, the government says you're sexist, the government says you're violent. On the contrary, I've never seen a more diverse group of Canadians" (Levant, 2022). Far-right media coverage depicted protesters positively and claimed that mainstream media was "complicit in mischaracterizing" those involved (Rebel News, 2022). Rangel and Gandsman (2022) argue that the media's categorization of protesters as an "unacceptable fringe minority"

negatively impacted people's perceptions of mainstream news. This likely turned Canadians, who were supportive of the convoy and frustrated with COVID-19 mandates, to alternative sources of information that characterized the protesters more positively than mainstream news did. The perceived legitimacy of far-right networks increased during the "Freedom Convoy" as many Canadians believed that the correct news narrative surrounding the protest was coming from these alternative sites. Further research is needed to fully explore the impact of the negative media coverage of the "Freedom Convoy" on Canadians' perceptions and trust of mainstream news.

Case Studies: Rebel News and True North

Rebel News was founded in 2015 by conservative media personalities Ezra Levant and Brian Lilley, both who previously worked for the now-defunct Sun News Network. *Rebel News* was originally established as a conservative media alternative as the founders felt "there was a need for a conservative voice in Canadian media" (Little, 2017). While the site was intended to serve as an independent media network that offered conservative perspectives on the news it, along with Ezra Levant, increasingly became more extreme in its reporting. As *Rebel News* became increasingly associated with the "far-right", Lilley and several other high-profile conservatives decided to cut ties with the network in 2017. In an interview with *Global News*, Lilley explained that his decision to resign came "after watching *Rebel News* move further and further away from its original mission" (Little, 2017). Since Lilley's resignation, *Rebel News* has moved further to the far-right under the leadership of Levant.

Ezra Levant, a controversial media personality, has gained fame from his "politically incorrect" views and opinions. After he graduated from the University of Alberta with a degree in law, Levant started his career as a lawyer before transitioning into media (Levant, 2023). He worked as an occasional columnist for the *Calgary Sun* beginning in 1997, but Levant's big transition into media occurred when he co-founded the *Western Standard* in 2004. The *Western Standard* was an Albertan-based conservative magazine that aimed to act as "a counterweight to Canada's mushy, left-wing, politically correct media" (Gatehouse, 2013). Although the magazine ended in 2007, shortly after its inception, it gained considerable criticism for publishing controversial cartoons in 2006 that depicted the Prophet Muhammed (Warnica, 2017).

After the *Western Standard* ended, Levant continued his controversial career in journalism and worked with *Sun News*. *Sun News* was founded in 2011 and intended to provide Canadians with "right-of-centre" media coverage to combat the supposed Liberal drift of the mainstream media (Warnica, 2017). During his time at *Sun News*, Levant's journalism was marked with anti-establishment sentiments and great controversy. For example, in 2014, Levant controversially attacked the Trudeau family for their apparent promiscuous behaviour, a slight that resulted in Justin Trudeau refusing to speak with *Sun News* until the network had publicly apologized (CBC, 2014). *Sun News* failed to gain the conservative audience it aspired to find, which led to the company folding in 2015 (Warnica, 2017). Since co-founding *Rebel News* in 2015, Ezra Levant is no longer restricted by editorial standards. Therefore, according to *Rebel News*, he can "follow the facts wherever they may lead — even if that conflicts with the official narrative of the establishment" (Rebel News, n.d.).

True North claims to be a "Canadian digital media platform that seeks to provide Canadians with fair, accurate, truthful and fact-based news reports" (True North, n.d.). It was started in 2018 by former spokesperson for Jason Kenny and the Canadian Taxpayers' Federation, Candice Malcolm. Before 2018, it originally operated under the name Independent Immigration Aid Association, a charity established in 1994 to welcome immigrants from the UK to BC (PressProgress, 2019). Currently, *True North* operates simultaneously as a media outlet, think tank, and registered charity; however, the charitable aspects of the organization are heavily questioned (PressProgress, 2019). With the limited scholarship and information available on Canadian far-right media outlets more research is needed to explore the history of *True North* and its founder Candice Malcolm.

Methodology

My research project used content analysis to determine the positions Canadian far-right media employed to attack mainstream media. Content analysis is a research method used to "determine the presence of certain words, themes, or concepts within some given qualitative data" (Columbia, n.d.). For this project, my qualitative data sampled news articles from my two selected cases, *Rebel News* and *True North*. By using content analysis, I could

identify emerging patterns, themes, and concepts relating to media criticism, and how these ideas were employed by the Canadian far-right. Therefore, my content analysis took an inductive research approach. Inductive research follows the process of gathering data, looking for patterns, and then develops a theory around what was observed (Saylor Academy, 2012). While my hypothesis indicated a theory about potential themes and positions the Canadian far-right media could take, an inductive approach allowed me to analyze what was truly in the data. An inductive method also allowed me to compare the themes I found during my analysis with the themes I specified in the initial hypothesis.

The research project sampled data from the websites of *Rebel News* and *True North*. Both sites were chosen because they were relatively popular, frequently reported on Canadian news, did not restrict their content behind a paywall, and had strong right-wing biases in their reporting. Because of limited time, I analyzed only two media outlets to reduce the project's scope. The sample data consisted of news articles posted to the websites of *Rebel News* and *True North*. Articles posted to both sites were usually short (less than 400 words) and frequently engaged in mainstream media criticism. Again, to limit the scope, this project did not analyze any social media posts or other media statements from *Rebel News* or *True North*.

Sample news articles were collected during a three-month timeframe between August 1, 2023, and October 31, 2023. Sampling was based on the following search words: media, journalist, legacy, mainstream, global news, CBC, CTV, Globe and Mail, *National Post*, and *Toronto Star*. Searches were conducted using the search function of each website. I decided to include search words for large legacy media sites to capture any articles that aimed specific criticism at them. Articles were then reviewed for relevance. To be included in the analysis, articles had to be critical of mainstream media. Any that were not related to media criticism, or articles that were duplicated, were removed from the data set. As a result, 43 articles from *Rebel News* and 22 articles from *True North* engaged in some form of Canadian mainstream media criticism over the defined timeframe.

To analyze my data, I used the qualitative analysis software MAXQDA. As previously mentioned,

I took an inductive approach to the sample data. Inductive research includes developing codes for the data “during the process of coding, based on the actual content of the data set” (Vears & Gillam, 113). This allowed me to specify additional positions of media criticism I found the Canadian far-right media using. After additional positions were identified, I coded for them in MAXQDA along with the positions specified in Figenschou and Ihlebæk's analysis. After all articles were coded, I created a frequency bar graph to indicate which positions were most frequently found within the far-right media's critiques of mainstream media. By seeing what positions of authority were most used, we can determine what strategies far-right media believe to be most effective in undermining the trust of legacy news.

Results and Discussion

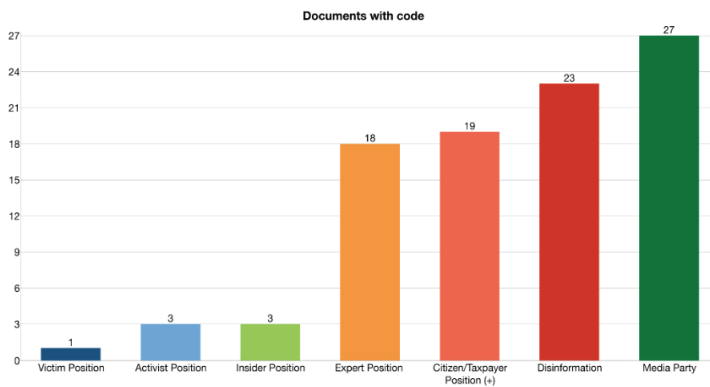
A total of 65 articles relating to mainstream media criticism were examined in my analysis of *Rebel News* and *True North*. *Rebel News* engaged in the highest levels of media criticism, with 43 articles containing media critiques over the defined three-month period. The focus of these articles surrounded topics such as the Israel-Palestine war, commentary on Bill C-18, and discussions of CBC's finances. Even though *True North* engaged in lower levels of media criticism, with only 22 articles containing media critiques, similar topics were still covered in their reporting.

Although *True North* and *Rebel News* are critical of all mainstream media, most of their criticisms focused specifically on the CBC. Out of the 43 articles from *Rebel News*, 25 (or 58%) were a direct criticism of the CBC. Similar percentages were found at *True North*, with 12 out of the 22 articles (or 55%), directly criticizing the CBC. Other mainstream media sources, such as CTV, *Global and Mail*, and the *Toronto Star*, were infrequently mentioned in the critiques of *Rebel News* and *True North*. These mainstream outlets were never the focus of any article and were only referred to in a few cases. For example, one critique from *True North* described “The Liberal-aligned legacy media in Canada” as including “the CBC, CTV, *Globe and Mail*, *Toronto Star* and Postmedia” (Malcom, 2023). Compared to their criticism of CBC, Canadian far-right media was significantly less critical of other mainstream media sources.

Not only was CBC the mainstream media outlet that

Figenschou and Ihlebæk, and the two identified by me) and I created a bar graph that represented the most used strategies. It should be noted that some articles contained more than one strategy and therefore had multiple codes assigned. Figure 4 depicts the positions that were most frequently found within the far-right’s media critiques of mainstream media.

Figure 4



Note: Bar Graph depicting the positions of authority used by Canadian far-right media.

My research found that *Rebel News* and *True North* utilized the “Media Party” position most frequently in their reporting, followed by the Disinformation position, and the Citizen position. The “Media Party” position was found within 27 of the 65 articles analyzed, suggesting that the far-right believes it’s a highly useful tactic. As previously mentioned, this position is used to legitimize the claim that mainstream media acts as a biased political party that favours the Liberals.

Although I hypothesized that Canadian far-right media would frame their critiques in similar ways to those seen in Figenschou and Ihlebæk’s (2019) framework, only two of their identified positions (the Citizen position and the Expert position) were substantially found. The Citizen position, which was found in 19 of the 65 articles, positioned *Rebel News* and *True North* as if dedicated to represent the interests of the people. In this position, far-right media attempts to gain legitimacy from the people by claiming legacy media is out of touch with reality.

In the Canadian context, *Rebel News* and *True North* used this position to criticize the legacy media’s finances as being a waste of taxpayer dollars, making claims such as “69% of CBC’s annual \$1.2 billion budget is courtesy of the taxpayer,” and “taxpayers subsidize Canadian media at \$595 million — in addition to the \$1.2 billion given to the CBC annually” (Gunn Reid, 2023; *Rebel News*, 2023c).

The Expert position found within the Canadian context saw far-right networks build factual legitimacy by reporting statistics and facts from other far-right networks. *Rebel News* and *True North* both frequently cited each other as sources to help establish credibility within their news reports. Also, articles from both sites used other far-right media such as *Blacklock*, *The Bureau*, and *The Counter Signal* to build this perceived factual legitimacy.

Conclusions

The growing presence of far-right media worldwide poses a significant challenge to the legitimacy of mainstream journalism. Far-right media continues to engage in media criticism to undermine the trust of mainstream media while asserting their journalistic authority. In Canada, the rise of far-right networks has followed similar trends since they regularly participate in legacy media criticism. I hypothesized that Canadian far-right media employs specific strategies of criticism that focus on presenting their discourse as authoritative over legacy media in Canada. Using content analysis, I found that Canadian far-right media asserts their authority by presenting the mainstream media through the following frames: The Media Party position (the claim that mainstream media is an extension of the Liberal Party); the Disinformation position (the claim that mainstream media purposefully spreads misinformation); the Citizen/Taxpayer position (the claim that mainstream media does not reflect the interests of taxpayers); and the Expert position (that uses information from other far-right media to appear to legitimize their claims). As the Canadian far-right media grows, it is crucial for mainstream media to understand the tactics used by the far-right media and develop strategies to prevent the spread of harmful far-right rhetoric and to maintain a sense of journalistic integrity in Canada.

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