

THE TWITTER RACISM PROJECT

An overview of a 2013 case study of a small sample of racist tweets in Canada, highlighting Twitter's ability to track racism online

THE PROJECT

IN JUNE 2013, RACIST TWEETS

WERE CAPTURED FROM SIX

DIFFERENT CANADIAN CITIES

OVER A 3 MONTH TIME SPAN.



THE PROJECT

Using hootsuite, a social media management platform. Each city was searched via hootsuite, looking for any tweets containing the following racist words in a negative context: **native(s)**; **white trash**; **nigger(s)**; **paki(s)**; and **chink(s)**.

These words were chosen because the majority of the words represent the **most common racist terms associated with specific racialized groups**. The term native, which is not usually associated with being a racist word, was surprisingly used in a negative way on twitter, and as such, was included as one of the key terms for this data set.

During the data collection stage, each tweet that came up which contained one of the above words was read by the researcher to determine the context of the tweet. For the purpose of this project, only tweets which contained the above words in a **NEGATIVE** context were captured in the data.

The data offers some initial results that generate a sense of what racialized groups are most commented on in a negative way online in these six Canadian cities and in what context (see next panel).

[CLICK HERE](#) TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE METHODOLOGY USED FOR THIS STUDY

THE FINDINGS

TORONTO		VANCOUVER		WINNIPEG	
Nigger(s)	190	Nigger(s)	29	Natives	33
Paki(s)	100	White Trash	23	Paki(s)	20
White Trash	88	Natives	17	Nigger(s)	10
Chink(s)	40	Paki(s)	15	Chink(s)	8
Natives	16	Chink(s)	15	White Trash	7
Totals	434	Totals	99	Totals	78

CALGARY		EDMONTON		MONTREAL	
Natives	30	Natives	27	Nigger(s)	18
White Trash	11	Nigger(s)	11	White Trash	10
Nigger(s)	10	Paki(s)	11	Chink(s)	9
Paki(s)	9	Chink(s)	6	Paki(s)	3
Chink(s)	2	White Trash	5	Natives	3
Totals	62	Totals	60	Totals	43

Although this data is very tentative, it is interesting to see that the cities with the highest number of Aboriginal residents ([Winnipeg](#), [Edmonton](#), and [Calgary](#)) have the term natives used most often in a negative context in the tweets gathered for this study. [Toronto](#) and [Montreal](#) - two cities with the highest black population in the country - also have the term nigger(s) used most often in a negative context in the tweets gathered for this study

THE CITIES

TORONTO
VANCOUVER
WINNIPEG
CALGARY
EDMONTON
MONTREAL

THE WORDS

NIGGER(S)
NATIVES
WHITE
TRASH
PAKI(S)
CHINK(S)

ANALYSIS

AFTER CONDUCTING A [CONTENT ANALYSIS OF EACH TWEET](#), THE FOLLOWING CATEGORIES WERE DEVELOPED (USING SIMILAR CATEGORIES FROM A 2014 [DEMOS STUDY](#), P.24) TO GIVE CONTEXT AROUND HOW THE TWEETS WERE BEING USED. BELOW IS A SUMMARY OF THE RESULTS:

REAL TIME RESPONSE - 50%
NEGATIVE STEREOTYPE - 28%
CASUAL USE OF SLUR - 12%
RESPONSES TO RACISM - 4%
TARGETTED ABUSE (ONLINE) - 2%
APPROPRIATED - 2%
"NON-DEROGATORY" - 2%

SAMPLE TWEETS

"OF COURSE...THE **NATIVES** ARE GOING TO THE LIQOUR STORE. #WHATASURPRISE"

NEGATIVE STEREOTYPE

"OFFICIALLY BOARDED. THEY PUT ME IN THE MIDDLE OF A 300 POUND LARD AND A PAKI...GREAT"

REAL TIME REACTION

"HA HA. **CHINK** DOESN'T CARD ME AT THE POOL BUT CARD'S MY BRO WHO IS 20 HAHAHAAAA"

CASUAL USE OF SLUR

"MY MOM CALLS THE DUCK FACE **NIGGER LIPS**. NOT SURE IF RACIST OR FUNNY"

CASUAL USE OF SLUR

"ATLEAST I DON'T ROB PEOPLE AND WEAR METAL ON MY TEETH. KEEP 'EM COMING **NIGGER** THIS IS FUN"

TARGETED ABUSE

"THE ONLY TIME I WILL DRIVE SOMEWHERE LOOKING LIKE **WHITE TRASH** IS WHEN I AM GOING TO THE