

**A SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONIST ANALYSIS OF  
CANADIAN CONSERVATIVE BLOGS ON ISLAMIC  
TERRORISM**

by

Benjamin John Woolsey  
Bachelor of Commerce, Mount Allison University, 2002

THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF  
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# APPROVAL

**Name:** Benjamin John Woolsey  
**Degree:** Master of Arts  
**Title of Thesis:** A Social Constructionist Analysis of Canadian Conservative Blogs on Islamic Terrorism

**Examining Committee:**

**Chair:** **Dr. Liz Elliott**  
Associate Professor

---

**Dr. John Lowman**  
Senior Supervisor  
Professor of Criminology

---

**Dr. Shane Gunster**  
Supervisor  
Assistant Professor of Communication

---

**Dr. Joel Best**  
External Examiner  
Professor of Sociology and Criminal Justice  
University of Delaware

**Date Defended/Approved:** December 11, 2009



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## **ABSTRACT**

This is a mixed methods content analysis of discourse in the Canadian conservative blogosphere regarding Islamic terrorism. The data are primarily from three years' worth of entries posted at Canada's most popular political blog, [smalldeadanimals.com](http://smalldeadanimals.com) (SDA). The analysis reveals that conservative discourse contains apprehension about global demographic trends, a critique of fundamental aspects of Islamic cultures and religious doctrine, and contempt for Western welfare and multicultural policies. The conservative blogging community also strongly disapproves of, and is seeking to reform, Canada's Human Rights Commissions (HRCs), which the conservatives claim are impeding legitimate criticism of militant Islam. The thesis examines conservatives' discourse as claims-making activities following a "natural history," described in the social constructionist literature on the creation of "social problems." This natural history proceeds through four stages, starting with a group's assertions of a putative societal threat, and finishing with calls to reform institutions designed to deal with similar claims.

**Keywords:** Islamic Terrorism; Conservative Politics; Social Problems; Political Blogosphere; Social Constructionism; Claims-Making

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# 1: PRELUDE TO A NATURAL HISTORY

## 1.1 Continued Tensions between Western and Islamic Societies

The goal of this thesis is to examine online, right-of-center political discourse in Canada regarding Islamic terrorism. Smalldeadanimals.com (SDA), a decidedly conservative and Canada's most popular political blog, is used as a window into this world. The Canadian conservative blogosphere was chosen as a source of data because it is part of a new, accessible, lively medium that authors such as Ray Maratea have suggested is ideally suited to incubate and spread concern for specific issues.<sup>1</sup> The authors of blog entries at SDA, and the readers who leave comments there, regularly express palpable concern about Islamic terrorism and related issues, which may not come as a surprise to many who regularly reads news articles about the foreign policies of Western nations. During the summer of 2009, while I was writing the final draft of this thesis, incidents of terrorism and conflict between the "Islamic" and "Western" worlds continued unabated, as they have at least since the tragic events of September 11, 2001.

In June, U.S. President Barack Obama began a tour of the Middle-East, culminating in a keynote address to the Muslim world from Cairo, intended to mend fences and set a new tone for his term in office.<sup>2</sup> In response, on June 3, al-Qaeda released a video, purportedly featuring Osama bin Laden, denouncing President Obama and his administration.<sup>3</sup> In Pakistan a week later militants blew up a truckload of explosives in the parking lot of a five-star hotel catering to

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<sup>1</sup> R. Maratea, "The e-Rise and Fall of Social Problems: The Blogosphere as a Public Arena," *Social Problems* 55, Issue 1 (2008).

<sup>2</sup> Hadeel al-Shalchi and Karin Laub, "Muslims want tangible change on Mideast from Obama," *Townhall*, June 1, 2009, [http://townhall.com/news/world/2009/06/01/muslims\\_want\\_tangible\\_change\\_on\\_mideast\\_from\\_obama](http://townhall.com/news/world/2009/06/01/muslims_want_tangible_change_on_mideast_from_obama)

<sup>3</sup> BBC News, "'Bin Laden' tape denounces Obama," June 3, 2009, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/world/south\\_asia/8081828.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/world/south_asia/8081828.stm)

Westerners, killing 11 people and wounding 55 more.<sup>4</sup> At the end of the month, al-Qaeda vowed revenge on France for considering banning women from wearing the Islamic niqab, or burka.<sup>5</sup>

Things did not get better in July, as British officials arrested British-Egyptian citizen Hazem Mostapha Ibrahim in relation to a bombing in Egypt that killed 25 people, including a 17-year-old girl from France.<sup>6</sup> On July 11, *The New York Times* ran an exclusive story documenting the radicalization of two Somali-born Americans who had dropped out of university and returned to Somalia to fight American forces there. One of them, Shirwa Ahmed, became the first known suicide bomber with American citizenship.<sup>7</sup> Federal papers unsealed 10 days later documented the arrest and conviction of Bryant Neal Vinas, an American-born man who converted to Islam while living in Long Island, who later traveled to Afghanistan to engage in rocket attacks against American forces.<sup>8</sup> On July 17, near simultaneous explosions in two of Jakarta's luxury hotels killed eight people, five of whom were Westerners.<sup>9</sup> Less than a week after that, in India, Mohammed Ajmal Kasab confessed to his role in the November 2008 terrorist attacks on Mumbai's financial district, which killed 166 people, including 28 foreigners.<sup>10</sup> At the end of July, seven men were arrested in North Carolina and charged with providing moral, financial, and technical support to Islamic converts wishing to fight Western forces in Afghanistan.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Ismail Khan and Salman Masood, "Militants Strike Hotel in Pakistan, Killing 11," *The New York Times*, June 9, 2009, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/06/10/world/asia/10peshawar.html>

<sup>5</sup> Breitbart News, "Qaeda warns France of revenge for burka stance," June 30, 2009, [http://www.breitbart.com/article.php?id=CNG.3ec79e2e7a25748f4b9623ac728de663.611&show\\_article=1](http://www.breitbart.com/article.php?id=CNG.3ec79e2e7a25748f4b9623ac728de663.611&show_article=1)

<sup>6</sup> Samer al-Atrush and Duncan Gardham, "Briton arrested in Egypt over terror attack that killed 17-year-old girl," *The Daily Telegraph*, July 2, 2009, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/egypt/5713186/Briton-arrested-in-Egypt-over-terror-attack-that-killed-17-year-old-girl.html>

<sup>7</sup> Andrea Elliott, "A Call to Jihad, Answered in America," *The New York Times*, July 11, 2009, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/07/12/us/12somalis.html>

<sup>8</sup> William K. Rashbaum and Souad Mekhennet, "L.I. Man Helped Qaeda, Then Informed," *The New York Times*, July 22, 2009, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/07/23/nyregion/23terror.html>

<sup>9</sup> Richard Lloyd Parry, "Eight dead in bomb blasts at Jakarta hotels," *Times Online*, July 17, 2009, <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/asia/article6717240.ece>

<sup>10</sup> Sumit Sharma, "Mumbai Gunman Says 'Hang Me' After Shock Confession," *Bloomberg*, July 22, 2009, [http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=20601091&sid=aL6Px3\\_peeCc](http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=20601091&sid=aL6Px3_peeCc)

<sup>11</sup> Josh Meyer, "7 arrested in North Carolina on terrorism charges," *WTKR News*, July 28, 2009, <http://www.wtkr.com/news/wtkr-terror-arrests,0,1417615.story>

In early August, Australian law-enforcement officials arrested four men with alleged connections to the Somali based terrorist organization al-Shabab, and charged them with plotting suicide attacks against military targets in Australia.<sup>12</sup> In mid-August, Yale University Press announced that, for fear of negative and potentially violent repercussions, it would not allow cartoons depicting the Islamic Prophet Muhammad to be included in a book entitled *The Cartoons That Shook the World* about those very same cartoons.<sup>13</sup> The next day, on August 13, American born and raised Ehsanul Islam Sadequee was found guilty of aiding terrorist groups from Washington D.C., where he had been filming strategic locations such as fuel depots and sending the video-tapes overseas.<sup>14</sup> On August 25, Saad Khalid, a Muslim Canadian who has been found guilty of plotting to detonate bombs in the Toronto area, admitted that his actions were motivated by his opposition to Canada's military role in Afghanistan.<sup>15</sup>

None of the above mentioned incidents should be viewed in isolation from acts perpetrated during the same time period by Western, chiefly American, governments and forces. President Barack Obama has claimed to be setting a new course on terrorism with his administration's decision to close the U.S. detention center in Guantanamo Bay.<sup>16</sup> However, in June, uncertainty as to where the detainees would go afterwards forced the White House to draft an Executive Order allowing for the indefinite detention of detainees' elsewhere.<sup>17</sup> Further, though American forces withdrew from an active combat role in Iraq at the end of the month, some 130,000 troops remain there.<sup>18</sup> On July 2 the U.S.

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<sup>12</sup> Aljazeera, "Australia arrests 'terror' suspects," August 4, 2009, <http://english.aljazeera.net/news/asia-pacific/2009/08/200983224141757757.html>

<sup>13</sup> Patricia Cohen, "Yale Press Bans Images of Muhammad in New Book," *The New York Times*, August 12, 2009, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/08/13/books/13book.html>

<sup>14</sup> BBC News, "US 'video terrorist' found guilty," August 13, 2009, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/8198667.stm>

<sup>15</sup> Trevor Pritchard, "'Toronto 18' member guilty in bomb plot says he made 'huge mistake'," *The Canadian Press*, August 25, 2009, [http://www.google.com/hostednews/canadianpress/article/ALeqM5iw6Gm\\_wEXFCnjp0wUEggpDLKFHA](http://www.google.com/hostednews/canadianpress/article/ALeqM5iw6Gm_wEXFCnjp0wUEggpDLKFHA)

<sup>16</sup> Mark Mazzetti and William Glaberson, "Obama Issues Directive to Shut Down Guantánamo," *The New York Times*, January 21, 2009, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/01/22/us/politics/22gitmo.html>

<sup>17</sup> Dafna Linzer and Peter Finn, "White House Weighs Order on Detention," *The Washington Post*, June 27, 2009, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/06/26/AR2009062603361.html>

<sup>18</sup> NBC News, "Fireworks over Baghdad as U.S. troops leave," June 30, 2009, [http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/31611805/ns/world\\_news-conflict\\_in\\_iraq/](http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/31611805/ns/world_news-conflict_in_iraq/)

opened a “major offensive” in Afghanistan, involving the addition of 17,000 more American troops, bringing their total in that country to over 40,000,<sup>19</sup> a situation that has caused considerable alarm for the Pakistani government.<sup>20</sup> Pakistan’s alarm is fuelled by the relentless missile attacks launched by U.S. drones, targeting militants along Pakistan’s border with Afghanistan. Attacks were reported on June 23,<sup>21</sup> July 3,<sup>22</sup> July 8,<sup>23</sup> August 5,<sup>24</sup> and August 11.<sup>25</sup> Those five alone killed approximately 100 people, all of whom appear to have been Muslims, many of whom were not known to be Islamic terrorists.

Given the information above, it is hardly surprising that many Western organizations and factions are making claims about the nature, causes, and solutions to Islamic terrorism. In the process, Canadian conservative bloggers have attempted to abolish Canada’s Human Rights Commissions and Tribunals. This thesis uses a social constructionist approach to analyze the discourse of Canadian conservative bloggers when making claims about Islamic terrorism. Online conservative concern regarding Islamic terrorism is revealed to be quite complex, focusing on Western policies as well as fundamental aspects of Islam itself. Despite this complexity, the stages of the blogging community’s activity and the rhetoric they employ to make their claims follow a pattern that has been well established in the literature on the social construction of “social problems.”

Before describing this pattern I will describe the origins, nature, and utility of a social constructionist perspective for examining discourse on Islamic terrorism. I then describe the primary and secondary components of this thesis—

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<sup>19</sup> BBC News, “US opens ‘major Afghan offensive’,” July 2, 2009, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south\\_asia/8129789.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/8129789.stm)

<sup>20</sup> Eric Schmitt and Jane Perlez, “Pakistan Objects to U.S. Expansion in Afghan War,” *Herald Tribune*, July 22, 2009, <http://www.heraldtribune.com/article/20090722/ZNYT03/907223015?Title=Pakistan-Objects-to-U-S-Expansion-in-Afghan-War>

<sup>21</sup> Alamgir Bitani, “U.S. drone strike kills 45 in Pakistan,” *Reuters*, June 23, 2009, <http://www.reuters.com/article/worldNews/idUSSP39352120090623>

<sup>22</sup> Munir Ahmed, “Officials: 17 die in US missile strike in Pakistan,” *Breitbart News*, July 3, 2009, [http://www.breitbart.com/article.php?id=D99726V82&show\\_article=1](http://www.breitbart.com/article.php?id=D99726V82&show_article=1)

<sup>23</sup> BBC News, “Drones ‘kill dozens’ in Pakistan,” July 8, 2009, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south\\_asia/8139739.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/8139739.stm)

<sup>24</sup> Alamgir Bitani, “‘U.S. Drone’ targets Pakistan Taliban chief,” *Reuters*, August 5, 2009, <http://www.reuters.com/article/topNews/idUSTRE5740WD20090805>

<sup>25</sup> Declan Walsh, “Deadly air strike targets Pakistan Taliban base,” *The Guardian*, August 11, 2009, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/aug/11/pakistan-taliban-base-attack>

an analysis of the “natural history” of conservative claims regarding Islamic terrorism, and an analysis of the rhetorical techniques conservatives have employed in making their claims—and explain my decision to adhere to a fairly “strict” application of the social constructionist paradigm. I conclude Chapter 1 with an outline of the thesis.

## 1.2 Social Constructionism’s *Raison D’être*

Before *Constructing Social Problems* was first published (1977), few people had tried to define the concept “social problems.” Spector and Kitsuse went so far as to say “There is no adequate definition of social problems within sociology, and there is not and never has been a sociology of social problems.”<sup>26</sup> According to them, many researchers and theorists simply assumed that social problems were anything that unnecessarily interfered with society’s “smooth functioning.”<sup>27</sup> Spector and Kitsuse claimed such an approach was untenable because it forced the researcher to prove both that the social problem was interfering with some abstract conception of societal efficiency, and that this interference was undesirable.<sup>28</sup>

In this sense, literature regarding the social construction of social problems is similar to labelling theory, another theoretical framework that emerged in the 1970s. Ostensibly, the labelling perspective sought to study societal perceptions of deviant behaviour and the effect of labelling on identity formation. The emphasis was supposed to be on how claims-makers come to view certain activities as being “outside” the normal accepted parameters of mainstream society, rather than on the causes of putatively “deviant” behaviour.<sup>29</sup> However, Spector and Kitsuse criticized the application of the labelling perspective for failing to live up to its mission. For example, the majority of Howard Becker’s book *Outsiders*, a seminal text in the labelling tradition,

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<sup>26</sup> Malcolm Spector and John I. Kitsuse, *Constructing Social Problems* (Walter de Gruyter, Inc., 1987), 1.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.* 23.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.* 25–26.

<sup>29</sup> J. Best, “Constructing the Sociology of Social Problems: Spector and Kitsuse Twenty-Five Years Later,” *Sociological Forum* 17, No. 4 (2002): 701.

discussed “not how groups create deviance by producing rules and applying them to others, but rather how persons come to participate in the kinds of actions that others find offensive.”<sup>30</sup>

It is the focus on the activities of people making claims about the existence of some problem, rather than the causes of the putative problem, that sets social constructionists apart.<sup>31</sup> Social constructionism focuses on the definitional process by examining how claims-makers define certain issues as social problems, and the “careers” of claims-making activities.<sup>32</sup> “The central problem for a theory of social problems is to account for the emergence, nature, and maintenance of claims-making and responding activities.”<sup>33</sup> This characterization of social problems has fostered at least two avenues of inquiry. First is the study of the “natural history” of social problems, or the various stages a group’s claims go through. The second examines the rhetoric employed in claims-making activities to ascertain patterns in the techniques used.

One of the primary goals of social constructionism, as defined by Spector and Kitsuse, is to examine the activities of various claims-makers and examine to what extent their definitions of social problems share similar careers. This avenue of investigation facilitates an understanding of political activism, and thus helps researchers and policy makers understand what to expect from various groups. It also helps to explain how socially acceptable behaviour is defined, and how legislative change occurs, and could potentially help shape both those processes.

### **1.3 Natural Histories of Claims-Making Activities**

A “natural history” is the “common portrait” that all social problem claims-making activities share.<sup>34</sup> “It is the sort of generalization that can be derived from

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<sup>30</sup> Spector & Kitsuse, *Constructing Social Problems*, 62.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.* 73.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.* 72.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.* 76.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.* 136.

intensive observations,”<sup>35</sup> as its application to any given case requires a deep understanding of a particular group’s claims over time. Analysts have proposed several natural history models. Ronald Weitzer constructed one such model based on his observations of conservative “moral crusaders”’ claims about sex trafficking and prostitution in the U.S. His is a four-stage model tracking the institutionalization of crusader claims, with each stage involving a different relationship between the crusaders and the government. The first stage is “consultation,” followed by “official recognition and endorsement,” followed by “independent articulation,” and then finally “programmatically and legal changes.”<sup>36</sup> Using this framework Weitzer documented the progress of claims in the United States denigrating sex work and causally connecting it with sex trafficking, from testimonies given at congressional hearings on sex trafficking,<sup>37</sup> through to government adoption of the crusader’s terminology.<sup>38</sup>

Spector and Kitsuse proposed their own natural history, derived from one developed by Herbert Blumer,<sup>39</sup> who proposed a five-stage model tracking changes in social problems activities: “emergence, legitimation, mobilization of action, formation of an official plan, and implementation of the plan.”<sup>40</sup> Randy Lippert used both Blumer’s natural history model and Stephen Toulmin’s method of analyzing rhetoric—the latter of which I will return to below—in his analysis of claims made in Canada about the threat of Satanism. Lippert determined that claims regarding the threat had passed the emergence stage. With seminars across the country on Satanism, claims-making had entered the legitimating stage.<sup>41</sup>

Spector and Kitsuse refined Blumer’s natural history and proposed a four-stage process. They were adamant that their model is “hypothetical,” and

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<sup>35</sup> Joel Best, “Constructing the Sociology of Social Problems,” 704.

<sup>36</sup> R. Weitzer, “The Social Construction of Sex Trafficking: Ideology and Institutionalization of a Moral Crusade,” *Politics & Society* 35, No. 3 (2007): 458.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.* 459.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.* 462, 464.

<sup>39</sup> C. Gentry, “The Social Construction of Abducted Children as a Social Problem,” *Sociological Inquiry* 58, No. 4 (1988): 413.

<sup>40</sup> R. Lippert, “The Construction of Satanism as a Social Problem in Canada,” *The Canadian Journal of Sociology* 15, No. 4 (1990): 433.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.* 434–434.

encouraged other researchers to help further develop, modify, and expand upon it by analyzing additional cases of claims-making activity.<sup>42</sup> Many researchers have done just that, including Cynthia Gentry, who used their model to study the evolution of concerns in the U.S. over abducted children.<sup>43</sup>

The first stage of Spector and Kitsuse's natural history involves a group's "attempt to assert the existence of some condition, define it as offensive, harmful, or otherwise undesirable, publicize these assertions, stimulate controversy, and create a public or political issue over the matter."<sup>44</sup> Thus, the focus for social constructionist researchers studying claims at this stage should be on the strategies used by the claims-makers to convince others that some alleged threat is a clear and present danger. Of particular interest are the facts that claims-makers cite,<sup>45</sup> and the use they make of the media.<sup>46</sup> Not all claims will proceed through the entire history, but if they do move past the first stage Spector and Kitsuse said it will be because of some "social controversy" between the claims-makers and another group that does "not use the same values or who have opposite interests in the condition in question."<sup>47</sup> The requirement of a controversy as the culmination of stage one has been questioned by Cynthia Gentry, who argues that certain "valence issues" have a high enough resonance with a majority of citizens to proceed to the second stage without any conflict.<sup>48</sup> This is exactly what she found had happened with respect to the abducted children problem, an issue few people were willing or able to take a stand against when it was first raised.<sup>49</sup> Others have argued that while it was possible at one time for certain claims to receive broad societal support, the political discourse of the twenty-first century is too fractured for any issue to be uncritically accepted as a problem.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Spector & Kitsuse, *Constructing Social Problems*, 141.

<sup>43</sup> Cynthia Gentry, "The Social Construction of Abducted Children as a Social Problem," 414.

<sup>44</sup> Spector & Kitsuse, *Constructing Social Problems*, 142.

<sup>45</sup> Cynthia Gentry, "The Social Construction of Abducted Children as a Social Problem," 413.

<sup>46</sup> Randy Lippert, "The Construction of Satanism as a Social Problem in Canada," 420.

<sup>47</sup> Spector & Kitsuse, *Constructing Social Problems*, 148.

<sup>48</sup> Cynthia Gentry, "The Social Construction of Abducted Children as a Social Problem," 421.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid. 422.

<sup>50</sup> D. Garland, "On the concept of moral panic," *Crime Media Culture* 4, no. 1 (2008): 17.



While there is some controversy about the progression through the stages, the second stage of Spector and Kitsuse's natural history is some sort of "official" recognition of the problem by an "organization, agency, or institution."<sup>51</sup> Often this recognition is by some level of government, and can be in the form of anything from "passive acknowledgement of the claim to active attempts to control, regulate, or eliminate the condition at issue."<sup>52</sup> The passage of H.R. 3781, "The Missing Children's Act," which created the Unidentified Person File, marked the second stage of the abducted children problem in the U.S.<sup>53</sup> This occurred after parents, businesses, and the mainstream media started paying the problem a lot of attention.<sup>54</sup>

Stage three is characterized by dissatisfaction among the claims-makers with the official procedures established or employed in the second stage.<sup>55</sup> Here the focus of claims switches from the original threat or problem to the official responses or the organizations designated to deal with the original claims.<sup>56</sup> In the abducted children case, this stage involved oversight hearings into the activities of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC), a private group created by the U.S. government and partially funded by the Justice Department to help reduce the number of missing and exploited children in the United States. Among other things the NCMEC was accused of "deliberately inflating the figures on stranger abductions, of instituting a public hysteria... misappropriating funds, and failure to follow congressional intent."<sup>57</sup>

The final stage in Spector and Kitsuse's natural history occurs if the dissatisfaction expressed in the third stage turns into outright rejection of official solutions and leads to "the development of activities to create alternative, parallel, or counter-institutions as responses to the established procedures."<sup>58</sup> In the abducted children case, there was a variety of proposed solutions at this

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<sup>51</sup> Spector & Kitsuse, *Constructing Social Problems*, 142.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.* 148.

<sup>53</sup> Cynthia Gentry, "The Social Construction of Abducted Children as a Social Problem," 417.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> Spector & Kitsuse, *Constructing Social Problems*, 142.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.* 152.

<sup>57</sup> Cynthia Gentry, "The Social Construction of Abducted Children as a Social Problem," 420.

<sup>58</sup> Spector & Kitsuse, *Constructing Social Problems*, 142.

stage, ranging from the reorganization to a complete dismantlement of the NCMEC.<sup>59</sup>

The primary objective of this thesis is to ascertain whether the claims made in the Canadian conservative blogosphere about Islamic terrorism follow the four stages of Spector and Kitsuse's natural history and, if they do not, to propose modifications to Spector and Kitsuse's model. I also employ a social constructionist analysis of rhetoric in order to assess conservative claims regarding Islamic terrorism, and conservative claims regarding Canada's Human Rights Commissions and Tribunals.

## 1.4 The Role of Rhetoric in Claims-Making Activities

Joel Best has indicated that the way claims-makers construct their arguments has an immense impact on the potential recognition of their claims as social problems.<sup>60</sup> Best applied Stephen Toulmin's method of analyzing claims to the arguments made by missing children claims-makers in the U.S.<sup>61</sup> Following Best's lead; Randy Lippert applied the same framework in his analysis of claims about Satanism in Canada.<sup>62</sup> The framework involves breaking claims down into "three categories of statements—grounds, warrants, and conclusions."<sup>63</sup>

Grounds are the facts cited by claims-makers to convince people that some threat exists. Though these facts vary depending on the claims made, grounds can usually be broken down into "definitions, examples, and numeric estimates."<sup>64</sup> Definitions describe the phenomenon or alleged threat, allowing people to determine what is and is not an example of the problem.<sup>65</sup> Best notes that claims-makers usually chose "emotionally-riveting" examples to help people identify with those affected by the problem.<sup>66</sup> Choosing such "atrocious tales"<sup>67</sup> is

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<sup>59</sup> Cynthia Gentry, "The Social Construction of Abducted Children as a Social Problem," 420.

<sup>60</sup> J. Best, "Rhetoric in Claims-Making: Constructing the Missing Children Problem," *Social Problems* 34, No. 2 (1987): 101.

<sup>61</sup> Joel Best, "Rhetoric in Claims-Making," 102.

<sup>62</sup> Randy Lippert, "The Construction of Satanism as a Social Problem in Canada," 423.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.* 424.

<sup>64</sup> Joel Best, "Rhetoric in Claims-Making," 104.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.* 105.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.* 107.

common practice in political discourse.<sup>68</sup> As Goode and Ben-Yehuda point out, the irony is that “to gather support for the typical conditions they oppose, social movements must invoke atypical ones.”<sup>69</sup> This polarizes the debate and helps portray the claims-makers as the “good guys.”<sup>70</sup> Once the “human dimensions” of the problem are established, estimates are made of the problem’s overall magnitude. “The bigger the problem, the more attention it can be said to merit, so most claims-makers emphasize a problem’s size.”<sup>71</sup>

Warrants are the bridge between grounds and conclusions, a product of the values or moral-code held by the claims-makers.<sup>72</sup> Often warrants are not explicit, in part because those who hold them see them as being axiomatic. Conclusions are the actions claims-makers want taken to deal with the alleged threat, and can range from simple increased awareness to the creation of government task forces or new laws.<sup>73</sup>

## **1.5 A Note on Objective Reality, Ontological Gerrymandering, and the Need to Graduate**

The final goal of this thesis was originally to objectively assess some of the Canadian conservative blogosphere’s core claims regarding Islamic terrorism. This was a clear violation of the criteria articulated in Spector and Kitsuse’s version of social constructionism, but one that later researchers and theorists in the field have accepted. As Joel Best puts it, “the sorts of questions constructionists pose are interesting, but they are hardly the only—or even the most—compelling questions people would like to answer about the various phenomena that are called social problems.”<sup>74</sup> Because so much of the political discourse regarding Islamic terrorism involves claims that Islam either is, or is

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<sup>67</sup> Weitzer, “The Social Construction of Sex Trafficking,” 448.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid. 114.

<sup>69</sup> Goode & Ben-Yehuda, *Moral Panics*, 63.

<sup>70</sup> Stanley Cohen, *Folk Devils and Moral Panics: The Creation of the Mods and Rockers* (Paladin, 1972), 11–12.

<sup>71</sup> Joel Best, “Rhetoric in Claims-Making,” 108.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Joel Best, “Constructing the Sociology of Social Problems,” 705.

not, a “religion of peace” and threat to Western civilization, I wanted to get to the bottom of the matter.

Spector and Kitsuse issued stern warnings against such a shift in focus. They claimed that attempting to answer the question of whether a threat claim-makers define as a social problem is, in fact, a problem “requires an elaborate and far-reaching definition of what conditions ‘really are,’ what people’s interests ‘really are,’ and how an observer could determine when those conditions constitute a ‘real threat.’”<sup>75</sup> They argued that attempting to make such far-reaching definitions would force a researcher to rely on evidence from other research traditions that the social constructionist cannot properly evaluate.<sup>76</sup> Following Joel Best’s lead, I will refer to those social constructionists who agree with Spector and Kitsuse on this point as “strict constructionists.”<sup>77</sup>

Strict constructionists attempted to offer empirical examples to establish that objective reality and claims are capable of moving entirely independently of each other. It was hoped that such examples would prevent causal explanations of claims-making from being evaluated by reference to objective reality.<sup>78</sup> Spector and Kitsuse asserted that, “the definition of the condition is not caused by the condition in any meaningful sense,”<sup>79</sup> and used the changing attitudes towards marijuana in the U.S. to illustrate their point. They said that since marijuana itself has not changed over time “an explanation of the variation in definition must come from another source.”<sup>80</sup> However, this defence of strict constructionism was doomed to failure as it relied upon an objective assessment of marijuana’s nature to prove its point. They used an assessment of objective reality to refute the utility of assessing objective reality in social constructionist research, a self-defeating trick Woolgar and Pawluch dubbed “ontological gerrymandering.”<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Spector & Kitsuse, *Constructing Social Problems*, 45.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.* 77.

<sup>77</sup> J. Best, “But seriously folks: The Limitations of the Strict Constructionist Interpretation of Social Problems,” In *Reconsidering Social Constructionism: Debates in social problems*, edited by James A. Holstein and Gale Miller, New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 1993, 136.

<sup>78</sup> D. Weinberg, “On the Social Construction of Social Problems and Social Problems Theory: A Contribution to the Legacy of John Kitsuse,” *The American Sociologist* 40, No. 1 (2009): 64–65.

<sup>79</sup> Spector & Kitsuse, *Constructing Social Problems*, 42.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.* 43.

<sup>81</sup> Joel Best, “But seriously folks,” 134.

Woolgar and Pawluch's observation gave birth to "contextual constructionism,"<sup>82</sup> a more pragmatic approach. In this tradition, researchers still study the careers of claims, but they also examine the validity of those claims. Researchers applying such an approach were capable of finding that claims about Satanism and AIDS, for example, emerged in a similar manner and at a similar time in the U.S., while also noting that, unlike AIDS, there is very little if any concrete evidence proving the existence of Satanism as a societal threat.<sup>83</sup>

Such a lack of concrete evidence might also prove useful when attempting to predict the success claims-makers will have convincing others of their claims' validity.<sup>84</sup> Should we be surprised or indifferent to the fact that the Canadian government has not set up a "Department of Satanism" to fight this dire threat to society's moral fabric? Satanism claims-makers could not demand any such thing because "Satanism is simply a vehicle for other problems."<sup>85</sup> In the extremely unlikely event that a Department of Satanism were established, the lack of evidence documenting the threat's widespread existence would be one more reason to study Satanists. Indeed, this is precisely the starting point of the "moral panic" literature,<sup>86</sup> and the reason Ronald Weitzer was able to debunk many claims about the harms associated with sex work.<sup>87</sup> Though it is true that such assessments of evidence will often require relying on other researchers' findings, this is an unavoidable aspect of most research and one of the reasons for peer-review in academia.

Agreeing with the utility of contextual constructionism did not make the task of objectively assessing claims about Islam any easier however. I did everything in my power to understand the teachings of Islam, such as reading the Qur'an, reading Hadith collections, watching documentaries of Muhammad's life, reading the writings of militants claiming to be waging war against the West in Islam's name, and reading news articles regarding terrorism on a daily basis. I

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<sup>82</sup> Ibid. 139.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Darin Weinberg, "On the Social Construction of Social Problems and Social Problems," 72.

<sup>85</sup> Randy Lippert, "The Construction of Satanism as a Social Problem in Canada," 434.

<sup>86</sup> Goode & Ben-Yehuda, *Moral Panics*, 74.

<sup>87</sup> Weitzer, "The Social Construction of Sex Trafficking," 447.

also read peer-reviewed articles regarding demographic trends in Islamic and Western nations, the struggle for women's rights in Islamic nations, and the connections between Saudi oil money and militant Islamic movements. Despite all this, I still do not feel capable of properly describing the extent to which the violence many in the West associate with Islam is inherent. Though I have made great strides towards assessing the extent to which the conservatives' claims are, as far as they go, accurate, I would still need to find a way to analyze and discuss all of the information they are *not* presenting before any discussion about the reality of their claims could truly be objective.<sup>88</sup> To do so would take more time and more space than I can spare for my Master's degree, so it is in the name of expediency that this thesis will adhere to the criteria of strict constructionism.

## 1.6 Thesis Outline

I begin Chapter 2 with a review of literature examining the nature of conflicts between the West and Islam, including claims from both the right and left of the political spectrum. Starting with Bernard Lewis' seminal essay *The Roots of Muslim Rage* (1990), moving on to Samuel Huntington's continuation of Lewis' thesis in *The Clash of Civilizations* (1993), and ending with Mark Steyn's *America Alone* (2006), I describe the development and nature of recent right-of-center discourse about Islamic terrorism. I contrast this stream of thought with two left-of-center works: Edward Said's *Covering Islam* (1997) and Noam Chomsky's *Failed States* (2006). In the last part of Chapter 2 I propose that the disagreements between these two political camps should be framed in terms of fundamentally opposed moralities, though a definitive analysis of such differences is beyond the scope of this thesis. The goal of this review is to give the reader a general sense of the debate in Western society about Islamic terrorism, and situate discourse in the Canadian conservative blogosphere within that debate.

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<sup>88</sup> J. Best, "People Count: The Social Construction of Statistics," The 2002 Joint Statistical Meeting of the American Statistical Association, [www.StatLit.org/pdf/2002BestASA.pdf](http://www.StatLit.org/pdf/2002BestASA.pdf)

Chapter 3 presents an overview of political blogging in Canada, beginning with a brief description of the Canadian blogosphere, and identification of the major political blogrolls, bloggers, ranking systems and other noteworthy aspects of this cyber-space. Then I describe the conservative blogosphere, including its central activity node, *bloggingtories.ca*, and introduce SDA and Catherine McMillan (Kate<sup>89</sup>), the resident blogger. This introduction includes biographical information about Kate, data regarding the popularity of her blog, and a brief thematic analysis of SDA to help explain the role it plays for her readers as a source of political engagement. Following this description of Canada's political blogosphere I review the mixed research methods employed for my content analysis.

In Chapter 4 I present the first part of my findings. I review the content of a year of blogging at SDA, coded and quantified using the Statistics Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). In Chapters 5 and 6 I present results from the qualitative discourse analysis phase of my content analysis, conducted using the qualitative data analysis software NVivo. In Chapter 5 I discuss the conservative blogosphere's perceptions of, and claims about Islamic terrorism. Chapter 6 describes their struggle with Canada's Human Rights Commissions and Tribunals. Chapters 5 and 6 begin with a discussion of how the information about to be presented fits into a social constructionist natural history model, and each chapter ends with an analysis of the rhetoric employed and claims made by the conservatives. In Chapter 7 I review my primary findings.

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<sup>89</sup> Note: in keeping with the spirit of online interactive communities, bloggers will be referred to on a first name basis throughout this thesis.

## **2: A BRIEF HISTORY OF POLITICAL DISCOURSE REGARDING ISLAMIC TERRORISM**

### **2.1 “Left” vs. “Right”**

The primary goal of this chapter is to trace the recent development of right-wing thought regarding Islamic terrorism, drawing upon the work of Bernard Lewis and Mark Steyn, who has become one of the standard-bearers for Canada’s online conservative community on this matter. I contrast these ideas with those of Noam Chomsky and Edward Said, whom I have chosen as representatives of left-wing progressive thought. At the end of this chapter, I draw on the work of Friedrich Nietzsche to characterize the disagreements between the political right and left as a manifestation of differing moralities or conceptions of ‘good.’ This is not intended to be a definitive characterization; I merely seek to emphasize the differences and place the Canadian conservative blogging community’s stance in a context.

Bernard Lewis is an influential Princeton professor who specializes in Near Eastern studies and who was an integral advisor during the Bush administration’s war in Iraq. Dick Cheney once noted “in this new century, his wisdom is sought daily by policymakers, diplomats, fellow academics, and the news media.”<sup>1</sup> Lewis’s 1990 essay “The Roots of Muslim Rage” laid out what he feels are the key doctrinal and practical differences between Christian and Islamic religious traditions, allowing secularism to flourish more easily in the former. He argues that the New Testament’s admonition to “Give unto Caesar,” an instruction to respect state authority, is an example of this difference. Practically speaking, Lewis emphasizes the Reformation’s impact on Christian societies, which forced Protestants and Catholics to separate Church and State

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<sup>1</sup> Richard Cheney, "Vice President's Remarks at the World Affairs Council of Philadelphia Luncheon Honoring Professor Bernard Lewis," White House Archives, <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2006/05/20060501-3.html>



in an effort to re-establish peace.<sup>2</sup> In Islamic societies such a separation has never occurred and, Lewis argues, is less likely to occur. He argues that "Islam was never prepared, either in theory or in practice, to accord full equality to those who held other beliefs and practiced other forms of worship."<sup>3</sup> This is a problem when not only is the world ruled by those who practice another form of worship, but also Western, predominately Christian nations are meddling in the Islamic nations' politics and inciting their women and children to demand Western "freedom."<sup>4</sup> It was with all this in mind that Lewis declared "this is no less than a clash of civilizations—the perhaps irrational but surely historic reaction of an ancient rival against our Judeo-Christian heritage, our secular present, and the worldwide expansion of both."<sup>5</sup>

Lewis' work has been harshly criticized by many commentators, including former Columbia University professor Edward Said and Massachusetts Institute of Technology professor Noam Chomsky. For arguing that firm lines can be drawn between "Western" and "Islamic" traditions, Said called Lewis's essay "a crude polemic devoid of historical truth, rational argument, or human wisdom."<sup>6</sup> Chomsky called Lewis "a vulgar propagandist and not a scholar" for omitting the driving motivation of oil revenues and resource control in his discussion of Western involvement in the Middle East.<sup>7</sup> Their criticisms of Lewis portray the West as an oppressive imperialistic force incurring quite understandable wrath for its actions. In response to such attacks against his ideas and Western foreign policy Lewis reiterated a point from his 1990 work, stating that while the West is not blameless, it is unique in its attempt to abolish such practices as racism, imperialism, and slavery, with noteworthy successes. In places such as India,

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<sup>2</sup> B. Lewis, "The Roots of Muslim Rage," *The Atlantic Monthly* 266 (1990): 47; 56.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 49.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* 59–60.

<sup>6</sup> Edward Said, *Covering Islam: How The Media And The Experts Determine How We See The Rest Of The World (Revised Edition)* (Vintage Books, 1997), xxxii.

<sup>7</sup> CBC News World, "Hot Type Transcript: Noam Chomsky '9-11' Interview April 16, 2002," [http://www.cbc.ca/hottype/season02-03/middleeast\\_chomsky.html](http://www.cbc.ca/hottype/season02-03/middleeast_chomsky.html)

despite the caste system, the British instituted a parliamentary democracy, common law, and a university education system.<sup>8</sup>

Harvard professor Samuel Huntington further developed Lewis' ideas in his famous 1993 article "The Clash of Civilizations?" for *Foreign Affairs*, which has become one of the most commonly used and hotly debated phrases describing Islamic and Western relations. Huntington explained the development of global warfare as having evolved from battles between princes, to nations, to ideologies and finally to our new era of cultural conflict.<sup>9</sup> Arguing that a civilization is "the broadest level of cultural identity people have short of that which distinguishes humans from other species," he notes that fundamental differences exist between the seven or so civilizations currently co-existing on our planet.<sup>10</sup> Key issues include "the relations between God and man, the individual and the group, the citizen and the State, parents and children, husband and wife, as well as differing views of the relative importance of rights and responsibilities, liberty and authority, equality and hierarchy."<sup>11</sup> He claims that while the new globalized village has the potential to help break down some barriers, such as those based on nationality or economic systems, others, like those of religion, will become sources of great tension because it is not possible to be half-Muslim and half-Christian.<sup>12</sup> Huntington goes on to argue that the civilization with the most consistent history of conflict with others is Islam, which "has [had] bloody borders" for the past 1,300 years,<sup>13</sup> a problem made all the worse by current demographic trends showing a surge in Muslim populations.<sup>14</sup> He concludes that while the West will have to live with other civilizations and should strive to find common ground, at the same time and in order to shape development it needs to

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<sup>8</sup> CBC News World, "Hot Type: Bernard Lewis Interview: What Went Wrong? Western Impact and Middle Eastern Response. Originally Aired: May 17, 2002," [http://www.cbc.ca/hottype/season02-03/middleeast\\_lewis.html](http://www.cbc.ca/hottype/season02-03/middleeast_lewis.html)

<sup>9</sup> S.P. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?" *Foreign Affairs* 72, no. 1 (1993): 23.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.* 24.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.* 26.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.* 27.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.* 35.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.* 32.

promote its agenda and strengthen its ties with others similar or sympathetic to Western ideals.<sup>15</sup>

Edward Said, who passed away in September of 2003, was an outspoken critic of such a characterization of world politics and author of the influential book *Orientalism*, first published in 1978. In a 1997 publication entitled *Covering Islam*, Said continued his analysis of “the modern relationship between the world of Islam, the Arabs, and the Orient on the one hand, and on the other the West: France, Britain, and in particular the U.S.”<sup>16</sup> Chief among his claims were that images, descriptions and explanations of the “Orient” in Western culture actually reveal more about the West than they do about the culture they supposedly describe.<sup>17</sup> Said saw this mischaracterization as partially intentional and systemic, though many engaged in the process are unaware of the biases they perpetuate. In the end, coverage of the Orient generally and the Middle East in particular tends to obscure what the “West” is doing, instead portraying events as a function of what “Muslims and Arabs by their very flawed nature are.”<sup>18</sup>

From Said’s perspective, Western characterizations of Muslims are the last widely accepted negative stereotype left in society,<sup>19</sup> a totally unacceptable situation given his contention that, despite the violence and other problems that do exist in many Muslim countries, Islam “is doctrinally as blameless in this regard as any other of the great universal religions.”<sup>20</sup> Said charged critics of “Islam” with deliberately choosing to use vague terminology such as “extremism” without ever attempting to quantify what proportion of Muslims actually exhibits such behavior,<sup>21</sup> and was incredulous at the thought that the “‘Islam’ being talked about is some real and stable object out there where ‘our’ oil supplies happen to be found.”<sup>22</sup> As an example he notes that virtually no conservative commentators ever discuss such things as the distinction between Muslims who believe in

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid. 48–49.

<sup>16</sup> Said, *Covering Islam*, xlix.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid. 4.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid. xxii.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid. xvi.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid. lvi.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid. xvii.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid. li.

personal interpretations of the Qur'an (*ijtihad*) and those who feel they must rely on religious authorities (*taqlid*).<sup>23</sup>

While Said certainly acknowledged the existence of rampant anti-Western sentiment in the Middle East, he did not see it as a matter of Muslims never having established a separation between Mosque and State, or as an inevitable byproduct of globalization. Rather it is due to the fact that the U.S. has for too long treated the entire world as its "imperium" and it is only from Islamic nations that resistance remains strong.<sup>24</sup> Finally, the causes of this resistance, such as the CIA backed overthrow of the Mossadegh regime in Iran in 1953,<sup>25</sup> or the fact that it was the U.S. that armed and trained the Mujahideen—implicated in the 1995 World Trade Center bombings—to fight the Russians,<sup>26</sup> are obscured by Western media. Ultimately, Said sees Islam as a term that hides more than it reveals, arguing that, for political reasons, the lines between the "West" and "Islam" are arbitrary, imagined, or incomplete.

Mark Steyn, the Canadian born, British raised and American naturalized outspoken political commentator and darling of the political right, published in 2006 his *New York Times* bestselling book *America Alone*. Its cover featured a picture of the globe with Islamic flags on every country but the U.S. He describes Edward Said as "the New York based America disparager" and says the line between Western Civilization and the Muslim world is actually clear, despite *Orientalism's* claim that it is impossible to draw. Quoting Rich Lowry from the *National Review* with approval, Steyn says "developing mass commercial aviation and soaring skyscrapers was the West's idea; slashing the throats of stewardesses and flying the planes into skyscrapers was radical Islam's idea."<sup>27</sup>

In many ways, *America Alone* is a continuation of Lewis and Huntington's position on Islam. Regarding Islam's unwillingness to accept modernity, Steyn cites 2002 United Nations statistics showing that more books have been

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid. 94.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid. xxix.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid. 115.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid. 76.

<sup>27</sup> Mark Steyn, *America Alone: The End Of The World As We Know It* (Regnery Publishing, 2006), 138.

translated into Spanish in the past year than were translated into Arabic in the past thousand years.<sup>28</sup> Elaborating on Huntington's point that demographic trends increase tensions between civilizations, Steyn argues that while some on the left may claim they are searching for root causes, "demography is the most basic root of all."<sup>29</sup> Despite what "progressives"—a pejorative term in his idiom—would have us believe, Steyn argues that world population is not headed for disaster because it is growing too big but rather because it is becoming too lopsided. He notes that, with the exception of the USA, birth rates in the West are below 2.0, while birth rates in the Muslim world are much higher.<sup>30</sup> The result is a massive influx of Muslims into Western nations. For example in France, 1 in 10 citizens are Muslim, including 4 in 10 in its cities.<sup>31</sup> Steyn claims that this Muslim population is being radicalized by Saudi Arabia's "Wahhabi" school of Islam, a violent and fundamental pro-Jihad strain that is being spread all over the world funded by petro-dollars.<sup>32</sup>

Just as Said had wondered how anyone could seriously discuss the Muslim world without taking into account the many nuanced differences between the various branches of Shari'ah law and ethnic divisions, Steyn laments the fact that while there are many moderate Muslims, few seem to see that there is not a dominant moderate Islam, meaning that most forms of Islamic religious authority have been radicalized.<sup>33</sup> However, Steyn blames this on Western multiculturalism, a popular punching bag in conservative discourse. Steyn argues multicultural policies have forced Westerners to accept all cultures as equal, thus preventing distinctions being made between the various strains of Islam. The result is an inability to identify the worst, Saudi Wahhabism, as a serious threat.<sup>34</sup>

In *Failed States* (2006) Noam Chomsky agrees that Saudi Arabia is among the worst human rights violators in the world and is a supporter of Islamic

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid. 16.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid. xvii.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid. 7.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid. 34.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid. 68–69.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid. 88.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid. 78–79.

fundamentalist terrorism. However, he is quick to add that Saudi Arabia is a client of the U.S., which also armed and trained the terrorist groups responsible for the 9/11 attacks.<sup>35</sup> To a limited extent Chomsky and Steyn agree that a big part of the problem is the U.S. giving Saudi Arabia too much money, but their very different recommendations bespeak fundamentally different moral perspectives. Regarding terrorism more generally, Chomsky cites a 2005 study by Britain's Chatham House which concluded that there "is no doubt" the invasion of Iraq boosted al-Qaeda's recruitment and funding.<sup>36</sup>

Chomsky's mention of the Chatham House study brings us to the process of quantifying various aspects of Islamic terrorism, which Said accused conservatives of not doing. To a certain extent this has changed since the publication of *Covering Islam*, though it appears the political left and right are concerned with different sorts of numbers. Steyn acknowledges that we are lacking the necessary information for a conclusive analysis of terrorism: "What proportion of Western Muslims is hot for jihad? Five percent? Ten, 12, 20 percent? The years roll by since September 11, and for the most part we're none the wiser."<sup>37</sup> This does not stop him from listing what information is available however. He quotes statistics from the *Ottawa Citizen* indicating that in 2001 all but two of Canada's Imams denied Muslims played any role in 9/11, and in 2006, 83% of Muslims in the United Kingdom thought Arabs had nothing to do with 9/11.<sup>38</sup> Steyn further notes that in 2005 according to *The Times* of London 7% of British Muslims thought suicide attacks on civilians were justified, and nearly half wanted to live under Shari'ah law.<sup>39</sup> Chomsky quotes methodologically similar statistics, citing a Gallup poll conducted in Iraq asking what the locals thought of the US invasion. A mere 6% of Iraqis in Bagdad thought it was either to bring

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<sup>35</sup> Noam Chomsky, *Reflections on 9-11* (Open Media, 2002), 79; 82.

<sup>36</sup> Noam Chomsky, *Failed States: The Abuse of Power and the Assault on Democracy* (Metropolitan Books, 2006), 19.

<sup>37</sup> Steyn, *America Alone*, 15.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.* 17.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.* 76.

democracy or assist the Iraqi people, with the remainder assuming it was either to control natural resources or aid Israel.<sup>40</sup>

It seems these political camps are talking past each other. Although they agree problems exist, they place the blame in different places. Steyn *et al.* claim Islam is part of the cause, stuck as it is in a Middle Age mentality left unchallenged by the Western welfare state and policies of multiculturalism, while Said, Chomsky and others see Islamic terrorism as the product of Western aggression and imperialism. At the end of their books, Steyn and Chomsky provide lists identifying various actions they believe the U.S. should take to alleviate global terrorism. As one might expect, their recommendations are quite different. On a potentially conciliatory note, Steyn advocates supporting women's rights in the Muslim world and reforming the American energy sector to rely less on foreign oil, as the oppression of women is seen as a valuable source of potential dissent to be exploited and dependence on resources from the Middle East only funds more terrorism. However, he also wants to "euthanize" the UN and NATO, overthrow the Iranian regime, and generally "strike militarily when the opportunity presents itself" to promote Western interests.<sup>41</sup> Chomsky, on the other hand, wants to let the UN take the lead in all wars and international crises, the U.S. to give up its veto at the Security Council, and cut back sharply on military expenses and increase funding for domestic social welfare programs.<sup>42</sup>

Conservatives do not want to submit to the will of world opinion, as in their eyes the rest of the world is anti-American, despite America having the best political and economic system. This sentiment becomes clear when considering "will," the second most important aspect of modern geo-politics that Steyn identifies.<sup>43</sup> "This book isn't an argument for more war, more bombing, or more killing, but for more will."<sup>44</sup> As conservatives see it the West is losing its will to survive and thus succumbing to an aggressive and oppressive Islamic mentality.

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<sup>40</sup> Chomsky, *Failed States*, 131.

<sup>41</sup> Steyn, *America Alone*, 205–206.

<sup>42</sup> Chomsky, *Failed States*, 262.

<sup>43</sup> Steyn, *America Alone*, xxii.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.* 193.

This is evident in terms of specific concessions to terrorist attacks, as when the 2004 Spanish elections swung in favor of the anti-war Socialist Workers Party immediately after the Madrid bombings,<sup>45</sup> and America's withdrawal from Somalia after the "Black Hawk Down" incident.<sup>46</sup> It is also and more insidiously evident with respect to any number of domestic concessions, from hate speech legislation that makes criticizing Islam difficult, to the looming legalization of polygamy in Canada.<sup>47</sup> "That's how great nations die—not by war or conquest, but bit by bit, until one day you wake up and you don't need to sign a formal instrument of surrender because you did it piecemeal over the last ten years."<sup>48</sup> As I explain further in ensuing chapters, one of the primary purposes of conservative bloggers is collectively to document these concessions.

While Chomsky urges Western nations to redirect military spending into social welfare programs, Steyn sees those very same programs as partially causing the West's eroding will, thereby inviting terrorist attacks. This erosion happens directly, because of would-be terrorists who plot our demise while collecting welfare cheques,<sup>49</sup> and indirectly, because the programs destroy "cross-generational solidarity"<sup>50</sup> by raising "secondary-impulse" decadence above the primary instincts of family and national defence.<sup>51</sup> In support of this hypothesis, Steyn compares Canada to the U.S. and notes that Canada, with a much stronger welfare state, also has a much lower birth rate: 1.48 to 2.11.<sup>52</sup> To further illustrate his point, both in the book and in various public speeches,<sup>53</sup> Steyn uses the example of a 2005 French news story describing the arrest of a man for living with his dead mother's body so that he could continue collecting her pension cheques. "As the Reuters headline put it: 'Frenchman Lived with

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid. 36.

<sup>46</sup> Osama bin Laden, "Frontline: Hunting bin Laden: Who is bin Laden? Interview with Osama bin Laden (in May 1998)," <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/binladen/who/interview.html>

<sup>47</sup> Steyn, *America Alone*, 77.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid. 197.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid. 83.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid. 190.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid. 43.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid. 54–55.

<sup>53</sup> Mark Steyn, "February 2008 Speech at CPAC - Part 1 of 5," February 10, 2008, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W3FwxXnTg-w>



Dead Mother to Keep Pension.’ That’s the perfect summation of Europe: welfare addiction over demographic reality.”<sup>54</sup>

While Chomsky and other progressives agree that serious problems with the relationship between society and the family exist, for them in many respects corporate capitalism is to blame. Citing John Dewey, Chomsky argues that “politics is the shadow cast on society by big business,”<sup>55</sup> and claims that the many inefficiencies underlying the current health care system in the U.S. are a byproduct of corporate capitalism, leading to an infant mortality rate on par with Malaysia. For Chomsky, the fact that larger families are several times more likely to declare bankruptcy, often due to expensive medical bills, is telling.<sup>56</sup> Aware of the right’s proposed solutions, Chomsky ruefully notes that while the rich get richer the poor “can be treated with lectures on responsibility.”<sup>57</sup>

Such disagreements, facts and counter-arguments could be presented indefinitely, which in many ways is what is happening in the political blogosphere. As a result, neither side is winning or even making much progress. There are many possible explanations for this impasse. While I do not claim to offer a definitive one, I will utilize Nietzsche’s work to develop a model that frames the disagreement in terms of fundamentally differing moralities, or conceptions of ‘good,’ and proceed to analyze how the conservative perspective manifests itself in the Canadian blogosphere.

## 2.2 Fundamental Questions of “Good?”

Looking at how progressives and conservatives characterize the U.S. helps explain their differing views of Islamic terrorism. Chomsky feels “the U.S. is a leading terrorist state, as are its clients,”<sup>58</sup> while Steyn thinks “America is the most benign hegemon in history.”<sup>59</sup> Chomsky laments the international string of secret prisons set up to interrogate U.S. detainees, justified by the type of legal

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<sup>54</sup> Steyn, *America Alone*, 112–113.

<sup>55</sup> Chomsky, *Failed States*, 206.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.* 244–245.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.* 249.

<sup>58</sup> Chomsky, *Reflections on 9-11*, 16.

<sup>59</sup> Steyn, *America Alone*, xxiii.

gymnastics not seen since Nazi Germany,<sup>60</sup> while Steyn wishes America would more actively pursue its imperial ambitions so it could spread liberty to the rest of the world.<sup>61</sup> Such statements and opinions are worlds apart.

Nietzsche's *On the Genealogy of Morality* notes the transient nature of dominant moralities and, in the process, identifies the two I feel lie at the heart of the divisions between what we now call the political left and right. Chomsky and those who agree with him adopt a principal of moral universality, the idea that one should never do something that if done by everyone or other countries would result in absurd and unsustainable consequences. According to Chomsky, if it acceptable for the U.S. to pre-emptively invade Iraq:

the elementary standard of universality, therefore, would appear to justify Iraqi pre-emptive terror against the United States. Of course, no one accepts this conclusion. Again, if we are willing to adopt elementary moral principles, obvious questions arise, and must be faced by those who advocate or tolerate the selective version of the doctrine of 'pre-emptive response' that grants the right to those powerful enough to exercise it with little concern for what the world may think.<sup>62</sup>

This rationale runs throughout Chomsky's arguments; he often appeals to it with respect to the atrocities visited upon Nicaragua in the 1980s by the U.S., noting with approval that the response of Nicaragua was not to return the favour, but rather that it attempted to resolve the problem through proper legal channels. When the World Court ruled against the U.S., the Reagan administration ignored the verdict.<sup>63</sup> An unwillingness to meet violence with violence is also one of the most obvious places where Chomsky and Osama bin Laden diverge in their worldviews. Osama, if we are to believe his September 2007 speech, agrees that it is corporate capitalism that has corrupted America's foreign policy, which he claims explains why no change of course was forthcoming after the 2006

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<sup>60</sup> Chomsky, *Failed States*, 41.

<sup>61</sup> Steyn, *America Alone*, 172–173.

<sup>62</sup> Chomsky, *Reflections on 9-11*, 124.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.* 25.

midterm elections.<sup>64</sup> Unlike Chomsky however, Osama believes because of this “retaliation and punishment should be carried out following the principle of reciprocity” until Westerners see the error of their ways and force change, preferably by adopting the “infallible methodology” of Islam.<sup>65</sup>

For Steyn, public opinion around the world is precisely the problem, at least to the extent that it disagrees with the U.S. The solution is for the U.S. to exert its will against those who object:

there’s a lot to be said for a great nation that understands its greatness is not an accident and that therefore it should spread the secrets of its success around; conversely, there’s not much to be said for a great nation that chooses to hobble itself by pretending it’s merely one vote among co-equals on international bodies manned by Cuba and Sudan.<sup>66</sup>

Here the similarities between Steyn’s desire for more will and Nietzsche’s desire that the world acknowledge and reconnect with a “will to power” begin to appear. Nietzsche cursed the notion that “every will should regard every other will as its equal,” declaring it a principle “hostile to life,”<sup>67</sup> and was adamant that “at the time when mankind felt no shame towards its cruelty, life on earth was more cheerful than it is today, with its pessimists. The heavens darkened over man in direct proportion to the increase in his feeling shame *at being man* [emphasis in original].”<sup>68</sup> Seemingly agreeing, Steyn points to statistics indicating that Americans are far more optimistic about the future than more socialist nations as proof that the welfare-state-multicultural-one-world-government system corrodes man’s spirit.<sup>69</sup>

Nietzsche would likely have classified those who adhere to Chomsky’s morality as advocates of a variation of Immanuel Kant’s “categorical

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<sup>64</sup> Osama bin Laden, "Transcript of Osama Bin Laden Tape September 2007," <http://www.mideastweb.org/log/archives/00000622.htm>

<sup>65</sup> Osama bin Laden, "Frontline: Hunting bin Laden: Who is bin Laden? Interview with Osama bin Laden (in May 1998)," <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/binladen/who/interview.html>

<sup>66</sup> Steyn, *America Alone*, xxvii.

<sup>67</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality* (Cambridge University Press, 1994), Part II, 11.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.* 7.

<sup>69</sup> Steyn, *America Alone*, 110.

imperative,"<sup>70</sup> which instructs one to "act only according to that maxim whereby you can at the same time will that it become a universal law."<sup>71</sup> Kant believed one can never justify killing, lying, or theft; when universalized such actions would lead to an existence where life, truth, and possessions were nonexistent or meaningless. I believe that much of the left's asceticism, in the form of vegetarianism and minimalist living, is another manifestation of this morality. My characterization may help explain why environmental issues are integral to the discourse of progressives; it is a problem ideally suited to being solved by sustainable coexistence. Adherents to variants of Kant's categorical imperative seem to favor collective protections in many forms, such as government mandated social protection programs that ensure everyone is provided with a minimum standard of living regardless of their circumstances.

Nietzsche claimed Kant's morality gained widespread acceptance through the Christian Gospel and the New Testament, which he despised almost as much as he respected the Old Testament.<sup>72</sup> For him the shift from "an eye for an eye"<sup>73</sup> to "turn the other cheek"<sup>74</sup> was an intolerable concession to the weak and was "the beginning of the slaves' revolt in morality [that] occurs when *resentment* itself turns creative and gives birth to values [emphasis in original]."<sup>75</sup> Thus did the weak devise a moral code that reinvented "good" as "that for which we are not strong enough."<sup>76</sup> For Nietzsche, this is a situation that leads to the lowest common denominator being accommodated and life's worth diminished.

The preferred order for Nietzsche is a hierarchy with the strong unashamedly asserting their *will to power* at the top. For life to progress and to be lived to its fullest, suffering, hate, and envy must be allowed, as great victory

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<sup>70</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude To A Philosophy Of The Future* (Penguin Books, 1973), 5.

<sup>71</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals* (Hackett Publishing, 1993), 30.

<sup>72</sup> Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*, Part 3, 22.

<sup>73</sup> *Holy Bible: Contemporary English Version* (New York: American Bible Society, 1995), Exodus 21:23–25; Leviticus 24:20; Deuteronomy 19:21.

<sup>74</sup> *Holy Bible*, Matthew 5: 38-40; Luke 6:27–29.

<sup>75</sup> Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*, Part 1, 10.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.* 13.

necessitates great defeat.<sup>77</sup> This firm belief in hierarchy and the necessity of asserting one's will is very much at the heart of the conservative contempt for multiculturalism. For the conservatives, the simple fact of the matter is that Western liberal democratic capitalist societies are superior to all others. What they perceive as pluralist, leftist, ethically relativistic attempts to argue otherwise represent a clear and present danger to the survival of Western nations. As Steyn puts it: "At the heart of multiculturalism is a lie: that all cultures are equally 'valid.' To accept that proposition means denying reality—the reality of any objective measure of human freedom, societal health, and global population movement."<sup>78</sup> For both Nietzsche and Steyn the end result of such undeserving equality will eventually be the imposition of another will that is not afraid to offend and oppress.

Indeed, for Steyn this stronger will is Islam and its imposition has already begun: "Madrid and London—along with other events such as the murder of Theo Van Gogh—were the opening shots of that European civil war."<sup>79</sup> This concept of a looming civil war with Muslims is deeply entrenched in conservative discourse. As advocates of their superior wisdom, conservative ideology is as ideally suited to focus on terrorism and war as is the left's universalist discourse to focus on the environment. The same is true with respect to the Israel-Palestine conflict, in which the political right is largely a staunch supporter of the Jews and Israel, while the left generally supports the Palestinians. In this conflict, Israel embodies both a will to power and the Old Testament.

Such characterizations are overly simplified; there are many other ways of characterizing the division between the political left and right in Western society. George Lakoff for example, a cognitive linguistics professor at Berkeley, argues that the distinction can be framed as one between adherents to the morality of nurturing, empathetic mothers for the left and strict, discipline inducing fathers for the right.<sup>80</sup> ET, a long time reader and commentator at SDA offers a different

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<sup>77</sup> Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 23.

<sup>78</sup> Steyn, *America Alone*, 202–203.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.* 38.

<sup>80</sup> See George Lakoff, *Politics: How Liberals and Conservatives Think* (University of Chicago Press, 1996).

distinction. For her the most important difference is between leftist adherents to a Platonic philosopher-king ideal of tribal collectivism,<sup>81</sup> manifesting itself as state force in communist, socialist and NDP/Liberal countries,<sup>82</sup> versus those on the right who believe in individualism, liberty, self governance and freedom of thought.<sup>83</sup> Others at SDA, such as guest-blogger Cjunk, explicitly frame various political issues in terms of “will,” claiming that the West’s lack of it accounts for our inability to achieve victory in Afghanistan.<sup>84</sup>

It is within the conservative tradition from Bernard Lewis to Mark Steyn that we find Kate McMillan, Canada’s most popular political blogger and the mastermind behind SDA. To her, as for many on the right, global maladies result from spoiled, self-doubting, apologetic Westerners lacking the will to create, maintain and expand an objectively better world. Through the process of blogging, when a perceived tolerance of the intolerant and forced sacrifice for the Kantian “greater good” risks ushering in new rulers unafraid to impose their oppressive will, she and other conservative bloggers not only document but also struggle to define these events, a struggle with very real implications for Canadian legislation and mechanisms of social control.

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<sup>81</sup> ET, comment on “Late you come, but still you come,” The Small Dead Animals: THE ROADKILL DIARIES (SDA) Blog, comment posted April 14, 2008, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/008477.html#c262384>

<sup>82</sup> ET, comment on “Liberal Fascists Strike Back,” SDA, comment posted January 10, 2008, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/007801.html#c229579>

<sup>83</sup> ET, comment on “Reader Tips,” SDA, comment posted March 23, 2008, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/008326.html#c254968>

<sup>84</sup> Cjunk, “Fight; or Flight,” September 12, 2008, SDA, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/009533.html>

## 3: DATA SOURCES AND RESEARCH METHODS

### 3.1 The Canadian Political Blogosphere

In this chapter I describe the political blogosphere in Canada, explaining how I came to settle on SDA as the primary source of data for my content analysis. I describe SDA and Kate McMillan, the weblog's creator and primary poster. Then I describe the methods employed to gather my data.

The partisan political blogosphere in Canada is divided up quite neatly into various blogrolls. A blogroll is a reciprocated hyper-linked member list that individual members agree to post somewhere on their website, theoretically increasing traffic between the blogs and definitely increasing their rank in link-based blog ranking systems. Each of these blogrolls has its own website that serves as a central activity node and Really Simple Syndication (RSS) feed aggregator. There are three main partisan blogrolls in Canada, each representing one of the main federal political parties with elected representatives in more than one province. As my SPSS results will show, though they are rarely politicians themselves, and do occasionally criticize their own leaders, partisan blogroll members are usually steadfast supporters of their party.

The New Democratic Party bloggers, who go by the name The Blogging Dippers,<sup>1</sup> are the smallest of the three partisan groups. The Liberal Party blogroll is known as Liblogs,<sup>2</sup> and the Conservative Party bloggers are The Blogging Tories,<sup>3</sup> the oldest and largest of them all. The Blogging Tories website was launched on January 4, 2005.<sup>4</sup> There are other political bloggers in Canada who do not officially broadcast their voting habits but keep a running commentary on

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<sup>1</sup> The Blogging Dippers, New Democrat Party Supporters' Blogroll Website, <http://dippers.myblahg.com/>

<sup>2</sup> Liblogs, Liberal Party of Canada Supporters' Blogroll Website, <http://www.liblogs.ca/>

<sup>3</sup> The Blogging Tories, Conservative Party of Canada Supporters' Blogroll Website, <http://www.bloggingtories.ca/>

<sup>4</sup> Stephen Taylor, "Blogging Tories," The Stephen Taylor Blog, January 4, 2005, <http://www.stephentaylor.ca/archives/000164.html>

local or national events, some of whom are members of The Blogging Alliance of Non-Partisan Canadians blogroll.<sup>5</sup> Others are members of The Progressive Bloggers blogroll,<sup>6</sup> and a few, such as The London Fog, are not affiliated with any one specific blogroll.<sup>7</sup>

By far the most technologically advanced of the Canadian blogrolls is The Blogging Tories, which has many useful features and tools, including “Blogging Tories Spy,”<sup>8</sup> a real-time daily page-view counter for all of the blogs that are members of its network. This counter was particularly useful when I was attempting to discover which of the Blogging Tories is the most popular. It quickly became apparent that SDA<sup>9</sup> was usually way ahead of the pack, with more daily page-views on average than The Blogging Tories website itself. In comparison to the other Canadian political blogs SDA is also number one. From 2004–2007, SDA won the annual Weblog Award in the category of Best Canadian Blog, and in 2008 won the international Best Conservative Blog award.<sup>10</sup> In “The Truth Laid Bear” blog ranking eco-system SDA is a large mammal. By comparison, the next most popular partisan political blogs in Canada are adorable little rodents or marauding marsupials.<sup>11</sup>

In terms of actual web traffic, SDA gets 8000–11000 visits per day.<sup>12</sup> By comparison, the next most popular Canadian blogs get closer to 3500 visits per day. However, SDA is but a blip on the radar when compared to the most popular political blogs globally. Daily Kos, a left-leaning political blog based in the U.S., gets well over 500,000 visits per day. Nevertheless, in the Canadian context SDA is very popular, influential, and well worth investigation. In the comments of his August 2008 top 25 Canadian political blog rankings, Robert Jago said:

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<sup>5</sup> The Blogging Alliance of Non-Partisan Canadians, <http://nonpartisans.ca/>

<sup>6</sup> The Progressive Bloggers of Canada, <http://www.progressivebloggers.ca/index.php>

<sup>7</sup> The London Fog Blog, <http://thelondonfog.blogspot.com/>

<sup>8</sup> See <http://www.bloggingtories.ca/spy-tab.php>

<sup>9</sup> Kate McMillan, The Small Dead Animals: THE ROADKILL DIARIES (SDA) Blog, <http://smalldeadanimals.com/>

<sup>10</sup> See <http://weblogawards.org/>

<sup>11</sup> See <http://truthlaidbear.com/ecosystem.php?start=mammal>

<sup>12</sup> See <http://www.sitemeter.com/?a=stats&s=s17smalldeadanimals>



Some of us are on this list entirely because of Kate. There's no left-wing equivalent. Matthew Good got me 400 hits, Canadian Cynic about 100, Garth Turner about 30. But SDA, I don't know how she does it, but she does it, and well. Any link from her guarantees you 1,500 hits. I have a lot of respect for her. And not grudging respect, but legitimate respect.<sup>13</sup>

When away for business or pleasure Kate has guest bloggers from The Blogging Tories fill in, such as Kathy Shaidle,<sup>14</sup> Stephen Taylor<sup>15</sup>—The Blogging Tories Webmaster—and Steve Janke.<sup>16</sup> She has on her site's sidebar a long list of favorite news related websites she regularly frequents. Also she regularly listens to conservative talk radio hosts such as John Gormley and Charles Adler.<sup>17</sup> Her popularity and high visitor counts reflect a substantial number of loyal readers who, on a daily basis—both privately through email and publicly through a “Reader Tips” section—submit news stories, personal stories, and constructive criticism.

Started on February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2004, SDA is a simple yet efficient blog Kate designed herself with a white background and black text. A small dead beaver is displayed in the upper left-hand corner. The deceased rodent is likely intended to symbolize those defining aspects of Canada Kate insists we do away with, such as the health care system, the Canadian Wheat Board, affirmative action programs, hate speech legislation, ethical relativism, multiculturalism, etc. Beside the beaver scrawled free-hand in orange with a simple image editor are the words “Small Dead Animals,” and below that in formal grey capital letters, “THE ROADKILL DIARIES.”

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<sup>13</sup> Robert Jago, comment on "Canada's top 25 political blogs," A dime a dozen political blog, comment posted August 2, 2008, <http://rjjago.wordpress.com/2008/08/02/canadas-top-25-political-blogs-august/comment-page-1/#comment-8843>

<sup>14</sup> Kathy Shaidle, The Five Feet of Fury Blog, <http://www.fivefeetoffury.com/>

<sup>15</sup> Stephen Taylor, A Blog on Canadian Politics, <http://www.stephentaylor.ca/>

<sup>16</sup> Steve Janke, The Angry in the Great White North Blog, <http://stevejanke.com/>

<sup>17</sup> See Kate McMillan “To All Saskatoon Health Region Staff, Physicians and Volunteers,” SDA, October 24, 2007, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/007278.html>; “The Battle of Medak Pocket,” SDA, November 6, 2007, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/007374.html> for examples.

Kate is a “decidedly non-religious”<sup>18</sup> lifelong conservative<sup>19</sup> whose intellectual heroes include the pro-capitalist anti-collectivist Ayn Rand, military historian Victor Davis Hanson, and conservative commentator Mark Helprin.<sup>20</sup> Kate grew up on a grain farm in Saskatchewan and currently resides in Delisle.<sup>21</sup> She firmly believes “the needs of the one outweigh the needs of the many”<sup>22</sup> and that a majority of the mainstream media, academia, and most political parties believe just the opposite. Above and beyond blogging she is also a first-class dog breeder<sup>23</sup> and commercial artist,<sup>24</sup> drawing her artistic inspiration from the famed Ontario painter Ken Darby.<sup>25</sup> Except for her legal expenses—a point to which I will return later—blogging does not pay Kate’s bills. Though she does have a “tip jar” at her site, and a few small advertisers, her primary source of income is painting.

Her independence and anti-mainstream stance is made evident by the mantra that was prominently featured on her sidebar throughout my content analysis, just above her Mensa International emblem—a group of which she is a proud member<sup>26</sup>—that reads:

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<sup>18</sup> Kate McMillan, “Pope Benedict XVI: Still Too Catholic,” SDA, April 14, 2006, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/003826.html>

<sup>19</sup> Kate McMillan, “There’s Nothing Neo About Me, Baby,” SDA, November 24, 2006, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/005031.html>

<sup>20</sup> Norman Geras, “The normblog profile 96: Kate McMillan,” The weblog of Norman Geras, [http://normblog.typepad.com/normblog/2005/07/the\\_normblog\\_pr\\_3.html](http://normblog.typepad.com/normblog/2005/07/the_normblog_pr_3.html)

<sup>21</sup> Kate McMillan, “Child Labour,” SDA, June 24, 2005, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/002222.html>

<sup>22</sup> Norman Geras, “The normblog profile 96: Kate McMillan,” The weblog of Norman Geras, [http://normblog.typepad.com/normblog/2005/07/the\\_normblog\\_pr\\_3.html](http://normblog.typepad.com/normblog/2005/07/the_normblog_pr_3.html)

<sup>23</sup> Kate McMillan, “Back, With Ribbons,” SDA, August 2, 2004, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/000627.html>

<sup>24</sup> Kate McMillan, “Day In The Life,” SDA, March 29, 2004, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/000174.html>

<sup>25</sup> Kate McMillan, “Laying Down The Brush,” SDA, September 24, 2007, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/007105.html>

<sup>26</sup> Kate McMillan, “Smarter Than JFK,” SDA, November 6, 2006, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/004930.html>

**Why this blog?**

*Until this moment  
I have been forced  
to listen while media  
and politicians alike  
have told me  
"what Canadians think".  
In all that time they  
never once asked.*

*This is just the voice  
of an ordinary Canadian  
yelling back at the radio—  
**"You don't speak for me."***

Several quotes featured and occasionally changed on her sidebar document both SDA's prominence in the blogosphere and Kate's mischievous and often humorous battles with ideological opponents. Regarding the former, Dr. Ross McKittrick, co-author of *Taken by Storm, the Troubled Science, Policy and Politics of Global Warming* (2002), states "I got so much traffic after your post my web host asked me to buy a larger traffic allowance." As for the latter, the former Premier of Saskatchewan, Lorn Calvert, whose 2007 defeat Kate worked overtime to orchestrate, is quoted as saying "Small Dead Animals doesn't speak for the people of Saskatchewan." This last statement was in response to an SDA entry from 2005 exposing an online poll Mr. Calvert's staff had rigged in his favor.<sup>27</sup>

These visual cues greet visitors to SDA and quickly convey the nature and intent of the site. Above and beyond a reverse chronological ordering of entries, the telltale sign of a weblog, the various staging elements, such as the imagery and mantra, serve to declare Kate's ideological stance to visitors.<sup>28</sup> Being a blogger, Kate often posts extended quotes from other sources, and thus regularly

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<sup>27</sup> Kate McMillan, "Flagging A Poll: Welcome CTV Viewers!" SDA, November 23, 2005, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/003010.html>

<sup>28</sup> Gillian Brown and George Yule, *Discourse Analysis* (Cambridge University Press, 1985), 152; Margaret Wetherell, Stephanie Taylor and Simeon J. Yates, *Discourse Theory and Practice* (Sage Publications, 2006), 18.

shifts her footing between her words and theirs,<sup>29</sup> a distinction made clear by the careful use of indentations and quotation marks within each entry. Often the only direct “value added” by Kate, meaning additional information provided above and beyond selecting the link or quote in question, will be the title of the post, which she uses to frame, constrain or contradict the meaning of the featured text or images.<sup>30</sup> Her entries also have a “comments” section where readers are allowed to offer their thoughts on the topic at hand. Though an email address is required before commenting, it can easily be faked, and the true identity of many regulars is unknown to the community. Kate’s policy on comments is fairly open,<sup>31</sup> and though she repeatedly requests civility and occasionally threatens banning specific IP addresses, in practice she rarely censors comments, even allowing personal attacks against her to stand. In a general sense, the blog entries at SDA are transactional; a place where Kate passes on information to her audience. The comment section of the entries are interactional in the sense that readers can discuss amongst themselves the information presented.<sup>32</sup>

### **3.2 Research Methods Part 1: SPSS Analysis**

The first part of my content analysis is quantitative in nature. After choosing SDA as the primary source of data, a SPSS code-sheet was developed in consultation with Dr. Shane Gunster and Dr. Paul Saurette, who are working on a much larger project discussing “The Rizomatic Right” in North America, and for whom I worked as the primary research assistant during the first part of the analysis. Partially using variables such as “Appeal” and “Subject” they had employed in their analysis of other sources, such as newspaper editorials, and partially using blog-specific variables such as “Number of Links,” a code-sheet was created to quantify one year of SDA posts. A total of 2036 entries posted between April 1, 2006, and March 31, 2007, were coded.

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<sup>29</sup> Goffman, “Footing,” in *Discourse Theory and Practice*, ed. Wetherell, Taylor and Yates, 107 (Sage Publications, 2006).

<sup>30</sup> Brown and Yule, *Discourse Analysis*, 46; 139.

<sup>31</sup> Kate McMillan, “Comment Policy,” SDA, April 24, 2006, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/003889.html>

<sup>32</sup> Brown and Yule, *Discourse Analysis*, 1.

Because this phase of the analysis was part of a larger project, all blog entries were coded for this time period, not just those related to Islamic terrorism and surrounding issues. I believe this has allowed me to place the discourse regarding Islamic terrorism in its wider context. For the second, qualitative phase of my content analysis I selected just those posts from the quantitative phase coded under the subjects of Terrorism, Islam, and Multiculturalism. Using the NVivo software package I included them with a wider qualitatively selected group from an additional year's worth of entries. Below is a list and explanation of the SPSS variables used in the analysis.

**1) Time Stamp (YMDHR)**

For each entry I started by recording the year, month, day, and hour it was posted.

**2) Blogger**

This variable was used to record the author of each post. Kate wrote a vast majority of the posts, but guest bloggers fill in when she is out of town or feeling under the weather.

**3) URL (Permalink)**

All posts as they appear are first listed at the top of SDA, but they also have permanent addresses where they can be viewed once they have been replaced by more recent entries. Having the permanent URLs allowed for selecting out posts, at a later date, with various characteristics for analysis.

**4) Number of Comments**

This variable was used to record how many comments each post generated, and was coded using the ratio scale.

**5) Title**

Kate does not formally categorize or “tag” her posts, but she often reuses titles for posts on specific issues. Blog entries that bring climate science into question are often entitled “The Sound of Settled Science;” entries that mock the failing—left-wing biased, according to Kate—newspaper industry are entitled “Not Waiting for

the Asteroid;” entries about the corrosive nature of Britain’s “nanny” state are entitled “Tony Blair’s Britain,” etc. Because of this characteristic of her blogs, recording the title of each post in SPSS helped provide a better sense of what was discussed.

**6) Length**

This variable was coded using an ordinal scale, with value options “Less Than,” “1–3,” and “More Than 3 Paragraphs.”

**7) Type**

It quickly became apparent while reading SDA before the content analysis began that many posts fit a certain mold or serve a certain purpose above and beyond what they are about. This variable was used to record eight types of entry.

**Table 3.1 Categories for SPSS "Type" Variable**

1. 1st Person News Coverage	2. Personal Rant from Experience
3. Critical Exposure/Attack	4. Editorial/Commentary
5. Personal (Author) Info/Update	6. Redirection/Reproduction
7. Simple Multi-Redir/Reproduction	8. Supporting Someone/Something

**8) Philosophy**

This variable attempted to record what political philosophy motivated each entry.

**Table 3.2 Categories for SPSS "Philosophy" Variable**

1. Individual Account/Responsibility	2. Choice
3. Democracy	4. Family
5. Human Rights	6. Market Efficiency
7. Nationalism	8. Other
9. Religion	10. Restricting Government
11. Security	12. Traditional Gender Roles
13. N/A	

### 9) Appeal

This was one of the variables suggested by Dr. Gunster. It attempted to answer several questions: Why are people drawn to any given post? What emotions are being engaged? What worldview is being reinforced, or argumentative tactic is being employed to connect with the reader? Obviously more than one of these will usually be present in any given post, but this variable attempted to code for the primary post "appeal."

**Table 3.3 Categories for SPSS "Appeal" Variable**

1. Anecdotes/Personal Stories	2. Authority
3. Claiming Victim Status	4. Common People
5. Creating Doubt	6. Disenfranchised
7. Empirical Evidence	8. Exaggeration
9. False Dichotomy	10. Free Markets
11. Free Speech	12. Humor
13. Information/Resources	14. Other
15. Pride	16. Revealing Hypocrisy
17. Slippery Slope	18. Tradition
19. Using Fear	20. Western Values
21. N/A	

## 10) Subject

This variable coded the issue or subject the entry addressed.

**Table 3.4 Categories for SPSS "Subject" Variable**

1. Afghanistan	2. Censorship
3. Elections/Races	4. Environment
5. Finance/Business	6. Gay Marriage
7. Health Care	8. Institutional Reform
9. Iran	10. Iraq
11. Legal/Law & Order	12. Liberal Bashing
13. Media	14. Multiculturalism
15. NDP Bashing	16. Non-Election Strategizing
17. Provincial/Local Issues	18. Scandals
19. Security	20. Technology
21. Terrorism	22. US Politics

## 11) Number of Links and Quotes

This variable recorded the number of outside sources of information contained in each blog entry, recorded using the ratio scale.

## 12) Link or Quote URLs (First Three)

The URL for the first three links and the first three quotes were recorded for every blog entry.

## 13) Link or Quote Sources

In an effort to understand what types of outside sites Kate was linking to most often, the type of source for the first three links and quotes were categorized.



**Table 3.5 Categories for SPSS "Link or Quote Sources" Variable**

1. Audio	2. Blogging Tory Site
3. Canadian Liberal Blog	4. Conservative News Site
5. Gov't Website	6. Link to Own Site
7. MSM	8. MSM Video
9. Non-Canadian Conservative Blog	10. Online Discussion Group
11. Other Blog	12. Other Can. Pol. Blog
13. Other Political Site	14. Other USA Pol. Blog
15. Other Video	16. Other Website
17. Research Institute	18. War Blog

#### **14) Link or Quote Attitude**

In an effort to understand what Kate thinks of the sources for the links and quotes she provides, I coded the attitude she expressed towards them as "For," "Against," "Neutral," or "Not Applicable."

### **3.3 Research Methods Part 2: NVivo Analysis**

The SPSS analysis provided a broad overview of all the blog entries at SDA, and has been very helpful in my attempt to understand the Canadian conservative blogging community's political worldview. However, I quickly realized that conservative discourse regarding Islamic terrorism has a complex relationship with other issues as well, involving a critique of both Islam and Western culture. As such, the coding system devised for the first part of this content analysis was not sufficient to answer my research questions. Thus, armed with the heightened understanding provided by the SPSS analysis, I conducted another round of analysis using the qualitative software package NVivo.

For this component of the research I included an additional year's worth of posts, starting where the SPSS analysis left off on March 31, 2007 and continuing until April 1, 2008. Every post that discussed some aspect of Islamic terrorism's causes, the conservative critique of it, or efforts to counter it was copied into a Microsoft Word document and then imported into NVivo for coding.

On April 1, 2008 I combined all of the posts I had collected in the past year (n=334) with 198 from the SPSS analysis that were coded as having Terrorism, Multiculturalism, or Islam as their primary subject, plus an additional 21 that caught my attention when writing up the SPSS results, for a total of 553 entries.

Selecting only those 219 from the SPSS analysis left a lot of valuable information behind, because posts are usually multi-faceted. Issues related to Islamic terrorism often crop up secondarily in entries about the mainstream media, the wars in Afghanistan or Iraq, etc. Due to time constraints and the desire to stay up to date with developments at SDA I decided to forego additional “mining” of the original SPSS data for more entries.

Starting in April of 2008 I printed the entries I already had and began reading over them several times, jotting notes in the margins regarding common subjects and themes. Eventually I transcribed all of my notes and started developing a simple coding system documenting the various subjects and actors discussed in any given entry. I did not limit myself to one subject or actor per entry during my qualitative coding. The variables and values I decided upon were as follows:

**Table 3.6 Categories for NVivo "Islamic Terrorism Location or Actor(s)" Variable**

1. Afghanistan	2. al-Qaeda
3. Australia	4. Britain
5. Canada	6. Egypt
7. Europe	8. Germany
9. Hezbollah	10. India
11. Iran	12. Iraq
13. Israel	14. Lebanon
15. North Korea	16. Osama bin Laden
17. Pakistan	18. Pope
19. Saudi Arabia	20. Somalia
21. Sudan	22. Syria
23. Taliban	24. Thailand
25. The Left	26. Turkey
27. United Nations	28. USA

**Table 3.7 Categories for NVivo "Islamic Terrorism Subject" Variable**

1. 9/11	2. Anti-America
3. Anti-Conservative	4. Civil War
5. Concession	6. Conspiracy
7. Controversy	8. Counter Terrorism
9. Double Standard	10. Free Speech
11. Immigration	12. Islam
13. Islam Quantified	14. Law
15. Media Bias	16. Multiculturalism
17. Sins of the Father	18. Terrorism
19. Torture	20. Will

**Table 3.8 Categories for NVivo "Islamic Terrorism Other" Variable**

1. Community	2. Direct Action
3. Mock	4. Other

The decision to continue coding current SDA entries instead of focusing solely on the data collected from the SPSS content analysis proved beneficial.

Beginning in early 2008 the battle between the conservative blogosphere and the Canadian and provincial Human Rights Commissions for the right to criticize Islam took center stage in the discourse on Islamic terrorism. In large part this is because Mark Steyn and Ezra Levant, both highly respected conservative intellectuals, had controversial work related to Islam investigated by these Commissions for potentially exposing Muslims to “hatred or contempt,” an accusation that could easily be leveled against Kate and many other conservative bloggers. Right-wing bloggers have deemed these Human Rights Commissions a threat to free speech and implicit supporters of Islamic terrorism; I describe and analyze this more specific discourse as well.

It would be hard to overstate the significance the Canadian conservative blogosphere has placed in these events. As Kate wrote regarding the Human Rights Commissions (HRCs), “Someone in media asked me in private conversation why this issue is so heated, so personal. I answered, ‘***Then, you don't understand. This is an existential threat to the Canadian blogosphere. This is not about what we say—this is about who we are*** [emphasis in original].”<sup>33</sup> Steps taken to counter the HRCs have also landed Kate and several other prominent Canadian conservative bloggers in a defamation lawsuit filed by one of the federal HRC’s former investigators, Richard Warman.

The final part of my content analysis explores the nature of this battle to determine how it fits into a natural history model of claims-making activities and what types of rhetorical techniques the conservatives are employing in their discourse regarding the HRCs. To accomplish this I expanded the scope of my content analysis beginning in April 2008 and, on a daily basis until May of 2009, started following other Canadian political blogs including ezrlevant.com run by Ezra Levant, Warren Kinsella’s blog warrenkinsella.com, and bigcitylib.blogspot.com run by Michael J. Murphy. Warren and Michael are supporters of Richard Warman, the HRCs, and sworn ideological enemies of the conservative bloggers. As such, their commentary on the events has been

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<sup>33</sup> Kate McMillan, “People wonder why I quit university teaching,” SDA, April 11, 2008, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/008462.html>

integral to developing a full understanding of the conservatives' battle against the HRCs. I collected all entries of note and entered them into NVivo for further analysis. In addition, I read all pertinent court documents, searched the mainstream media for articles regarding these issues, and I attended the opening of the British Columbia Human Rights Tribunal hearing into an article Mark Steyn wrote for *Maclean's* magazine. The categories I chose for this part of the content coding grouped information regarding events, organizations, and individuals together.

**Table 3.9 Categories for NVivo "Human Rights Commissions" Variable**

1. Canadian Islamic Congress	2. Community
3. Defamation	4. Direct Action
5. Ezra Levant	6. Free Dominion
7. Legal Documents	8. <i>Maclean's</i> Case
9. Marc Lemire	10. Mohamed Elmasry
11. Other	12. Richard Warman
13. Stephen Boissoin	14. Syed Soharwardy
15. Tarek Fatah	

### **3.4 Additional Data Source: All SDA Comments**

People who comment at SDA add relevant information that is often quite telling of the worldview of the political right. Among the frequent visitors to Kate's blog are other influential bloggers, political pundits, computer programmers, university professors, engineers, etc. Moreover, Kate often says so little in her entries, referencing any number of inside jokes her loyal readers are already aware of, that reading just the post does not provide sufficient context. However, in the comments people usually dissect her meaning. I decided that including this reader-generated information would make for a more comprehensive content analysis of SDA. To accomplish this I used the software "Surf Offline 2.0," which every few weeks I instructed to download just the text from recent entries and comments at SDA, allowing me to archive each post ever written along with the

comments it generated. I exported the downloaded material as html files, and then acquired software that converts the .html files into .txt files. I imported these .txt files into NVivo as “sources” to run searches on. Such searches have proven useful for finding posts in which intense discussion of any given topic has taken place. These data also allowed me to easily quantify the amount of SDA posts in which readers discussed topics such as Islamic terrorism and the HRCs, a technique I have used to gauge the “volatility” of these topics over time.

## 4: SPSS RESULTS

In this Chapter I outline the major findings from the SPSS phase of the content analysis. Written descriptions of categories accounting for less than 7.5% of total entries have been omitted unless they deal with an issue directly related to my research questions.

### 4.1 Blogger

As the following table shows, Kate wrote a vast majority of posts.

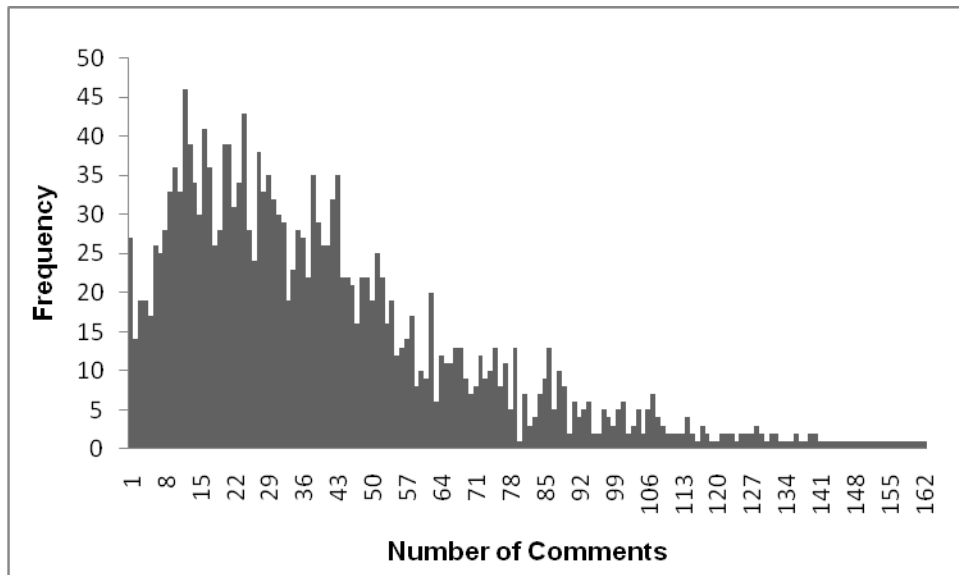
**Table 4.1 SPSS Results: Blogger Entry Frequency**

<b>Blogger</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>%</b>
Kate McMillan	1766	86.74
CJunk	87	4.27
Kevin Jeager	78	3.83
KShaidle	49	2.41
Steve Janke	33	1.62
Damian	8	0.39
Sean	5	0.25
Stephen Taylor	5	0.25
PlanetX	3	0.15
Larry Weber	1	0.05
Unknown	1	0.01
Total	2036	100

### 4.2 Number of Comments

There was a mean of 41 comments per blog entry, a median of 33, a mode of 11, a minimum of zero and a maximum of 324.

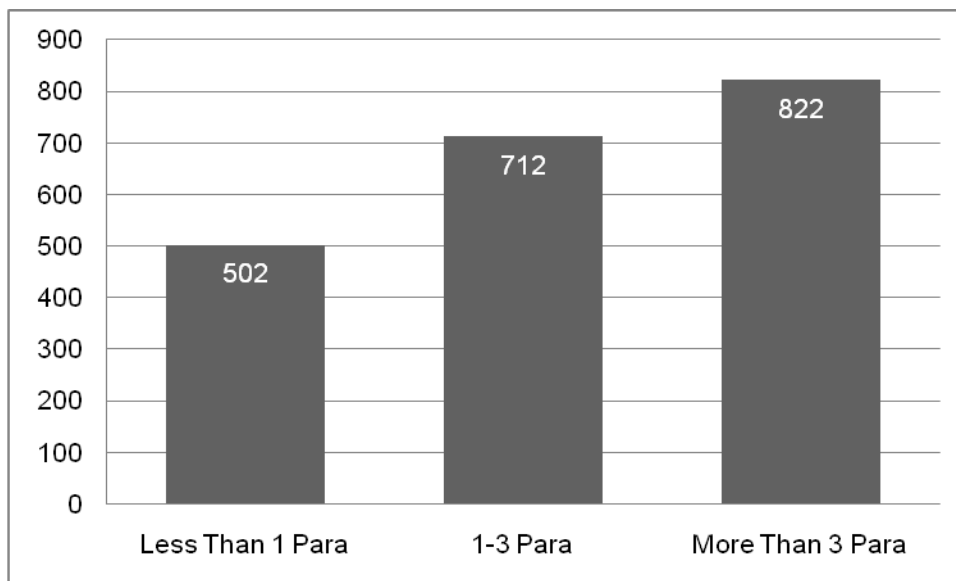
**Figure 4.2 SPSS Results: Number of Comments per Entry**



### 4.3 Length

The modal category for post length was “More Than 3 Paragraphs.” Most posts in this category contain excerpts or quotes from the sources linked to, meaning longer posts usually include a paragraph or more of writing that is not written by the SDA blogger who authored the entry.

**Figure 4.3 SPSS Results: Length of Blog Entries**





## 4.4 Type

This variable clearly shows the extent to which the bloggers at SDA, like most bloggers, act as a news filter for their readers. Just over half of the entries were either “Simple” or “Multi” link redirection/reproductions, which I discuss as a whole because they are so similar.

**Table 4.4 SPSS Results: Type of Entry Frequency**

Type	Frequency	%
1. Simple Redirection/Reproduction	558	27.4
2. Editorial/Commentary	601	29.5
3. Simple Multi-Link Redirection/Reproduction	462	22.7
4. Critical Exposure/Attack	144	7.07
5. Personal Info/Update	116	5.7
6. Supporting Someone/Something	107	5.26
7. 1st Person News Coverage	35	1.72
8. Personal Rant	13	0.64
Total	2036	100

1. Redirection/Reproduction: 50.1% (n=1020)

Kate often adds very little if any commentary above and beyond having chosen the sources for posting on her blog. In such cases it is not unusual for her to use a snide or sly title for her post, and then provide nothing more than the link or quote. Such entries were coded as either “Simple” or “Multi” link redirections/reproductions.

2. Editorial/Commentary: 29.52% (n=601)

Obviously bloggers have an opinion on almost everything they write about and often they use links or quotes in their entries as a springboard to argue a point. If they made any substantial general comments in an entry that were not specific enough to have it coded elsewhere I coded the blog post as an “Editorial/Commentary,” which is the largest category, but only

because “Simple” and “Multi” link redirections/reproductions were coded separately.

4. Critical Exposure/Attack: 7.07% (n=144)

If Kate or her guest bloggers have strong political opinions in opposition to someone or what they stand for, it is safe to assume that the bloggers will post any information they can get their hands on portraying their ideological enemies in a less than favorable light. This includes Liberal Party members who over-charge Canadian taxpayers for meals,<sup>1</sup> Stephane Dion reusing his old speeches and taking credit for other people’s initiatives,<sup>2</sup> the federal NDP talking out of both sides of their mouth on Afghanistan while President Karzai was in town,<sup>3</sup> and the Saskatchewan NDP crying foul on health care initiatives they themselves brought about.<sup>4</sup> It also includes Kate’s scathing attacks on the Status of Women Fund for eroding women’s rights and being a mouthpiece for hard-left policies,<sup>5</sup> her claim that Al Gore is a huge hypocrite,<sup>6</sup> or her posting of doctored mainstream media photographs depicting Israel’s role in various battles in a negative light.<sup>7</sup>

6. Supporting Someone/Something: 5.26% (n=107)

In certain respects this is the flip side of “Critical Exposure/Attack.” In some cases it was a post asking SDA readers to vote for Preston Manning

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<sup>1</sup> Kate McMillan, “Entitled To Their Entitlements,” The Small Dead Animals: THE ROADKILL DIARIES (SDA) Blog, April 7, 2006, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/003783.html>

<sup>2</sup> Steve Janke, “Stephane Dion recycles his own speech in order to take new credit for an old idea,” SDA, September 25, 2006, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/004683.html>

<sup>3</sup> Steve Janke, “There are lies, damned lies, and then there are NDP press releases,” SDA, September 22, 2006, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/004665.html>

<sup>4</sup> Kate McMillan, “Tommy Douglas: Night Of The Living Serby,” SDA, April 26, 2006, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/003900.html>

<sup>5</sup> Kate McMillan, “Status Of Feminists,” SDA, August 25, 2006, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/004506.html>; Kate McMillan, “The CBC: Environmentally Friendly Hit Pieces,” SDA, January 11, 2007, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/005318.html>

<sup>6</sup> Kate McMillan, “An Inconvenient Comparison,” SDA, March 8, 2007, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/005721.html>

<sup>7</sup> Kate McMillan, “al-Reutergate II,” SDA, August 6, 2006, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/004399.html>

in an online poll to determine who the “greatest Canadian” is.<sup>8</sup> In others it was a post supporting “eat an animal for PETA day,”<sup>9</sup> or pointing out a new conservative news aggregator,<sup>10</sup> providing information for a pro-war protest,<sup>11</sup> plugging a TV airing of *Obsession: Radical Islam’s War Against The West*,<sup>12</sup> or exposing new bloggers to the SDA audience with a “Carnival of the Newbies” entry.<sup>13</sup>

## 4.5 Philosophy

Coding for philosophical perspective was one of the most difficult tasks I faced during the SPSS phase of the content analysis. I understood what was desired, but often found myself unsure how to categorize specific posts, hence the large “Other” category.

**Table 4.5 SPSS Results: Philosophy of Entry Frequency**

Philosophy	Frequency	%
1. Individual Account/Responsibility	510	25.05
2. Security	410	20.14
3. Democracy	198	9.72
4. Restricting Gov't	99	4.86
5. Human Rights	82	4.03
6. Choice	78	3.83
7. Market Efficiency	61	3
8. Nationalism	27	1.33
9. Family	26	1.23
10. Religion	17	0.83
11. Traditional Gender Roles	7	0.34
12. Other	521	25.59
Total	2036	100

<sup>8</sup> Kate McMillan, “Vote For Preston,” SDA, August 20, 2006, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/004470.html>

<sup>9</sup> Jaeger, “Belated eat an animal for PETA day!” SDA, March 16, 2007, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/005775.html>

<sup>10</sup> Kate McMillan, “News Aggregator Launched,” SDA, August 28, 2006, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/004518.html>

<sup>11</sup> Kate McMillan, “Coming Events: Counter Protest In Montreal,” SDA, March 15, 2007, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/005756.html>

<sup>12</sup> Kate McMillan, “Obsession,” SDA, November 6, 2006, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/004932.html>

<sup>13</sup> Kate McMillan, “Carnival Of The Newbies,” SDA, May 31, 2006, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/004060.html>

1. Accountability/Individual Responsibility: 25.05% (n=510)

Posts coded this way usually highlighted a lack of accountability among those ideologically opposed to conservatism, and called for responsibility, though sometimes they commend people or groups for being responsible. Either way it is quite clear Kate favors increased accountability for everyone. This was often the philosophy for posts about members of the mainstream media, who were singled out in 168 or 32.9% of these 510 entries. Issues surrounding the environment and “climate alarmists” were highlighted in 61 or 12% of these posts, and the Liberals drew fire in 57 or 11.2%. Garth Turner, who Kate feels should have held a by-election when he was ousted from the Conservative Party of Canada, was the subject of a number of posts criticizing his actions.<sup>14</sup> Likewise, the Saskatchewan NDP was criticized for not pressing charges against SaskPower employees suspected of “financial irregularities.”<sup>15</sup>

2. Security: 20.14% (n=410)

A vast majority of these entries had “Afghanistan,” “Iraq,” “Iran,” “Terrorism,” “Muslims,” “International Issues,” or “Law & Order” as their subject. If the post was motivated by the belief that good people’s lives are in peril then I coded it as the philosophical perspective of “Security,” be they in Caledonia and threatened by Aboriginals,<sup>16</sup> in Afghanistan by the Taliban,<sup>17</sup> or on the American border with Mexico.<sup>18</sup> More general arguments were also included, such as posts implying a connection

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<sup>14</sup> Kate McMillan, “The Mother Of All Backpedallers,” SDA, February 6, 2007, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/005501.html>

<sup>15</sup> Kate McMillan, “Catch 44,” SDA, April 12, 2006, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/003815.html>

<sup>16</sup> Kate McMillan, “CitizensofCaledonia.ca,” SDA, April 30, 2006, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/003916.html>

<sup>17</sup> Unknown, “Canadians Wounded by IED,” SDA, June 21, 2006, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/004175.html>

<sup>18</sup> Kate McMillan, “Is This A Problem Now?” SDA, January 5, 2007, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/005275.html>

between the detrimental impact of heroin, safe injection sites in Canada and the opium trade in Afghanistan.<sup>19</sup>

3. Democracy: 9.72% (n=198)

Kate favors democratic rights as long as they do not infringe on the individual liberties of others. She considers diversity of thought “the only diversity that really matters in a free and democratic society.”<sup>20</sup> Individual liberty, freedom of speech and the right to choose to buy items in a free market are important to her, but she is not in favor of a tyranny of the majority. Blog entries coded as “Democracy” had subjects that included ongoing elections and the protection of free speech. Posts about online polls were also included here,<sup>21</sup> particularly ones that got “crashed” by right-wing Internet surfers to swing the vote, as happened when CTV.ca asked if certain comments by Prime Minister Stephen Harper about Liberal leadership candidates were “anti-Israel.”<sup>22</sup> Some posts criticizing specific political leaders were also determined to have “Democracy” as their primary philosophy. An example is the post entitled “The Giggle Politics of Elizabeth May,”<sup>23</sup> the Green Party leader who Kate dislikes because she allegedly gets too much publicity despite not being an official member of the opposition, publicity that Kate attributes to pro-environmentalism media bias.

5. Human Rights: 4% (n=82)

Kate wishes that everyone be measured using the same standard and treated accordingly. For example she feels that Jews are constantly

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<sup>19</sup> Kate McMillan, “The High Price Of ‘Safe Injection’ Sites,” SDA, September 12, 2006, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/004598.html>

<sup>20</sup> Kate McMillan, “Dear Macleans,” SDA, November 2, 2006, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/004912.html>

<sup>21</sup> Kate McMillan, “A Petition,” SDA, January 6, 2007, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/005284.html>

<sup>22</sup> Kate McMillan, “Fair Political Dialogue,” SDA, October 13, 2006, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/004796.html>

<sup>23</sup> Kate McMillan, “The Giggle Politics Of Elizabeth May,” SDA, March 19, 2007, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/005798.html>

mistreated by those on the left of the political spectrum.<sup>24</sup> Kate is also against what she perceives to be double standards, such as affirmative action programs ostensibly designed to promote equality but which often elevate Aboriginals above other Canadians,<sup>25</sup> or women above men.<sup>26</sup> She is not a fan of the UN Human Rights Council,<sup>27</sup> or Commission,<sup>28</sup> which she sees as playing favorites against the U.S. and Israel in a non-meritocratic way.<sup>29</sup> However, she does not oppose water-boarding, seeing it as a wee bit less offensive than, say, drilling holes in people's heads.<sup>30</sup> More generally she is against organ harvesting<sup>31</sup> and policies of the British government that require everyone to wait an equally long time before they receive medical care.<sup>32</sup>

## 4.6 Appeal

This variable attempted to categorize the various reasons readers were drawn to any given post. The two most substantive categories above and beyond “Information/Resources”—which is the most common category for “Simple” and “Multi” link redirections/reproductions—are “Creating Doubt” and “Humor.” Kate wishes to challenge widely accepted stances on various issues. Consequently “Creating Doubt” is a frequent intent in her posts, and one that her readers enjoy

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<sup>24</sup> Kate McMillan, “As The Left Is Quick To Remind Us,” SDA, August 15, 2006, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/004445.html>

<sup>25</sup> Kate McMillan, “Chinese Threaten Not To... Er....,” SDA, February 9, 2007, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/005527.html>

<sup>26</sup> Kate McMillan, “Parade Of Lights,” SDA, April 10, 2006, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/003793.html>; Kate McMillan, “Affirmative Reaction,” SDA, November 24, 2006, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/005017.html>; Kate McMillan, “University Diversity Of Michigan,” SDA, November 9, 2006, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/004946.html>

<sup>27</sup> Kate McMillan, “Frist: No to UN Human Rights Council,” SDA, April 1, 2006, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/003753.html>

<sup>28</sup> Kate McMillan, “It makes no mention of any other religion besides Islam,” SDA, March 31, 2007 <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/005885.html>

<sup>29</sup> Kate McMillan, “The despots who run this council couldn't care less,” SDA, March 27, 2007, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/005850.html>

<sup>30</sup> Kate McMillan, “Its the new bunjee jumping,” SDA, November 4, 2006, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/004925.html>

<sup>31</sup> Kate McMillan, “US State Dep't: Sujiatun Visit,” SDA, April 17, 2006, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/003845.html>

<sup>32</sup> Kate McMillan, “Tommy Douglas - Not Bloody Dead Enough,” SDA, August 4, 2006, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/004382.html>

as many of them are skeptical of what they perceive to be common wisdom. Regarding humor, if I had coded for “Secondary Post Appeal” it would be an even larger category, as humor abounds at SDA.

**Table 4.6 SPSS Results: Appeal of Entry Frequency**

Appeal	Frequency	%
1. Information/Resources	535	26.3
2. Creating Doubt	404	19.8
3. Humor	330	16.2
4. Western Values	139	6.83
5. Empirical Evidence	130	6.39
6. Common People	84	4.13
7. Using Fear	73	3.59
8. Revealing Hypocrisy	72	3.54
9. Anecdotes/Stories	70	3.44
10. Free Speech	33	1.62
11. Other	166	8.15
Total	2036	100

1. Information/Resources: 26.3% (n=535)

Virtually every entry provides information of some kind. Entries were coded as having “Information/Resources” as their appeal if that was the only appeal a post had, meaning if Kate or the guest blogger posted only a link or several links without any additional commentary. This is almost always the case for “Reader Tips,” which were usually a collection of links posted as the last entry on any given day, where readers were welcome to drop their own links in the comments. Factual posts designed to convey information but which were not quantitatively-oriented enough to be coded as “appeal to empirical evidence” also ended up in this category.

2. Creating Doubt: 19.8% (n=404)

Kate is forever challenging what she believes to be erroneous but widely held stances on various issues. Global warming is a good example, as

Kate spends a lot of time attempting to discredit its adherents' claims.<sup>33</sup> This is evident by her many posts entitled "Y2Kyoto"<sup>34</sup> and "The Sound of Settled Science."<sup>35</sup> Other examples of Kate attempting to create doubt include discussions of the supposed achievements of Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez,<sup>36</sup> the leadership abilities of Stephen Dion,<sup>37</sup> and the professionalism of the mainstream media.<sup>38</sup> The Liberal Government's claims that farmers actually support the Wheat Board has also been brought into question,<sup>39</sup> as have leftist and Muslim claims that Islam is a Religion of Peace<sup>40</sup> and that the United Nations is useful.<sup>41</sup>

### 3. Humor: 16.2% (n=330)

It would come as no surprise to anyone who has ever read a day of entries at SDA that Kate revels in sarcasm. She continuously finds ways to point out what she feels to be the double-standards or failings of others whose ignorance, self-righteousness or misguided ideologies have led them astray. Humorous quips and one-liners are also very common in the comments section of any given post, giving SDA a jovial atmosphere for those of a conservative persuasion. During my analysis leftists were laughed at for their fear of "BushMcChimpyHitler,"<sup>42</sup> people offended by SDA's content were informed of the proper, and non-existent, complaints

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<sup>33</sup> Kate McMillan, "Y2Kyoto: Weekly World Warming News," SDA, March 26, 2007, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/005844.html>

<sup>34</sup> See <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/mt/mt-search.cgi?IncludeBlogs=1&search=y2kyoto>

<sup>35</sup> See <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/mt/mt-search.cgi?IncludeBlogs=1&search=sound+settled+science>

<sup>36</sup> Kate McMillan, "Committees Of Chavez Control," SDA, February 18, 2007, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/005585.html>

<sup>37</sup> Kate McMillan, "Stephane Dion: Call Your Office," SDA, February 15, 2007, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/005569.html>

<sup>38</sup> Kate McMillan, "What do we need professional reporters for?" SDA, January 20, 2007, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/005377.html>

<sup>39</sup> Kate McMillan, "Independent Farmer Sighting Update: A Response From Canadian Press," SDA, January 17, 2007, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/005357.html>

<sup>40</sup> Kate McMillan, "Little Mosque In Mississauga," SDA, January 6, 2007, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/005290.html>

<sup>41</sup> Kate McMillan, "Pimp My UN Ride," SDA, January 3, 2007, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/005263.html>

<sup>42</sup> Kate McMillan, "BushMcChimpyHitler And The 'New Oil' Conspiracy," SDA, April 19, 2006, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/003856.html>



procedure,<sup>43</sup> contests to rename the NDP—“Not Dead Enough...”—were held,<sup>44</sup> online polls were crashed,<sup>45</sup> carbon neutral offset plans were parodied,<sup>46</sup> and so on. With respect to Islamic terrorism, the form of humour most frequently employed is mockery. Kate is fond of poking fun at fashion trends in fundamentalist Islamic dress codes, as her “Little Mosque On The Catwalk”<sup>47</sup> and “Burqini”<sup>48</sup> posts made clear. She is pleased when fundamentalist fatwa’s are made that endanger the future of Islam in a globalized world; a March 2007 entry titled “Faster Please!” featured a ruling by an Islamic cleric who claimed that vaccination prior to an epidemic’s outbreak are not allowed under Shari’ah Law.<sup>49</sup> Finally, she cannot help but point and laugh when Islamic terrorists refuse to die in battle and thus expose themselves as cowards.<sup>50</sup>

#### 4. Western Values: 6.8% (n=139)

A common thread among these posts is highlighting aspects of other cultures that are worse than those of Western Civilization, or sounding the alarm when Western pillars of liberty come under threat. Posts regarding the lack of property rights in China,<sup>51</sup> or women being killed in Pakistan for not wearing a veil<sup>52</sup> were placed into this category, as was a post detailing

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<sup>43</sup> Kate McMillan, “Complaint Procedure,” SDA, June 15, 2005, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/002168.html>

<sup>44</sup> Various, “Rename The NDP Contest!” SDA, November 2006, [http://www.smalldeanimals.com/mt/mt-comments.cgi?entry\\_id=4918](http://www.smalldeanimals.com/mt/mt-comments.cgi?entry_id=4918)

<sup>45</sup> Jaeger, “David Suzuki’s Poll results,” SDA, March 2, 2007, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/005686.html>

<sup>46</sup> Kate McMillan, “Is Your Cat Ownership Environmentally Sustainable?” SDA, March 21, 2007, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/005811.html>

<sup>47</sup> Kate McMillan, “Little Mosque On The Catwalk,” SDA, February 12, 2007, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/005541.html>

<sup>48</sup> Kate McMillan, “Burqini,” SDA, May 6, 2007, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/006149.html>

<sup>49</sup> Kate McMillan, “Faster Please!” SDA, March 12, 2007, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/005740.html>

<sup>50</sup> Kate McMillan, “Those Fickle Islamists,” SDA, July 21, 2006, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/004325.html>

<sup>51</sup> Kate McMillan, “Property Rights In China,” SDA, March 26, 2007, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/005835.html>

<sup>52</sup> Kate McMillan, “For Refusing The Veil,” SDA, February 20, 2007, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/005605.html>

the BC Civil Liberties Association's efforts to back the *Western Standard's* right to republish the *Jyllands-Posten* Muhammad cartoons.<sup>53</sup>

5. Empirical Evidence: 6.39% (n=130)

This category was reserved for posts containing quantitative facts and statistics, or that offer some other form of proof, such as photographs, for the argument being made. Good examples of quantitatively appealing posts include those comparing spending records of various Canadian political figures,<sup>54</sup> Kate's peer reviewed paper on ophthalmology,<sup>55</sup> and a quote from an engineer about the structural integrity of the twin towers and the high likelihood that they fell from the planes' impact and the subsequent fire on 9/11.<sup>56</sup> Regarding photographs, the conservative blogosphere is constantly on the hunt for doctored photos from the Middle East.<sup>57</sup>

7. Using Fear: 3.59% (n=73)

A majority of entries stoking fears dealt with some aspect of Islamic terrorism. Generally Kate and the community at SDA feel Islam, at least in its current manifestation, is fundamentally flawed and violent,<sup>58</sup> barbarous towards women<sup>59</sup> and incapable of reform.<sup>60</sup> This is in part because Muslim youth from around the world are being indoctrinated in the ways of

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<sup>53</sup> Kate McMillan, "BCCLA Backs Western Standard," SDA, April 5, 2006, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/003771.html>

<sup>54</sup> Kate McMillan, "Entitled To Their Entitlements," SDA, April 7, 2006, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/003783.html>

<sup>55</sup> Kate McMillan, "My Mutant Rat Dogs," SDA, May 17, 2006, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/003991.html>

<sup>56</sup> Kate McMillan, "'The greatest post in the history of the Democratic Underground', Part II," SDA, July 10, 2006, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/004262.html>

<sup>57</sup> Kate McMillan, "All The News That's Fit To Fake," SDA, August 29, 2006, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/004523.html>

<sup>58</sup> Kate McMillan, "Religion Of Peace Submission," SDA, June 19, 2006, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/004163.html>

<sup>59</sup> Kathy Shaidle, "UK: 6-year-old burned to death in 'honour killing,'" SDA, September 20, 2006, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/004646.html>

<sup>60</sup> Kathy Shaidle, "Another day, another critic of Islam under police protection," SDA, September 28, 2006, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/004708.html>

violence in the name of Islam.<sup>61</sup> Islam is seen as a problem that has immediate consequences for Canadians, especially in light of research indicating that 12% of Canadian Muslims agree that Stephen Harper should be beheaded.<sup>62</sup> TV documentaries highlighting the threat of Islamic radicals, such as the BBC's *Undercover Mosque*,<sup>63</sup> were featured whenever they were released. Iran was a big concern because of its Holocaust-denying president,<sup>64</sup> nuclear program,<sup>65</sup> and warnings that any attack on Syria will be taken as an attack on Iran.<sup>66</sup>

#### 10. Free Speech: 1.62% (n=33)

Entries on free speech became much more common after my SPSS analysis was complete. During the period covered by the SPSS analysis, April 1, 2006 through until March 31, 2007, Kate occasionally emphasized the importance of open dialogue in the truth discovery process—more so in the blogosphere than elsewhere<sup>67</sup>—and at other times drew the reader's attention to situations where free speech had been curtailed.<sup>68</sup>

## 4.7 Subject

This variable has proven useful for selecting out and studying posts on specific topics, especially because Kate does not categorize or “tag” her entries. Coding for more than one subject per post would have produced more useful

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<sup>61</sup> Kate McMillan, “Baby Boomer,” SDA, January 27, 2007, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/005423.html>

<sup>62</sup> Cjunk, “12 Percent Canadian Muslims Agree: Behead Harper,” SDA, February 28, 2007, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/005668.html>

<sup>63</sup> Kate McMillan, “Undercover Mosque,” SDA, January 16, 2007, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/005347.html>

<sup>64</sup> Kate McMillan, “Not In Holocaust Denial, After All,” SDA, July 20, 2006, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/004320.html>

<sup>65</sup> Kate McMillan, “Iran Joins The 'Nuclear Club'.” SDA, April 11, 2006, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/003808.html>

<sup>66</sup> Kate McMillan, “Jimmy Carter's War: Day 9,757\*,” SDA, July 13, 2006, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/004282.html>

<sup>67</sup> Kate McMillan, “For 'Tony The Media Moley',” SDA, April 24, 2006, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/003884.html>

<sup>68</sup> Kate McMillan, “The Alexa Filter,” SDA, August 4, 2006, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/004379.html>

information, as any given post's subject, such as the mainstream media, is primarily a vehicle for Kate to make a broader point. Initially there was another variable for "Secondary Post Subject," but this proved to be too time consuming to code. This lack of depth and nuance in the quantitative analysis is the primary reason I decided to include a qualitative analysis.

**Table 4.7 SPSS Results: Subject of Entry Frequency**

Subject	Frequency	%
1. Media	234	11.49
2. Social Commentary	200	9.82
3. Various	169	8.3
4. Afghanistan, Iraq, and Iran	163	8.00
5. International Issues	136	6.68
6. Provincial/Local Issues	131	6.43
7. Liberal Bashing	113	5.55
8. Environment	112	5.5
9. US Politics	88	4.32
10. Muslims/Islam	84	4.13
11. Law & Order	83	4.07
12. Institutional Reform	72	3.54
13. Terrorism	68	3.34
14. Non-Election Strategizing	56	2.75
15. Multiculturalism	46	2.26
16. Censorship	21	1.03
17. Other	260	12.77
Total	2036	100

1. Media: 11.49% (n=234)

Kate often wrote about the mainstream media and her contempt for many journalists. Her primary criticism was that journalists are not held accountable for their shortcomings and biases. Seventy two percent (n=169) of posts about the media had "Accountability/Individual Responsibility" as their primary philosophy, and half had "Creating Doubt"

as their primary appeal. For Kate and conservatives generally it is painfully obvious that the Canadian media, particularly the CBC, are ideologically opposed to Stephen Harper, the Conservative government, and the war in Afghanistan.<sup>69</sup> Consequently, conservative bloggers enthusiastically supported the cold shoulder Harper has given the Canadian press gallery,<sup>70</sup> and have not hidden their dislike for media attempts to voice its displeasure over his tactics.<sup>71</sup> The American media were similarly viewed as being anti-Bush,<sup>72</sup> and most Western media were portrayed as being opposed to Christianity but unwilling to criticize Islam.<sup>73</sup>

## 2. Social Commentary/Observation: 9.82% (N=200)

Kate has some fairly strong opinions about the current state of Western Civilization. She feels that in many respects Western Civilization is headed in the wrong direction. This category was reserved for posts about society generally, and with 200 entries it is full of insight into Kate's perception of reality. Arguments about the inherently degrading effects of the welfare state<sup>74</sup> and laments regarding the long-term implications of raising generations of children afraid of risk—e.g. constantly wearing helmets<sup>75</sup>—were placed here. So too were tirades against the supposed successes of the feminist movement.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Kate McMillan, "Roggio: Canadian Media On 'Death Watch'," SDA, June 5, 2006, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/004081.html>

<sup>70</sup> Kate McMillan, "Finding Nuance," SDA, July 23, 2006, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/004329.html>

<sup>71</sup> Kate McMillan, "Look Who's Being Petulant Now?" SDA, May 23, 2006, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/004026.html>

<sup>72</sup> Kate McMillan, "Well, our job is to bash the president," SDA, February 26, 2007, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/005566.html>

<sup>73</sup> Jaeger, "Don't insult religion - unless it's Christianity," SDA, March 2, 2007, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/005680.html>

<sup>74</sup> Kate McMillan, "The Right To Be Relieved Of Burden," SDA, June 1, 2006, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/004066.html>

<sup>75</sup> Kate McMillan, "If It Kills One Child," SDA, February 12, 2007, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/005538.html>

<sup>76</sup> Kathy Shaidle, "5 Things Feminism Has Done for Me," SDA, September 26, 2006, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/004696.html>

3. Various: 8.3% (n=169)

A majority of these posts were “Reader Tips” that provide the SDA news consumer with a selection of links on various subjects. Readers are free to comment or add their own links regarding the day’s events in the comments section of these posts. Other entries categorized as “Various” were also smorgasbords, though they were not entitled “Reader Tips.”

4. Afghanistan, Iraq, and Iran: 8% (n=163)

Initially, each of these countries was treated as a distinct category, accounting for 65, 64, and 34 posts respectively. Subsequently for the sake of brevity I amalgamated them into a single category, as Kate’s treatment of each country was similar. She was keen to counter claims that the presence of Western forces in the Middle East is part of some imperialist plot. Regarding the Canadian mission in Afghanistan, Kate happily pointed out when recruitment rates were up 250% in the Prairies.<sup>77</sup> Occasionally SDA posts asked readers to take time out to write to the troops,<sup>78</sup> and remember their sacrifice when they died.<sup>79</sup> Posts about Iraq also celebrated the bravery of the troops despite Canada not having an active role there.<sup>80</sup> Kate often featured the independent reports of Michael Yon<sup>81</sup> and Michael Totten,<sup>82</sup> two freelance military journalists Kate feels paint a much better picture of the realities on the ground than the mainstream media. Important events were also mentioned, such as the death of al-Zarqawi<sup>83</sup> and Saddam Hussein,<sup>84</sup> both of which pleased Kate.

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<sup>77</sup> Kate McMillan, “Will I get a chance to go to Afghanistan?” SDA, September 17, 2006, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/004626.html>

<sup>78</sup> Kate McMillan, “Greetings from Kandahar,” SDA, April 22, 2006, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/003873.html>

<sup>79</sup> Cjunk, “Corporal Shane Keating’s Mother Speaks,” SDA, September 21, 2006, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/004655.html>

<sup>80</sup> Kate McMillan, “Freedom Fighters,” SDA, November 5, 2006, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/004926.html>

<sup>81</sup> Kate McMillan, “Michael Yon: Brave Men and Demons,” SDA, June 23, 2006, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/004184.html>

<sup>82</sup> Kate McMillan, “‘Holy sh\*t, we could drive to Iraq,’ con’t,” SDA, April 12, 2006, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/003813.html>

<sup>83</sup> Kate McMillan, “Al-Zarqawi Dead,” SDA, June 8, 2006, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/004100.html>

Iran has already been discussed to some extent in the “Using Fear” section of the “Appeal” variable’s discussion, and I will add here only that information regarding important events that involve Iran, such as the seizing of British Navy personnel in March 2007,<sup>85</sup> was posted at SDA as well.

5. International Issues: 6.68% (n=136)

This category was for posts about international issues that did not explicitly fall within one of the more specific categories like “Iran” or “Iraq.” These included posts criticizing Hugo Chavez and his socialist policies<sup>86</sup>—Kate is fond of saying “if you scratch a socialist you’ll find an anti-Semite”<sup>87</sup>—or celebrating what she thought was the death of Castro.<sup>88</sup> Other entries placed here include ones about Pakistan’s roll in the war on terror,<sup>89</sup> North Korea’s next move,<sup>90</sup> and the many failed policies and scandals of the United Nations.<sup>91</sup>

9. US Politics: 4.3% (n=88)

Sometimes Kate has nice things to say about politicians in the U.S., such as when she reminded her readers that Donald Rumsfeld helped rescue people from the wreckage of the Pentagon in the aftermath of the 9/11

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<sup>84</sup> Kate McMillan, “Saddam Swings (Updated),” SDA, December 29, 2006, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/005233.html>

<sup>85</sup> Kate McMillan, “Iran Seizes British Navy Personnel At Gunpoint,” SDA, March 23, 2007, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/005822.html>

<sup>86</sup> Kate McMillan, “Venezuelan Bulldozer Market: Status Report,” SDA, March 20, 2007, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/005803.html>

<sup>87</sup> Kate McMillan, “True Colours,” SDA, July 20, 2006, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/004316.html>

<sup>88</sup> Kate McMillan, “Castro,” SDA, December 2, 2006, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/005080.html>

<sup>89</sup> Cjunk, “Musharraf’s Pakistan Killing Canadian Troops,” SDA, October 10, 2006, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/004773.html>

<sup>90</sup> Steve Janke, “Reading North Korean tea leaves,” SDA, October 10, 2006, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/004775.html>

<sup>91</sup> Kate McMillan, “UN Supervised Rearing Of Hezbollah Complete,” SDA, November 15, 2006, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/004966.html>

attacks,<sup>92</sup> or when she provided a plethora of positive commentary when he stepped down after the 2006 midterm elections.<sup>93</sup> Kate also had good things to say about Republican presidential candidate Fred Thompson during the 2008 primaries.<sup>94</sup> At least as often Kate targets the political left or the Democrats in the U.S., whom she feels are soft on terror and undermining the safety of the troops.<sup>95</sup> She thinks Jimmy Carter was one of the worst presidents in history,<sup>96</sup> and has several times referred to the problems with Iran as “Jimmy Carter’s War.”<sup>97</sup> She is also no fan of Bill or Hillary Clinton,<sup>98</sup> or of Barack Obama, who she has posted about more and more frequently as he rose to power.<sup>99</sup>

#### 10. Muslims/Islam: 4.13% (n=84)

When a blogger does not rely on blogs for any meaningful amount of income, they are free to say whatever they want without fear of losing sponsorships or advertising revenue. Perhaps that is why some right-wing blogs in North America have gone one step further than the news networks to argue that Islam is not simply the victim of radical extremists who have hijacked their faith because moderates are unwilling to speak out, but rather is a fundamentally flawed,<sup>100</sup> misogynistic and violent belief system. When a moderate Canadian Muslim spokesperson was forced to

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<sup>92</sup> Kate McMillan, “Hanson On Rumsfeld,” SDA, November 9, 2008, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/004948.html>

<sup>93</sup> Kate McMillan, “Rummy Resigns,” SDA, November 8, 2006, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/004942.html>

<sup>94</sup> Kate McMillan, “Draft Fred,” SDA, March 10, 2007, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/005727.html>

<sup>95</sup> Kate McMillan, “If You Support The Troops,” SDA, January 24, 2007, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/005405.html>

<sup>96</sup> Kate McMillan, “The Warmonger Test,” SDA, February 21, 2007, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/005609.html>

<sup>97</sup> Kate McMillan, “Jimmy Carter’s War: Day 9,757\*,” SDA, July 13, 2006, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/004282.html>

<sup>98</sup> Kate McMillan, “The Path To 9/11,” SDA, September 10, 2006, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/004592.html>

<sup>99</sup> Kate McMillan, “Barack Hussein Obama,” SDA, January 18, 2007, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/005352.html>; Kate McMillan, “White Like Obama,” SDA, February 21, 2007, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/005619.html>

<sup>100</sup> Cjunk, “Fundamentally Flawed,” SDA, October 4, 2007, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/007159.html>



retire because of threats to his life for his views on Islam,<sup>101</sup> or authors who dare speak out against Islam are placed under police protection,<sup>102</sup> conservative bloggers wonder aloud if Islam might be inherently violent,<sup>103</sup> in which case “tolerance is not a good thing.”<sup>104</sup>

### 13. Terrorism: 3.34% (n=68)

The threat of terrorism is a main reason why Kate feels it is important to continue the missions in Iraq and Afghanistan, or start one in Iran. When a post was about terrorism in other places its subject was coded as “Terrorism.” Breaking news of an attack in Egypt was placed here,<sup>105</sup> as was information regarding a domestic plot to behead Prime Minister Stephen Harper.<sup>106</sup> General commentary on terrorism in Thailand,<sup>107</sup> the role Syria plays as a supply route for Hezbollah,<sup>108</sup> online anti-terrorism “purity tests,”<sup>109</sup> and the need to face up to the fact that terrorists do not comprise a “broad strata of society”<sup>110</sup> when developing much needed profiling policies<sup>111</sup> were also placed here.

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<sup>101</sup> “Kate McMillan, “Religion Of Peace Submission,” SDA, August 4, 2006, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/004389.html>

<sup>102</sup> Kathy Shaidle, “Another day, another critic of Islam under police protection,” SDA, September 28, 2006, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/004708.html>

<sup>103</sup> Kate McMillan, “Islam On Benedict,” SDA, September 15, 2006, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/004618.html>

<sup>104</sup> Steve Janke, “Tolerance is not a good thing,” SDA, September 20, 2006, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/004641.html>

<sup>105</sup> Kate McMillan, “Attack In Egypt,” SDA, April 24, 2006, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/003886.html>

<sup>106</sup> Kate McMillan, “Terrorist Threat To Behead Prime Minister,” SDA, June 7, 2006, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/004089.html>

<sup>107</sup> Kate McMillan, “Terror In Thailand: Hardening The Target,” SDA, June 13, 2006, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/004125.html>

<sup>108</sup> Kate McMillan, “The Syrian Supply Train,” SDA, July 19, 2006, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/004308.html>

<sup>109</sup> Kate McMillan, “The Purity Test,” SDA, December 5, 2006, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/005094.html>

<sup>110</sup> Kate McMillan, “Another Broad Strata Gang Apprehended,” SDA, August 10, 2006, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/004424.html>

<sup>111</sup> Kate McMillan, “The Jackbooted Left Wight Fascist State Marches Forward,” SDA, August 15, 2006, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/004442.html>

15. Multiculturalism: 2.26% (n=46)

Like Mark Steyn and most blogging conservatives, Kate argues that cultures are not equal. Numbering 46 posts in all, with the majority of them appealing to Western values or creating doubt, Kate is quick to point out that many of the values she thinks that Canadians hold dear—such as democratic traditions, freedom of speech and equal gender opportunity—are not held dear in other cultures.<sup>112</sup> She claims that people in Western democracies are generally unaware of the negative impact pro-multicultural government policies are having on their way of life. In Kate's opinion it is paramount that we remember and defend that which keeps Canada's culture distinct from and superior to Saudi Arabian culture.<sup>113</sup> Most of the bloggers at SDA criticize state actions that are perceived as demeaning the positive contributions Western culture has made in favor of not offending anyone. Thus, Jaeger made a point of expressing his irritation when government offices in Britain relocated because the locals were viewed as an insufficiently diverse cross section of the population to ensure equal opportunity employment.<sup>114</sup>

16. Censorship: 1.03% (n=21)

Entries categorized as having the subject "Censorship" usually advocated the need to protect freedom of speech. Research documenting the imprisonment of bloggers in various parts of the world got its own post,<sup>115</sup> as did a polemic about the need to defend Canadian bloggers' right to offend,<sup>116</sup> and a post noting that Mark Steyn's book *America Alone* was

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<sup>112</sup> Kate McMillan, "Democracy, Immigration, Multiculturalism," SDA, April 12, 2006, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/003796.html>

<sup>113</sup> Kate McMillan, "StatsCan: More Pavilions At Folkfest," SDA, March 15, 2007, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/005759.html>

<sup>114</sup> Jaeger, "Government offices move out - Town 'Too white and too British'," SDA, March 7, 2007, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/005713.html>

<sup>115</sup> Kate McMillan, "Bloggers Behind Bars," SDA, December 20, 2006, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/005188.html>

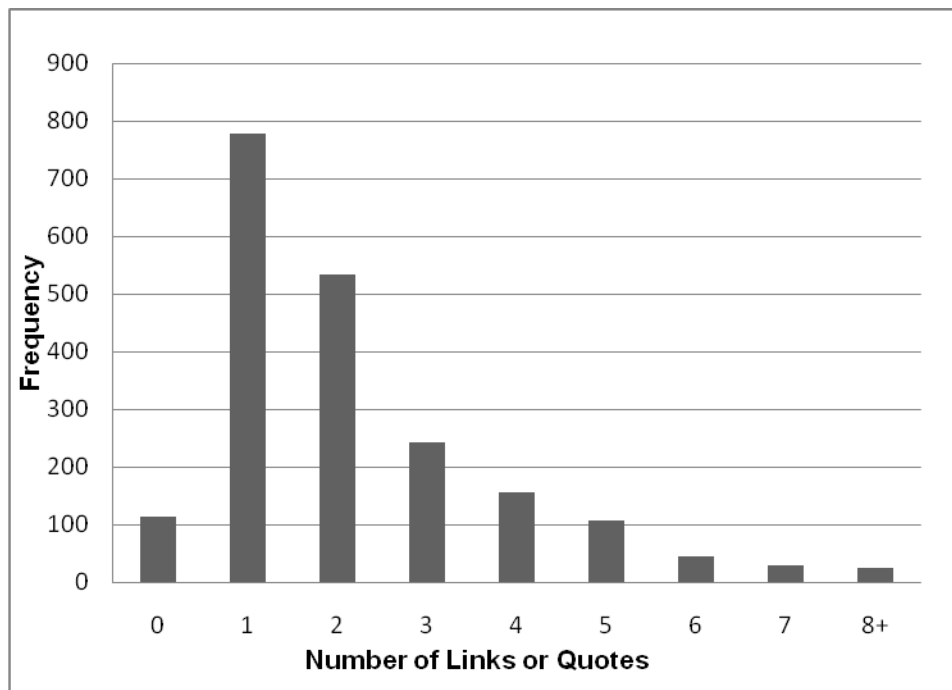
<sup>116</sup> Kate McMillan, "Almost Home," SDA, March 8, 2007, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/005717.html>

not available on Canadian book stores though it had sold enough copies online to make the bestseller list.<sup>117</sup>

#### 4.8 Number of Links or Quotes

Though I coded for the number of links and the number of quotes in each post separately, I have combined them for the purpose of this discussion. Their distribution is more normal than the number of comments, though still positively skewed and with a much lower total. The mean for links and quotes combined was 2.2 per blog entry, with a minimum of zero and a maximum of nineteen. Only 115 (5.6%) of the 2036 total entries had zero links or quotes, giving further quantitative credence to my suggestion that a large part of Kate’s role involves acting as a news filter. SDA serves to direct Kate’s audience towards what she considers important information, often adding only minimal—but carefully worded, intelligent, cutting and sarcastic—additional commentary.

Figure 4.8 SPSS Results: Number of Links and Quotes per Entry



<sup>117</sup> Kate McMillan, “America Alone,” SDA, November 3, 2006, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/004915.html>

## **4.9 Link and Quote Sources, and Attitude towards Sources**

This is the area where the initial code-sheet needed the most revision. While the list of sources was adequate, one of the problems I encountered was deciding which category a link or quote should be coded into. To illustrate this problem, consider the online conservative website “National Review,” or “The Corner,” which is a sub-section of the website where syndicated columnists like Mark Steyn post comments—are they part of the mainstream media, a blog, or an “Other Political Site?” These types of questions plagued me while coding. I have attempted to resolve disputes and ensure consistent coding by reviewing all the classifications in the data set for the first three links and quotes of every post coded as part of the SPSS analysis. This has allowed me to correct misclassifications of both objectively categorized sources—i.e. a CBC news story being coded as a blog entry accidentally—and ensured that sources such as “The Corner” were consistently coded. A cross-tabulation of the results, including information on whether Kate was “for” or “against” the link or quote in question, is presented below.

**Table 4.9 SPSS Results: Attitude Toward Sources Cross-Tabulation**

Source	Neutral	For	Against	N/A	Total
MSM	256	645	172	92	1165
Blogging Tory Site	5	425	2	5	437
Other Website	95	256	47	22	420
Non-Canadian Conservative Blog	4	292	1	1	298
Link to Own Site	2	288	3	3	296
Other Blog	19	214	11	16	260
Other Political Site	19	212	19	4	254
Conservative News Site	9	174	7	12	202
Other Can. Pol. Blog	16	155	14	5	190
Other USA Pol. Blog	4	113	5	0	122
War Blog	0	121	1	0	122
Gov't Website	35	49	16	1	101
Research Institute	11	44	8	9	72
Canadian Liberal Blog	14	13	17	0	44
Other Video	3	28	2	1	34
MSM Video	4	19	9	0	32
Online Discussion Group	8	15	1	2	26
Audio	1	1	0	1	3
Total	505	3064	335	174	4078

Kate is much more likely to provide links or quotes for a source she agrees with rather than something she dislikes or feels neutral about. If the post is about something she dislikes she will often link to a post also attacking that which she dislikes, thus indicating a favorable attitude towards at least one of the links or quotes in question. Table 3.9 also makes evident the ideological affiliations with the Blogging Tories, other American conservative blogs such as michellemalkin.com and instapundit.com, and conservative news sites such as drudgereport.com. Regarding links provided to other Blogging Tory sites, it seems that while Kate is the dominant player within that network, one of her rolls is to introduce to her larger audience other Canadian conservative blog entries she deems worthy. As for sites she dislikes, the mainstream media is the number one target, with the highest proportion going to members of the Canadian Liblogs

blogroll. This pattern is consistent with Cass Sunstein's (2007) analysis of links provided by political blogs in the U.S.<sup>118</sup> Sunstein perceives negative ramifications stemming from a society with citizens whose political opinions are so polarized that they will not even listen to each other.<sup>119</sup> No easy solutions to this problem of polarization exist, as forcing private citizens to promote opinions with which they disagree would be an unacceptable infringement on their freedom of expression. Sunstein advocates "a norm by which both liberals and conservatives include at least a few high-quality blogs from people with whom they do not agree."<sup>120</sup> Unfortunately, as I tried to make clear in my literature review, the disagreements over fundamental questions run so deep that bloggers have a hard time distinguishing "high-quality blogs" from those "with whom they do not agree."

However, despite Sunstein's concerns and their ideological differences political bloggers do monitor the "enemy," and thus they are aware of counter-arguments; hence their ability to ridicule the views of their ideological opponents. Readers making comments at SDA often post links to political discourse regarding Muslims from the left-of-center, at such sites as Babble.ca,<sup>121</sup> or the *Globe and Mail* chat forums.<sup>122</sup> Conservative blogger Damian Penny, who occasionally guest blogs at SDA, is known to read and actively engage others in Warren Kinsella's comment section.<sup>123</sup> This bantering goes both ways, as the Liberal blog bigcitylib.blogspot.com, whose subtitle is "Tips on Beating Down the Conservative Menace," is dedicated to deconstructing the arguments of Canadian conservative bloggers.

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<sup>118</sup> Cass Sunstein, *Republic.com 2.0* (Princeton University Press, 2007), 55.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.* 44.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.* 209.

<sup>121</sup> Wallyj, comment on "Reader Tips," SDA, comment posted July 25, 2008, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/009170.html#c291047>

<sup>122</sup> Kris, comment on "The Religion Of Peace," SDA, comment posted July 27, 2008, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/009186.html#c291653>

<sup>123</sup> Damian, comment on Warren Kinsella's blog, comment posted August 13, 2008, [http://www.haloscan.com/comments/wkinsella/entry080813\\_071407/#27219](http://www.haloscan.com/comments/wkinsella/entry080813_071407/#27219)

#### **4.10 The Need for a Second Look**

This review of the findings of the quantitative phase of the analysis indicates that issues surrounding Islamic terrorism crop up in many different types of conservative political commentary, from criticisms of the mainstream media to Western policies of multiculturalism. The multi-faceted nature of conservative concerns regarding Islamic terrorism led me to engage in a second, more focused qualitative content analysis, incorporating NVivo and using a longer time series of blog entries.

## **5: THE CANADIAN CONSERVATIVE BLOGOSPHERE'S PERCEPTION OF ISLAMIC TERRORISM**

### **5.1 Stage 1 of a Natural History**

I will now explain, in depth, how Kate and the Canadian conservative blogosphere conceive of the causal mechanisms underlying Islamic terrorism, what claims they are making, and what they are doing to counter this perceived threat. This chapter is best understood as an example of the first stage of Spector and Kitsuse's natural history model in action, as the conservatives are attempting "to assert the existence of some condition, define it as offensive, harmful, or otherwise undesirable, publicize these assertions, stimulate controversy, and create a public or political issue over the matter."<sup>1</sup> In so doing, the bloggers at SDA make extensive use of online information provided by the mainstream media and other bloggers. This effective use of the press is an essential element of successful claims-making.<sup>2</sup> At the end of this chapter, I analyze the rhetoric employed in the making of these claims.

I begin with conservative conceptions of Islam generally, and then discuss attempts to quantify various aspects of it. These will be followed by an overview of the nature of the connections thought to exist between Islam, terrorism, and Saudi Arabia. Next will be a more general description of the role conservatives see multiculturalism, issues of free speech, and double standards playing in Western culture's understanding of Islamic terrorism. Then I will describe some of the many self-destructive cultural concessions Kate and others argue Western countries are making to appease Muslims, concessions that conservatives believe are leading towards civil war.

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<sup>1</sup> Spector & Kitsuse, *Constructing Social Problems*, 142.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 145.



## 5.2 SDA on Islamic Terrorism: General Overview

As SDA acts as a news filter, documentaries looking at Islam and terrorism in a light favorable to Western interests get positive reviews and links from Kate. Examples include Wayne Kopping's 2006 film *Obsession: Radical Islam's War Against the West*,<sup>3</sup> the BBC's 2007 *Dispatches: Undercover Mosque*,<sup>4</sup> and Geert Wilders 2008 short *Fitna*.<sup>5</sup> As these films had their own marketing budgets, and each caused its own special controversy, it seems likely that many in the SDA community would have become aware of them independently of Kate or the guest bloggers. This is not the case with many of the stories Kate and the other conservative bloggers dig up however, and it is clear that specific, small-scale examples illustrating a larger point are integral to many successful blogs generally and SDA specifically, as is the ability to go further than the mainstream media when speculating about the role Islam—not just the radical strain—plays in contemporary terrorism.

One example on the topic of the rampant indoctrination of Muslim youth was the story of Mr. Chahhou, a Muslim and new Spanish teacher at a public school in Johnston County, North Carolina, who also taught at a separate Muslim school. When Mr. Chahhou was suspended after his Johnston County students discovered offensive terms like 'destroy America' in their word-search game, Kate provided a link to the story with the title "He Just Forgot Where He Was."<sup>6</sup> In England it was reported that an Islamic school in London uses textbooks that call Jews apes and Christians pigs. Worse, the school insists the books still have good chapters in them and is refusing to stop using them.<sup>7</sup> Excerpts from children's television shows in the Middle East are featured on a fairly regular basis, with children happily discussing the murder of Jews or engaging in military

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<sup>3</sup> Kate McMillan, "Obsession," The Small Dead Animals: THE ROADKILL DIARIES (SDA) Blog, November 6, 2006, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/004932.html>

<sup>4</sup> Kate McMillan, "Undercover Mosque," SDA, January 16, 2007, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/005347.html>

<sup>5</sup> Kate McMillan, "Fitna (Bumped)," SDA, March 28, 2008, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/008360.html>

<sup>6</sup> Kate McMillan, "He Just Forgot Where He Was," SDA, November 20, 2006, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/004996.html>

<sup>7</sup> Kate McMillan, "As though "King Fahd Academy in Acton" Wasn't The First Clue," SDA, February 7, 2007, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/005508.html>

training exercises.<sup>8</sup> On January 27, 2007, Kate posted yet another picture of a menacing looking child dressed up in ceremonial clothes under the heading “Baby Boomer,” with a link to more pictures, all taken as part of Ashura, a yearly event in which both Sunni and Shia Muslims observe various aspects of their religious history. As is occasionally the case a reader criticized Kate for insinuating that the pictures and event somehow proved that Islam is a violent religion, to which Kate responded by posting more pictures of Muslims in Pakistan in a parade whipping themselves until their backs bled.<sup>9</sup> For the Shia, who believe Muhammad’s grandson and one of their infallible Imam’s Husayn ibn Ali was martyred on this day, it is an event often commemorated with parades involving self-flagellation.

Alleged Islamic honour killings and related violence are also fairly frequent SDA topics. One example is the death of 6 year old Alisha Begum from Birmingham, whose older brother had been dating a Muslim teenager against that teenager’s family’s wishes, resulting in Alisha’s house being burnt to the ground with her accidentally still in it.<sup>10</sup> Closer to home the death by strangulation of Aqsa Parvez,<sup>11</sup> a 16 year old Ontario resident whose father and older brother had fought with and physically threatened her after she chose to stop wearing the Islamic hijab—covered hair and modest dress—was the subject of several entries.<sup>12</sup> The Montreal murder of El-Mehdi Bellari, whose brother considered him an apostate and allegedly stabbed him in the neck for being a “bad Muslim,” was also the subject of one of Kate’s posts.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Kate McMillan, “Baby Boomers,” SDA, March 15, 2007, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/005762.html>; Kate McMillan, “Baby Boomers,” SDA, June 3, 2007, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/006373.html>; Kate McMillan, “Baby Boomer Children’s Network,” SDA, February 12, 2008, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/008026.html>

<sup>9</sup> Kate McMillan, “Baby Boomer,” SDA, January 27, 2007, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/005423.html>

<sup>10</sup> Kathy Shaidle, “UK: 6-year-old burned to death in ‘honour killing’,” SDA, September 20, 2006, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/004646.html>

<sup>11</sup> Kate McMillan, “Repent Islamophobe, Or We Kill You!” SDA, December 11, 2007, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/007610.html>

<sup>12</sup> Kate McMillan, “Repent Islamophobe, Or We Kill You!” SDA, December 12, 2007, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/007618.html>

<sup>13</sup> Kathy Shaidle, “Montreal man killed for being a ‘bad Muslim’,” SDA, June 8, 2007, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/006420.html>

Kathy Shaidle is a Christian conservative and blogger who, along with Cjunk, is known to be an even more outspoken critic of Islam than Kate. While guest-blogging in February 2007 she cross-posted an entry arguing that, while the violence found in the Bible is descriptive—simply explaining how or why God has been violent or punished sinners—the violence found in the Qur’an is normative, meaning that it instructs its followers to commit it.<sup>14</sup> A series of posts by Cjunk in early October 2007 entitled “Fundamentally Flawed” made a similar case,<sup>15</sup> adding that while those on the right of the political spectrum are called bigots for painting Islam with a broad brush,<sup>16</sup> those on the left are not so labelled despite their similarly broad characterization of conservatives.<sup>17</sup> The left’s alleged unwillingness to criticise Islam despite its failings and biases, particularly against women and homosexuals, is a frequent topic. A November 6, 2007 entry by Kate entitled “Where Feminists Fear To Tread” highlighted this point, featuring a picture of the crowd at an Iranian political gathering in which all the women, covered from head to toe, were separated from all the men.<sup>18</sup> Likewise a December 2, 2007 entry entitled “Muslim fags don’t exist” noted the recent rise of gay bashings in Morocco.<sup>19</sup>

The argument being made is that Islam, taken as a whole and at least in its current manifestation, is more violent and less respectful of Western conceptions of individual human rights and women than other religions. The advocates of this argument feel the general consensus amongst Westerners is that Islam is a religion of peace, and any violence associated with it is not because of its inherent qualities but rather situational contingencies such as Western imperialism itself. In an effort to counter this consensus conservatives

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<sup>14</sup> Kathy Shaidle, “Where the hell’s my handmaid at?” SDA, February 27, 2007, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/005660.html>

<sup>15</sup> Cjunk, “Fundamentally Flawed,” SDA, October 4, 2007, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/007159.html>

<sup>16</sup> Cjunk, “Fundamentally Flawed ... con’t,” SDA, October 5, 2007, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/007162.html>

<sup>17</sup> Cjunk, “Fundamentally Flawed ... con’t part 3,” SDA, October 6, 2007, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/007170.html>

<sup>18</sup> Kate McMillan, “Where Feminists Fear To Tread,” SDA, November 7, 2007, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/007336.html>

<sup>19</sup> Kate McMillan, “Muslim fags don’t exist.” SDA, December 2, 2007, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/007545.html>

have made a habit of mocking the term “Religion of Peace,” in the form of “Religion of Peace™,” “Religion of Submission,” and other similar variations. A series of posts at SDA with “Religion of Peace” in the title drive this point home. Information regarding the murder of a Christian bookstore operator in the Gaza Strip,<sup>20</sup> death threats to Dutch politicians who call for an end of Islamic tolerance, and British Islamic literature calling for the murder of gays<sup>21</sup> is only the beginning. Yet more examples include posts providing information regarding the resignation of moderate Canadian Muslim Tarek Fatah from his position as head of the Muslim Canadian Congress due to death threats,<sup>22</sup> and excerpts from an interview with the Indonesian Muslim Cleric Abu Bakar Bashir in which he calls for the submission of all people to Islam.<sup>23</sup>

Widespread approval of and support for Tarek Fatah shows that the conservatives are quite willing to acknowledge and support Muslims who are critical of violence and oppression. Kate and some of her reader’s further note that the often negative repercussions of such criticism bolsters their claim that Islam and Muslims are too often violent and anti-Western. Whether this more violent nature means that a majority of Muslims hold violent sentiments towards the West does remain an open question, however, although one seen as beside the point. In an entry favourably featuring an article written by Paul Marek entitled “Why the Peaceful Majority is Irrelevant,”<sup>24</sup> the argument is made that repeatedly in Nazi Germany, Soviet Russia, and now the Middle East, it is fanatics who seize the day and control the tide of history. Another post entitled “The True Radicals”<sup>25</sup> provided a link to an entry at Cjunk’s blog arguing that moderates such as Tarek Fatah are the radicals, amounting to a slightly different argument

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<sup>20</sup> Kate McMillan, “Religion of Peace Greater Understanding Outreach Program,” SDA, October 11, 2007, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/007191.html>

<sup>21</sup> Kate McMillan, “Religion Of Peace: Today’s News Briefs,” SDA, October 30, 2007, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/007312.html>

<sup>22</sup> Kate McMillan, “Religion Of ~~Peace~~ Submission,” SDA, August 4, 2006, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/004389.html>

<sup>23</sup> Kate McMillan, “Religion Of ~~Peace~~ Submission,” SDA, June 19, 2006, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/004163.html>

<sup>24</sup> Kate McMillan, “Why the Peaceful Majority is Irrelevant,” SDA, March 19, 2007, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/005795.html>

<sup>25</sup> Kate McMillan, “The True Radicals,” SDA, February 27, 2007, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/005620.html>

meaning the same thing: despite dissenting opinions by some Muslims, Islam is a threat to Western Civilization.

### 5.3 Islam Quantified

The picture of Islam and Islamic terrorism painted at SDA is not entirely composed of individual incidents involving specific Muslims or the blogger's broad generalizations. They are also making an effort to quantify the threat of Islamic terrorism objectively, with similar results. When a survey of 1,003 British Muslims found "greater support for militant Islamist groups among the young" than among older Muslims—in the form of support for Muslim schools, dress codes, and admiration for organizations such as al-Qaeda—Kate provided a link with the title "The Children Are Our Future."<sup>26</sup> Other surveys include a Canadian Environics poll of 500 Muslims indicating that 12% felt a plotted terrorist attack on Toronto in 2006 was justified,<sup>27</sup> and a two-year World Public Opinion poll in Morocco, Egypt, Pakistan, and Indonesia showing widespread Muslim support for Shari'ah law and uncertainty as to the perpetrators of the 9/11 attacks.<sup>28</sup> A Pew poll of American Muslims featured in an entry in May of 2007 indicated that 24% think suicide-bombing attacks are sometimes justified.<sup>29</sup> This was a revelation for which the mainstream media also came under attack for spinning those numbers positively.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Kate McMillan, "Baby Boomers: The Children Are Our Future," SDA, January 31, 2007, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/005440.html>

<sup>27</sup> CBC News, "Canada's Muslims, an international comparison," February 13, 2007, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/background/islam/muslim-survey.html>

<sup>28</sup> Kate McMillan, "Muslim Opinion," SDA, April 25, 2007, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/006055.html>

<sup>29</sup> Kate McMillan, "Poll: Some US Muslims Seek To Adopt Palestinian Deathstyle," SDA, May 24, 2007, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/006312.html>

<sup>30</sup> Michelle Malkin, "The AP gets the headline wrong UPDATE: The headline morphs!" The Michelle Malkin Blog, May 22, 2007, <http://michellemalkin.com/2007/05/22/the-ap-gets-the-headline-wrong-update-the-headline-morphs/>

## 5.4 Islam and Terrorism

That Kate and the guest bloggers feel there are strong connections between Islam and terrorism is obvious. Despite some on-going debate as to whether these connections are causal or merely highly correlated, many SDA blog entries continue to question the perceived Western-societal assumption that Islam is a religion of peace. Excerpts from a speech by Democrat Rick Santorum on September 12, 2006, stressed the importance of acknowledging the severity of the threat posed by the Iranian regime and other fundamentalists.<sup>31</sup> On April 2, 2007, Kate provided another update on the battle for southern Thailand raging between Islamic separatists and the Thai government.<sup>32</sup> With a death toll of 2,100, it was at the time “the bloodiest conflict in southeast Asia.”<sup>33</sup> In June 2006 the SDA community was neither surprised by the arrests of 12 Muslims for plotting to blow up parliament and kill the Prime Minister of Canada, nor by media attempts to characterize the would-be terrorists as representing a “broad strata of society”<sup>34</sup> in a perceived attempt to hide the fact that they were all, in fact, Muslims. In subsequent posts Kate repeated the phrase “broad strata of society” to mock the media. In early August of 2006, when British authorities detained 21 individuals with suspected links to al-Qaeda, the blog entry was entitled “Another Broad Strata Gang Apprehended.”<sup>35</sup> Later that month when a German engineering student, Youssef Muhammad, was arrested for attempting to blow up a train the entry was titled “Another Deprived Youth From The Broad Strata Of Society.”<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Kate McMillan, “Rick Santorum,” SDA, September 12, 2006, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/004599.html>

<sup>32</sup> Kate McMillan, “This is a downward spiral,” SDA, April 2, 2007, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/005892.html>

<sup>33</sup> Michael Sheridan, “Thousands die in Thai shadow war,” *Times Online*, March 25, 2007, <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/asia/article1563400.ece>

<sup>34</sup> Kate McMillan, “Terror Cell Apprehended – Continued,” SDA, June 4, 2006, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/004072.html>

<sup>35</sup> Kate McMillan, “Another Broad Strata Gang Apprehended,” SDA, August 10, 2006, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/004424.html>

<sup>36</sup> Kate McMillan, “Another Deprived Youth From The Broad Strata Of Society,” SDA, August 22, 2006, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/004480.html>

## 5.5 Islam and Saudi Arabia

To what extent is the spread of Islamic terrorism blamed on Saudi Arabia? As with Steyn's book, the SDA community thinks Saudi Arabia is playing an important role, as are other Muslim nations. Entries regarding Saudi Arabia note their policy of lashing women caught in public without a male escort,<sup>37</sup> and their policy of preventing non-Muslims from buying water during certain hours of the day.<sup>38</sup> Conservatives claim that these policies, coupled with the decision to evict female Canadian teachers from an Education Fair because they were women,<sup>39</sup> make it seem hardly surprising that, with an increase in Saudi funding in the area, we have seen an upsurge in fundamentalist and terrorist activities in the Balkans.<sup>40</sup> Nor do conservatives find it surprising that the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), which has received considerable amounts of money from Saudi Arabians, has been able to open up new chapters across America despite income from membership dues declining drastically.<sup>41</sup> In a characteristically blunt post after a foiled car bombing in London, Kate claimed that:

Islamic extremism has been imported to Britain, and is promoted and financed by foreign interests. The individuals recruited to carry them [*sic*] out are mere delivery agents, their citizenship irrelevant. The London train bombings and this event (should early suspicions be confirmed) are about as 'home grown' as a date palm taking root in a London greenhouse.<sup>42</sup>

On August 6, 2007, Kate posted a lengthy excerpt from *America Alone* in which Steyn discussed the writing of *Alms for Jihad: Charity and Terrorism in the*

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<sup>37</sup> Cjunk, "That'll Teach Her," SDA, March 6, 2007, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/005707.html>

<sup>38</sup> Jaeger, "Just another day in Saudi Arabia," SDA, September 30, 2007, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/007140.html>

<sup>39</sup> Kate McMillan, "Religious Police Evict Canadian Women From Saudi Education Fair," SDA, May 9, 2007, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/006177.html>

<sup>40</sup> Kate McMillan, "Wahhabism In The Balkans," SDA, May 6, 2007, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/006153.html>

<sup>41</sup> Sean, "Not a CAIR in the world," SDA, June 21, 2007, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/006529.html>

<sup>42</sup> Kate McMillan, "Piccadilly Bloodbath Averted," SDA, June 29, 2007, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/006568.html>

*Islamic World*, a publication cancelled by the Cambridge University Press after a Saudi banker threatened to sue for libel.<sup>43</sup> This incident is one small part of a global battle over the written word waged between Muslims and the Western political right.

## 5.6 Multiculturalism

I will now turn to that side of the terrorist coin over which the West is seen as having more control: multiculturalism, a common punching bag for conservative commentators. Both in *America Alone*<sup>44</sup> and on April 12, 2006,<sup>45</sup> Steyn and Kate quote the words of James C. Bennett, president of and contributor to the website Albion's Seedlings, whose December 2005 article "Some Thoughts on Assimilation" started off by stating "Democracy, Immigration, Multiculturalism—Pick Any Two."<sup>46</sup> Central to the conservative critiques of multicultural policies is the belief that Western society is objectively superior to other cultures, as evidenced by global patterns of immigration and democratic participation.<sup>47</sup> As those on the political right see it, multiculturalism is inextricably linked to ethical relativism, because it allegedly asserts that all cultural traditions are different but equal. Conservatives claim that commentators on the left are unwilling to declare that Western culture is superior to Islamic culture. Our traditions of diversity of thought, freedom of speech, and individual liberty are seen as distinct from and better than Islamic traditions. In a post entitled "The Paradox of Multiculturalism," Kate provided a link to an article by French philosopher Pascal Brunckner arguing just that. She then asks her leftist readers and critics—known as "trolls" amongst the regular SDA fan base—"if it is indeed true that we have no moral authority to judge other cultures, on what basis do

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<sup>43</sup> Kate McMillan, "Sued Into Silence," SDA, August 6, 2007, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/006777.html>

<sup>44</sup> Mark Steyn, *America Alone: The End Of The World As We Know It* (Regnery Publishing, 2006), 202.

<sup>45</sup> Kate McMillan, "Democracy, Immigration, Multiculturalism," SDA, April 12, 2006, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/003796.html>

<sup>46</sup> James C. Bennett, "Some Thoughts on Assimilation," *Albion's Seedlings*, December 12, 2005, <http://anglosphere.com/weblog/archives/000188.html>

<sup>47</sup> Mark Steyn, *America Alone: The End Of The World As We Know It* (Regnery Publishing, 2006), 203.



you defend recognition of the 'refugee' seeking safe harbor on our shores?"<sup>48</sup> A post from April of 2007 goes further by featuring a speech entitled "The Challenge of Relativism" by Pastor John Piper, which claims that the end result of policies promoting ethical relativism is the moral degeneration and decline of Western society.<sup>49</sup> Excerpts from a 2001 speech given by Dnesh D'Souza entitled "Multiculturalism: Fact or Threat?" were provided in December of 2006, with Kate calling it a personal "ideological anchoring point."<sup>50</sup> In the speech D'Souza passionately argued that Western Civilization has produced much more of value than others, not because of imperialism or oppression, but because of the emancipating ideology of individual liberty, which was the driving force behind Britain and America being the first societies willing to lose lives and money to end other people's slavery.

Multicultural policies are accused of bringing many negative consequences, such as rampant racism, sexism, and religious fundamentalism being imported wholesale from other countries.<sup>51</sup> Moreover, these effects are thought to be largely unnoticed by mainstream society, both in Canada and abroad. This perceived lack of awareness is summed up nicely by a recurring title for posts regarding multicultural issues at SDA: "When the concept of 'multiculturalism' was introduced to Canadians, most assumed it meant more pavilions at Folkfest,"<sup>52</sup> meaning we are getting much more than we bargained for though we have not realized it yet.<sup>53</sup> Kate extends this observation to all Western

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<sup>48</sup> Kate McMillan, "The Paradox Of Multiculturalism," SDA, February 22, 2007, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/005621.html>

<sup>49</sup> Kate McMillan, "The Challenge of Relativism," SDA, April 29, 2007, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/006060.html>

<sup>50</sup> Kate McMillan, "Thank God my granddaddy got on that boat." SDA, December 9, 2006, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/005126.html>

<sup>51</sup> Kate McMillan, "Inbox: 'Incoming!'" SDA, April 25, 2007, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/006052.html>

<sup>52</sup> Kate McMillan, "Inside the Scarborough South West Liberal Nomination Race," SDA, March 28, 2007, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/005861.html>

<sup>53</sup> Kate McMillan, "Should outsiders be telling African women what initiation practices are acceptable?" SDA, November 30, 2007, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/007529.html>; Kate McMillan, "Free to choose your belonging," SDA, April 10, 2008, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/008458.html>

countries,<sup>54</sup> but most dramatically to Britain because of its once great standing in the world and its recent influx of Muslim immigrants.<sup>55</sup>

When events transpire that do, or should, bring these negative effects to the attention of those on the left the conservatives are quick to point it out. Much attention is paid to situations in which leftists are, or might end up, on the wrong end of Islamic rules. Members of the conservative blogging community often shake their heads at what they consider to be the left's bizarre and self-defeating affection for Muslims generally and Palestinians in particular. Such was the case when marchers in Toronto's Gay Pride Parade brandished anti-Israel and Pro-Palestinian placards. "Do these idiots not know what happens to gay people in Islamic states?" asked a conservative blogger from [dustmybroom.com](http://dustmybroom.com).<sup>56</sup> When clashes between Islamic and leftist ideologies move from theoretical to actual, as they did in April 2008 in Bristol after local Muslims successfully had books promoting same-sex marriage removed from two schools, disbelief is exchanged for glee. "Score One For the knuckledraggers" wrote Kate, "Let the games begin!" echoed a commentator.<sup>57</sup>

Again, Kate employs individual stories to illustrate larger tendencies, such as the ramifications of multicultural policies in Britain, Europe, and Canada. An entry on February 23, 2007, featured the story of a man named Doug, who slowly came to feel out of place in his home town of Bristol because of growing numbers of aggressive immigrant Muslims loyal to Islam and not Britain.<sup>58</sup> Likewise, a May 2007 entry featured an article by Christopher Hitchens entitled "Londonistan Calling." The article discusses Hitchens' visit to his North London birthplace, now home for many Muslim women wearing veils and Muslim men, "not ashamed to

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<sup>54</sup> Kate McMillan, "Reader Tips," SDA, March 9, 2008, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/008222.html>

<sup>55</sup> Kate McMillan, "Tony Blair's Britain," SDA, February 3, 2008, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/007967.html>

<sup>56</sup> See Kathy Shaidle, "Remove hate messages from Pride Parade, demands B'nai Brith," The Five Feet of Fury Blog, July 10, 2008; Blazing Cat Fur, "Remove hate messaging from pride parade, B'nai Brith demands, otherwise carry on with the vulgar displays of public nudity," The Blazing Cat Fur Blog, July 9, 2008, <http://blazingcatfur.blogspot.com/2008/07/remove-hate-messaging-from-pride-parade.html>

<sup>57</sup> Kate McMillan, "Score One," SDA, April 8, 2008, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/008445.html>

<sup>58</sup> Kate McMillan, "Why its time to go'," SDA, February 23, 2007, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/005627.html>

speak of conquest and violence.”<sup>59</sup> Further facts cited as evidence of the increasing influence Muslims have over European life include Muhammad being the second most popular boys’ name with the largest growth rate in Britain,<sup>60</sup> and the rise of gay bashings in Oslo.<sup>61</sup>

The Canadian conservative blogging community claims that similar trends are developing in Canada. They point out that in Windsor Ontario at some public elementary schools Arabic is the first language of half the students, and several private Arabic schools have opened.<sup>62</sup> The conservatives also present evidence that the Canadian Islamic Congress in 2004 released a report grading all Canadian Members of Parliament on various issues concerning Muslim Canadians as proof that the Muslims would combine Mosque and Canadian-State if they could.<sup>63</sup>

## 5.7 Islam and Free Speech

Heightening conservative concerns regarding Islam and Islamic terrorism is a perceived culture of political correctness making honest discussions of the threat taboo. This culture has resulted in what the right sees as, at best, denial among the political left and mainstream media or, at worst, wholesale treason regarding the connections between Islam and terrorism.<sup>64</sup> Under the heading, “Diversity Sensitivity Training” Kate provided many links, some of which decried the media’s reluctance to point out the common thread among violence witnessed all across the world. Others wryly noted the lengths to which the RCMP went to prevent offending the Canadian Muslim community prior to the

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<sup>59</sup> Kate McMillan, “The Present Is Another Country,” SDA, May 13, 2007, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/006204.html>

<sup>60</sup> Kate McMillan, “Tony Blair’s Britain,” SDA, December 19, 2007, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/007663.html>

<sup>61</sup> Kate McMillan, “Pim Fortuyn saw all this coming years ago,” SDA, February 1, 2008, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/007949.html>

<sup>62</sup> Kate McMillan, “All They Lack Is The Saudi Funding,” SDA, May 22, 2007, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/006284.html>

<sup>63</sup> Kate McMillan, “Allah Bless Canada,” SDA, December 7, 2007, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/007580.html>

<sup>64</sup> Kate McMillan, “Spirit Of Appeasement,” SDA, April 28, 2008, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/008583.html>

June 2006 terror arrests in Toronto, including providing clean prayer mats in the prison cells and receiving training on how to handle copies of the Qur'an.<sup>65</sup> In other posts regarding the coverage of the Aqsa Parvez murder, the mainstream media were likewise criticised for their unwillingness to discuss the religious overtones of the incident.<sup>66</sup> Conservatives claim that the media and leftists label any attempt to criticize Islam as a whole as hate speech and bigotry.

Conservatives contend that the multicultural path being travelled by Western Europe is one to avoid. To make this argument, accounts from various Western European countries were provided to document the negative impact of their failed immigration policies. For example, in April 2006 a post entitled "Model Of Tolerance" featured an article describing the fear many Dutch residents feel towards their Muslim neighbors in the wake of the Theo van Gogh murder.<sup>67</sup> Posts from May of that year described the plight of Ayaan Hirsi Ali, author of *Infidel* and co-creator of *Submission*<sup>68</sup> with van Gogh, and her political struggle in and eventual departure from the Netherlands.<sup>69</sup> However, as many posts at SDA indicated, Muslim countries are much worse for individual rights and freedoms than their European counterparts. One entry detailed the flight from Pakistan of a blogger critical of Islam,<sup>70</sup> while another drew the reader's attention to a controversy in Sudan involving a British schoolteacher arrested and convicted for the crime of idolatry and "insulting religion" when one of her students named a teddy-bear Muhammad.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Kate McMillan, "Diversity Sensitivity Training," SDA, June 6, 2006, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/004083.html>

<sup>66</sup> Kate McMillan, "The Trouble With Teenagers," SDA, December 13, 2007, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/007625.html>

<sup>67</sup> Kate McMillan, "Model Of Tolerance," SDA, April 18, 2006, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/003847.html>

<sup>68</sup> *Submission* available at: <http://youtube.com/watch?v=V6CakuoCf4>

<sup>69</sup> Kate McMillan, "A Victory For 'Progressive' European Human Rights," SDA, May 3, 2006, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/003935.html>; Kate McMillan, "An Islamist Victory In The Netherlands," SDA, May 18, 2006, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/003997.html>

<sup>70</sup> Kathy Shaidle, "Ex-Muslim blogger seeks refugee status in Canada," SDA, September 25, 2006, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/004689.html>

<sup>71</sup> Kate McMillan, "Echoes Of The Great Republican Riots Of 1901," SDA, November 30, 2007, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/007528.html>

“Stop Calling Them Violent And You Won’t Get Hurt” was the title of an October 2006 entry discussing the violence after the Danish cartoons publication.<sup>72</sup> “Silence Wikipedia! WE KEEL YOU!” was the title from a February 2008 post documenting a petition and threats to Wikipedia for displaying depictions of the Prophet Muhammad on its page about him, a petition for the removal of which garnered over 100,000 signatures.<sup>73</sup> In March of 2008 the Dutch parliamentarian Geert Wilders’s controversial short film *Fitna*—an Arabic term for “turbulent reform”—was released, in which he alleges a desperate need to reform rampant Islamic fundamentalism. The film was released on Liveleak.com, but was subsequently temporarily removed due to death threats against the Liveleak staff,<sup>74</sup> though in solidarity it was hosted on other websites in the meantime.<sup>75</sup> Information about the censorship of much less controversial works was also posted, such as the August 2008 decision by Random House to indefinitely postpone the release of Sherry Jones’ novel *The Jewel of Medina*. Although “deliberately and consciously written respectfully,”<sup>76</sup> it traced the life of Muhammad’s child bride A’isha and thus was deemed by Random House to be too controversial for publication. Kate provided a link to the story through a screen-shot of a Google search for “Muslim literary giants” that returned zero results.<sup>77</sup> The conservatives feel these types of reactions to criticism of the Islamic faith are straight out of the Middle Ages. “Escape from the 16<sup>th</sup> Century Doesn’t come easy” was the title of a January 2008 entry detailing the

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<sup>72</sup> Kate McMillan, “Stop Calling Them Violent, And You Won’t Get Hurt,” SDA, October 16, 2006, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/004806.html>

<sup>73</sup> Kate McMillan, “Silence Wikipedia!” SDA, February 10, 2008, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/008010.html>

<sup>74</sup> Kate McMillan, “Fitna, Restored,” SDA, March 31, 2008, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/008391.html>

<sup>75</sup> Kate McMillan, “Fitna (Bumped),” SDA, March 28, 2008, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/008360.html>

<sup>76</sup> Edith Honan, “Random House pulls novel on Islam, fears violence,” *Reuters*, August 7, 2008, <http://www.reuters.com/article/newsOne/idUSN0736008820080807>

<sup>77</sup> Kate McMillan, “The Jewel Of Medina,” SDA, August 8, 2008, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/009266.html>

imprisonment and death sentence imposed on an Afghan journalism student whose brother criticized tribal leaders.<sup>78</sup>

## 5.8 Double Standards

The political right views the task of raising awareness of the threat of Islamic terrorism as key to avoiding the destruction of Western traditions. Because of this, any attempt to curtail the conservative's critique only makes conservatives more convinced of its necessity. They see capitulating to demands for "respect" as submission. In their view, a dangerous double standard exists in which Muslims are free to vocalize their worldview—that treats non-Muslims, women, and homosexuals as unequal—while conservatives are not free to vocalize their alternatives.

When the Bishop of Rochester made the mistake of claiming that some parts of Muslim dominated Britain are "no-go" zones for non-Muslims, various Muslim leaders demanded an apology for such outrageous claims. Kate saw this as another example of Muslims having it both ways.<sup>79</sup> In a similar vein, it seems no one thought of filing a human rights complaint when a very alarmed Muslim started screaming obscenities about infidels on an Air Canada flight to London in December of 2007.<sup>80</sup> The conservatives feel "hate crime" is a charge reserved for offences committed by whites and other non-minorities, a double standard perpetuated by both the mainstream media and society.

Because of this perceived double standard, no one in the conservative blogosphere was surprised when police charged Pace University student Stanislav Shmulevich<sup>81</sup> with a hate crime when he stole university copies of the

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<sup>78</sup> Kate McMillan, "Escape From the 16th Century," SDA, January 28, 2008, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/007922.html>

<sup>79</sup> Kate McMillan, "Tony Blair's Britain," SDA, January 8, 2008, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/007782.html>

<sup>80</sup> Kate McMillan, "I Smell A Human Rights Complaint Coming On," SDA, December 14, 2007, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/007633.html>

<sup>81</sup> Andrew Mytelka, "Student Arrested in Koran-in-Toilet Incidents at Pace U.," *Chronicle.com*, July 28, 2007, <http://chronicle.com/news/article/2761/student-arrested-in-koran-in-toilet-incidents-at-pace-u>

Qur'an and threw them in campus toilets.<sup>82</sup> The conservatives quickly contrasted this incident with Andres Serrano's 1987 piece "Piss Christ," which won an Award in the Visual Arts competition for submerging a cross in urine.<sup>83</sup> On August 5, 2007, shortly after news of the Shmulevich story broke, Kate posted a political cartoon depicting two toilets, one with a Holy Bible in it and one with a Qur'an. Above the first was hung a sign reading "ART," while the second had the words "HATE cRiME" scrawled above it.<sup>84</sup> Conservatives see double standards as running deep and getting worse, with Muslim-only swim periods at local pools becoming common in Britain,<sup>85</sup> and the Human Rights Commissions in Canada rarely, if ever, investigating discrimination perpetrated by Muslims.<sup>86</sup>

## 5.9 Concessions

Like Steyn, Kate feels a central component of the threat posed by Islamic terrorism is a distinct lack of Western will. This lack of will manifests as a reluctance to take pride in past Western accomplishments and ideals because of their negative impact on some cultures. Conservatives see such concessions as cumulatively paving the way for the decline of Western Civilization.

Often these concessions have nothing directly to do with Islam. When the City of Vancouver started to consider changing its coat of arms because it features Caucasian males, Kate quipped that the city was "ensuring that history properly recognizes the contributions made by disabled lesbian lumberjacks of colour."<sup>87</sup> Conservatives see debates about allowing Hutterites to get drivers licences without photographs because having a picture taken would violate their

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<sup>82</sup> Kate McMillan, "Someone Call The ACLU," SDA, July 29, 2007, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/006740.html>

<sup>83</sup> See [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Piss\\_Christ](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Piss_Christ)

<sup>84</sup> Kate McMillan, "Indeed," SDA, August 5, 2007, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/006778.html>

<sup>85</sup> Kate McMillan, "Tony Blair's Britain," SDA, April 13, 2008, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/008475.html>

<sup>86</sup> Kate McMillan, "Return Fire," SDA, April 15, 2008, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/008488.html>

<sup>87</sup> Kate McMillan, "Ethnic Cleansing At Vancouver City Hall," SDA, July 19, 2006, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/004311.html>

religious beliefs,<sup>88</sup> and leaked memos from the CBC urging reporters to avoid using terms such as “terrorist” for fear of offending people<sup>89</sup> as part of the same downward cycle. So too are claims that Ryerson University’s so called “multi-faith room” has been permanently booked by Muslim students,<sup>90</sup> and revelations that Canadian Muslim men are receiving social benefits for multiple wives.<sup>91</sup>

Kate has posted many other alleged examples of Western concessions to Islam. These include: the Australian Government’s unwillingness to condemn Sheik Taj el-Din al-Hilaly for his remarks that scantily clad women invite rape;<sup>92</sup> the use of riot police in Brussels to suppress peaceful protests against the creeping “Islamification” of Europe;<sup>93</sup> hesitance to teach lessons about the Holocaust in British schools with significant numbers of Muslim students;<sup>94</sup> and the unwillingness of the BBC to produce a story about Private Johnson Beharry, Victoria Cross recipient, because it would portray the Iraq war in “too positive” a light.<sup>95</sup>

In fact, the moral decline of Britain into ethically relative mush is a very frequent topic at SDA. Entries discussing it are usually entitled “Tony Blair’s Britain, Where the foxes caper unmolested, the government packs your school lunch and [link to story documenting the self inflicted wounds of a once great nation].” This title once again articulates the conservative perception of a link between the lack of a will to dominate the less powerful and government provisions of basic needs, as described in *America Alone*. “Tony Blair’s Britain...” was the title when it was discovered that some British schools made teachers

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<sup>88</sup> Kate McMillan, “The Can Opens,” SDA, May 9, 2006, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/003969.html>

<sup>89</sup> Kate McMillan, “Irony At 11,” SDA, June 6, 2006, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/004088.html>

<sup>90</sup> Kate McMillan, “Unifaith At Ryerson,” SDA, November 23, 2006, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/005018.html>

<sup>91</sup> Kate McMillan, “If You Build It, They Will Come,” SDA, February 8, 2008, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/008000.html>

<sup>92</sup> Kate McMillan, “Failing The Test,” SDA, November 7, 2006, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/004935.html>

<sup>93</sup> Kate McMillan, “Free Speech In Europe’s Muslim-Controlled Capital,” SDA, September 12, 2007, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/007017.html>

<sup>94</sup> Kate McMillan, “First They Came For The Three Little Pigs....” SDA, April 2, 2007, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/005899.html>

<sup>95</sup> Kate McMillan, “Why Not Pull The Plug And Pipe In Al Jazeera?” SDA, April 9, 2007, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/005943.html>



wear Islamic dress for a Muslim festival,<sup>96</sup> that some hospitals are making overworked nurses turn the beds of Muslim patients towards Mecca five times a day,<sup>97</sup> and that the city of Oxford is being subjected to Muslim calls to prayer over loudspeakers.<sup>98</sup> It was also the title when the British Government decided to refuse to include references to pigs in various aspects of its operations for fear of offending Muslims,<sup>99</sup> and when the media discovered school curricula that refer to British history as “morally ambiguous.”<sup>100</sup> Further, welfare payments to families with multiple wives,<sup>101</sup> the Archbishop of Canterbury’s assertion that the practice of Shari’ah law in the UK is “unavoidable,”<sup>102</sup> and British police officer’s who either stop Christians from spreading their message in Muslim neighbourhoods<sup>103</sup> or are kept off the force because of “intimidating” tattoos featuring the word ENGLAND,<sup>104</sup> are all signs of a crumbling will. When prominent artists such as Grayson Perry admit they are unwilling to criticize Islam out of fear for their safety,<sup>105</sup> and new regulations prohibit truck drivers from driving more than 31 miles without a rest, Kate’s response is “My Dear English Cousins—Churchill should have thrown you to the wolves.”<sup>106</sup>

Conservatives think that Muslim terrorists interpret these self-inflicted wounds as signs that they are gaining the upper hand. On March 25, 2007,

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<sup>96</sup> Kate McMillan, “Tony Blair’s Britain,” SDA, October 31, 2007, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/007322.html>

<sup>97</sup> Kate McMillan, “Tony Blair’s Britain,” SDA, December 4, 2007, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/007560.html>

<sup>98</sup> Kate McMillan, “Tony Blair’s Britain,” SDA, December 31, 2007, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/007732.html>

<sup>99</sup> Kate McMillan, “Tony Blair’s Britain,” SDA, January 23, 2008, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/007892.html>

<sup>100</sup> Kate McMillan, “Tony Blair’s Britain,” SDA, February 1, 2008, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/007951.html>

<sup>101</sup> Kate McMillan, “Tony Blair’s Britain,” SDA, February 3, 2008, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/007967.html>

<sup>102</sup> Kate McMillan, “Tony Blair’s Britain,” SDA, February 7, 2008, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/007996.html>

<sup>103</sup> Kate McMillan, “Tony Blair’s Britain,” SDA, June 2, 2008, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/008818.html>

<sup>104</sup> Kate McMillan, “Tony Blair’s Britain,” SDA, March 23, 2008, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/008327.html>

<sup>105</sup> Kate McMillan, “If Only Popes Wore Machetes,” SDA, January 10, 2008, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/007802.html>

<sup>106</sup> Kate McMillan, “To My Dear English Cousins,” SDA, April 3, 2008, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/008410.html>

Kate's only post was an excerpt from a recent speech by Bernard Lewis. In it Lewis argued that Osama bin Laden and his ilk see themselves as winning the centuries old battle between the West and Islam. Bernard Lewis and the conservatives see this perception of Western inferiority among Osama bin Laden and his followers as due to the dislike of aggression displayed by Western powers,<sup>107</sup> a self-hatred and guilt that amounts to nothing less than "Surrendering The Enlightenment."<sup>108</sup> "Civilizations Die By suicide" claimed a June 5, 2008 entry documenting the removal of four British Columbian murals in the provincial legislature, commemorating the Labour, Justice, Courage, and Enterprise of British settlers. Kate concluded the post by saying "unconfirmed sources indicate that consideration is being given to replacing the murals with depictions of slavery, torture and ritual human sacrifice from early American 'civilizations' that eventually succumbed to oppressive European influences such as 'mathematics', 'written language', and 'the wheel'."<sup>109</sup>

## 5.10 Civil War

At its zenith the Canadian conservative blogosphere's dystopian predictions of the West's future have Muslims gaining control of Western Europe, though whether that takeover will be peaceful or violent depends on whether the non-Muslim locals are willing to accept their status as "dhimmis," a term for non-Muslims under Shari'ah law who are subjected to extra taxes. The general sense on the right is that at some point—though potentially too late—resistance to the creeping Islamification of Europe will result in a backlash and even civil war. Blog entries documenting tensions symptomatic of such eventualities are common.

Kate cited public support for withdrawal from the Iraq war in the wake of terrorist attacks in Britain and Spain as evidence of the weakening resolve of Western nations, support thought to encourage more attacks because defeatism

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<sup>107</sup> Kate McMillan, "My topic this evening is Europe and Islam'," SDA, March 25, 2007, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/005838.html>

<sup>108</sup> Kate McMillan, "Surrendering The Enlightenment," SDA, November 4, 2006, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/004921.html>

<sup>109</sup> Kate McMillan, "Civilizations Die," SDA, June 5, 2008, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/008846.html>

breeds defeat.<sup>110</sup> Other bloggers at SDA pointed to Rioting in Brussels<sup>111</sup> and France<sup>112</sup> by mostly Muslim youth in the fall of 2006 as another sign of things to come. Even in countries such as Spain, where accounts indicate people are starting to acknowledge the threat posed by a massive influx of Muslim immigrants, the conservatives claim no one is sure what to do about it.<sup>113</sup> A guest post by Cjunk in January of 2008 introduced excerpts from a couple of familiar sounding news stories describing recent statements by UK Bishop Nazir-Ali discussing the existence and rise of “no-go” Muslim controlled neighbourhoods and the outrage and indignation of the Muslim Council of Britain at such claims. Cjunk wondered “at what point does one awake to find the house on fire... but awakes too late to flee?”<sup>114</sup> Cjunk also posted information in February of 2008 documenting violence surrounding the re-publication of the Muhammad cartoons.<sup>115</sup>

With these signs of civil war in mind, is it any surprise, asked Kate, that two thirds of British residents fear immigrant violence?<sup>116</sup> Footage of an anti-British Muslim protest that ended with police being surrounded by Muslims when the police attempted to stop a man from broadcasting his verbal attacks on “Kaffirs”—an Islamic pejorative for unbeliever—over a loudspeaker is pointed to as the answer.<sup>117</sup> The SDA community sees similar signs of civil unrest in Canada too, as a May 24, 2008 post linking to news stories about a brawl

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<sup>110</sup> Kate McMillan, “The More Things Don’t Change,” SDA, July 7, 2007, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/006609.html>

<sup>111</sup> Jaeger, “Ramadan Rioting in Brussels?” SDA, September 26, 2006, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/004697.html>

<sup>112</sup> Jaeger, “The Eurabian Civil War,” SDA, October 5, 2006, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/004751.html>

<sup>113</sup> Kate McMillan, “Come to think of it, things are really crazy here in Europe!,” SDA, July, 9, 2007, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/006616.html>

<sup>114</sup> Cjunk, “Europe: House on Fire,” SDA, January 24, 2008, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/007900.html>

<sup>115</sup> Cjunk, “History,” SDA, February 17, 2008, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/008068.html>; Cjunk, “The Little Country That Could,” SDA, February 18, 2008, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/008076.html>

<sup>116</sup> Kate McMillan, “Tony Blair’s Britain,” SDA, April 18, 2008, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/008513.html>

<sup>117</sup> Kate McMillan, “Tony Blair’s Britain,” SDA, May 18, 2008, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/008710.html>

between Kurds and Turks in Edmonton attests.<sup>118</sup> The August 2008 riot in Montreal resulting from the shooting death of a “youth” from an “ethnic neighbourhood”—non-descript and thus inoffensive terms the SDA community couldn’t help but notice the mainstream media used, though in this case Muslims were not involved—was also seen as a result of liberal policies towards multiculturalism and a general soft-on-crime attitude.<sup>119</sup>

The conservative logic of looming civil unrest is simple: we in the West are turning ourselves into wimps and risk becoming extinct. Government welfare programs have turned ours into a hedonistic culture focused only on the present. As a result we are opening our borders and tough immigrants, many of them Muslim with a strong will to power and tendency to have large families, are being imported. Suddenly, claim the conservatives, cherished values like freedom of speech and equality of the sexes are becoming less popular amongst the general population. An April 27, 2007 entry entitled “The Children Are Our Future” provided links to three stories indicative of this trend. The first described the disciplining of a teacher for attempting to discipline her students. The second told of the removal of a 400 foot-long mural in a Los Angeles high school depicting the enslavement and genocide of North America’s native population, and the third was a video showing a twelve-year-old Pakistani Muslim severing the head of an infidel.<sup>120</sup>

The belief that there is a potential for civil war between Muslims and Westerners is widespread in the conservative blogging community. Two of the most popular conservative bloggers next to Kate, Kathy Shaidle and Ezra Levant, have both touched on the theme of civil war between Muslims and non-Muslims. In July of 2008, Ezra remarked that he believes many people think it is “better to chase after some ageing, impotent Nazis denying the last Holocaust, than the

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<sup>118</sup> Kate McMillan, “Feel The Diversity,” SDA, May 24, 2008, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/008758.html>

<sup>119</sup> Kate McMillan, “Montreal,” SDA, August 11, 2008, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/009278.html>

<sup>120</sup> Kate McMillan, “The Children Are Our Future,” SDA, April 27, 2007, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/006077.html>

young, violent Muslim radicals planning the next one.”<sup>121</sup> The same month Kathy Shaidle wrote “remember: radical Muslims are not the ‘new Jews.’ They are the ‘new Nazis.’ ... But if you don’t speak up, **the blood of hundreds or thousands of your fellow Canadians will one day be on your hands** [emphasis in original].”<sup>122</sup>

## 5.11 Will

The intent of predictions of civil unrest and even war is to raise awareness and fight inaction. Kate, Steyn, and other conservatives do have a prescription to cure what ails the West: take pride in who we are and what we do, do not wallow in regret over our past transgressions, and be willing to kick some terrorist ass. For some time SDA’s comment-thread subtitle stated “Less Forest Gump. More Team America.” Kate does not understand the current trend of government apologies for past wrongs,<sup>123</sup> and thinks that people who perceive modern Western society as anything but the zenith of human achievement need to spend a little time in another era or place to get a sense of what real hardship and oppression feel like.<sup>124</sup>

In immediate, specific and practical terms, actions to counter Western Civilization’s downward slide include admitting that Muslims are more likely to be terrorists and start profiling accordingly during flights.<sup>125</sup> In a more general sense, it means fostering an environment in which it is acceptable to question the basic tenants of Islam, or at least its current manifestation, before it is too late.<sup>126</sup> When brave people actually question Islam, such as the Swedish immigration minister

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<sup>121</sup> Ezra Levant, “The tale of two hate crimes,” The Ezra Levant Blog, July 24, 2007, <http://ezralevant.com/2008/07/the-tale-of-two-hate-crimes.html>

<sup>122</sup> Kathy Shaidle, “Just another day in Canada’s multicultural paradise,” The Five Feet of Fury Blog, July 23, 2008, <http://www.fivefeetoffury.com/:entry:fivefeet-2008-07-23-0004/>

<sup>123</sup> Kate McMillan, “I Don’t Get It Either,” SDA, April 26, 2006, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/003901.html>

<sup>124</sup> Kate McMillan, “A modest proposal for curing a whiny nation’,” SDA, February 14, 2008, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/008046.html>

<sup>125</sup> Kate McMillan, “The Jackbooted Left Wight Fascist State Marches Forward,” SDA, August 15, 2006, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/004442.html>

<sup>126</sup> Kate McMillan, “Oriana Fallaci,” SDA, September 15, 2006, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/004619.html>

Nyamko Sabuni, who wanted to ban schoolgirls from wearing the Muslim hijab and impose mandatory gynaecological inspections for genital mutilation, Kate applauds them.<sup>127</sup> Kate also celebrates the killing of anti-Western forces in Iraq with “Grin” milestones, such as the 20,000<sup>th</sup> death sometime on December 29, 2007.<sup>128</sup> On this occasion, she stated that,

the CIA could waterboard ‘Mahmoud’ [Ahmadinejad] once a week, and western democracies would be nowhere in danger of becoming ‘no better than the enemy’ or ‘losing our soul’ or other such nonsense. Some of the tactics employed during WW2 in defeating the Axis fell rather short of pleasure thresholds, but the victors emerged from the morass as the ‘greatest generation’ nonetheless. (Of course, give it time. Another 20 years and we could well be sending reparations and ‘never again’ mea culpas to the descendants of Hiroshima).<sup>129</sup>

Kate similarly delights at the election of pro-American politicians in other countries, such as Berlusconi in Italy<sup>130</sup> or Boris Johnson in London.<sup>131</sup> She also approved of former UN ambassador John Bolton’s suggestion to reduce the United Nations’ offices by 10 floors and his suggestion that the U.S. pre-emptively strike Iran.<sup>132</sup>

A series of SDA posts entitled “Frankly, My Dear,” perfectly sums up Kate’s attitude towards offending political views: “Frankly, My Dear is a new category here at SDA. Inspired by the 1939 movie *Gone With The Wind*, that if subjected to the same standards as classic cartoons, would be unavailable for viewing today.”<sup>133</sup> The posts each feature an animated cartoon, some critical of

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<sup>127</sup> Kate McMillan, “Nyamko Sabuni,” SDA, October 25, 2006, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/004850.html>

<sup>128</sup> Kate McMillan, “Grin Milestone,” SDA, December 29, 2007, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/007725.html>

<sup>129</sup> Kate McMillan, “Bobbing For Atta,” SDA, March 11, 2008, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/008236.html>

<sup>130</sup> Kate McMillan, “Berlusconi Is Back,” SDA, April 15, 2008, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/008489.html>

<sup>131</sup> Kate McMillan, “Tony Blair’s... Eh What?” SDA, May 2, 2008, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/008614.html>

<sup>132</sup> Kate McMillan, “He Was Right About Losing 10 Floors Off The UN, Too.” SDA, May 6, 2008, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/008640.html>

<sup>133</sup> Kate McMillan, “Frankly, My Dear,” SDA, April 13, 2008, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/008474.html>

Native Americans<sup>134</sup> or Nazi Germans,<sup>135</sup> that nonetheless had enough truth to them to have been created in the first place. While it may at first appear that posting such images is a fairly innocent or childish act designed to mock the heightened sensitivity of twenty-first century society, it is actually a shot across the bow of leftists and Islamists engaged in what conservatives perceive as perpetuating politically-correct censorship in Canada.

## 5.12 Community Involvement

Bloggers are only as influential as their readers are numerous and loyal. Readers in the Canadian conservative blogosphere play a large role in creating and disseminating concerns about Islamic terrorism. During my content analysis, the bloggers were often either calling their readers into action, or the readers were bringing important pieces of information to the bloggers' attention. Kate often encourages her readers to write letters about any worthy conservative cause to any deserving recipient. When the federal NDP exposed the Conservative party's secret anti-Taliban negotiations with the United Arab Emirates, Kate was quick to give out both Jack Layton and Libby Davies' contact information,<sup>136</sup> just as she was happy to publicize information from her readers regarding an upcoming counter anti-war protest.<sup>137</sup>

In August of 2007, a Windsor Ontario man on his way to work saw a billboard featuring Hezbollah leader Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah in a favourable light. Being a reader of the conservative blog Celestial Junk, he snapped a picture and sent it to blogger CJunk who immediately posted it.<sup>138</sup> Kate then reposted it to her much bigger audience, many of whom wasted no time

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<sup>134</sup> Kate McMillan, "Frankly, My Dear," SDA, May 4, 2008, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/008578.html>

<sup>135</sup> Kate McMillan, "Frankly, My Dear," SDA, August 10, 2008, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/009236.html>

<sup>136</sup> Kate McMillan, "An astonishing act of sabotage," SDA, April 21, 2007, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/006031.html>

<sup>137</sup> Kate McMillan, "Coming Events: Counter Protest In Montreal," SDA, March 15, 2007, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/005756.html>

<sup>138</sup> CJunk, "Terrorists - On Billboards - In Canada," The Celestial Junk Blog, August 11, 2007, <http://cjunk.blogspot.com/2007/08/terrorists-on-billboards-in-canada.html>

contacting city officials who took the billboard down the next day.<sup>139</sup> In early February of 2008, Kate re-posted information from mypetjawa.mu.nu regarding a Taliban website re-routed through Brampton Ontario. It displayed fake news stories of Canadian soldiers killing and torturing Afghani locals. The SDA community immediately set about contacting the service providers, who quickly removed the website.<sup>140</sup> Similarly, when a SDA fan and Facebook-surfer came across a group named “Ezra Levant is a piece of shit JEW,” he mentioned it to Kate. She promptly posted a screen-capture listing the group’s members, most of whom were from Calgary, one who was from Lebanon, and all were of Middle Eastern descent.<sup>141</sup> One of the group members, Khalil Jeha, found her name plastered across the conservative blogosphere and decided to write threatening emails to the dustmybroom.com bloggers who had also posted the screen-capture. The dustmybroom.com bloggers promptly published the threatening letters, with Kate and others following suite, as the conservative blogosphere intensified its mockery of Khalil. Kate’s entry on the subject read “Khalil Jeha, We’re Gonna Make You Famous!”<sup>142</sup>

Wisecracks about the threat of Islam are also common in comments by SDA readers, as a spontaneous contest to rename the despised CBC pro-Muslim “propaganda” television series *Little Mosque On The Prairie* shows. Among the most popular suggestions were “Guantanamo Bay Watch,” “Kneel or No Deal,” and “Divorce, Divorce, Divorce Court.”<sup>143</sup> The exchange of personal advice and wisdom regarding ways of perceiving or dealing with Islamic terrorists also is common. Shortly before Christmas in 2007, Kate featured a comment from reader Joe, who stated:

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<sup>139</sup> Kate McMillan, “Heil Hezbollah (bumped),” SDA, August 13, 2007, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/006811.html>

<sup>140</sup> Kate McMillan, “Keep Your Friends Close, And Your Enemies In Brampton,” SDA, February 3, 2008, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/007964.html>

<sup>141</sup> Kate McMillan, “Those Moderate Muslims,” SDA, January 13, 2008, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/007823.html>

<sup>142</sup> Kate McMillan, “Khalil Jeha, We’re Gonna Make You Famous!” SDA, February 25, 2008, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/008131.html>

<sup>143</sup> Kate McMillan, “Mosque Acres,” SDA, January 9, 2007, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/005306.html>



It's not the Muslim's fault. They are but the whet stone being used to hone us that we might actually stand for something and do something and be someone who matters. Don't try to reform them. We must try to reform ourselves and having done so see how quickly they fall. The Islamic faith is one that dwells in fear loathing and ignorance. We only strengthen it when we deal in the same.

At the end of the post, Kate wrote "thank you, Joe. Its comments like this that make the blogging effort worthwhile."<sup>144</sup>

### 5.13 The Claims-Makers' Rhetoric, Part I

Members of the conservative blogosphere appears to be unique in their willingness to question the basic tenants of Islam, and in their claims that Islam could be fundamentally opposed to many aspect of Western Civilization. Richard Jackson, who analysed political discourse regarding Islamic terrorism in journals, articles and books, notes many subjects and themes I too found recurring in the online discourse. Among these themes are the ideas that Islamic terrorism is partially due to the "failure of multiculturalism or the radicalizing influence of foreign Jihadists."<sup>145</sup> However, Jackson also notes that the offline literature and discourse consistently contains "careful qualifications" arguing that Islam is, in fact, a religion of inclusion and peace and that terrorists are distorting its basic tenants.<sup>146</sup> Clearly, the Canadian conservative blogging community is willing to go further with its claims. Mocking references to the "Religion Of ~~Peace~~ Death"<sup>147</sup> and blog entry titles such as "Stop Calling Them Violent And You Won't Get Hurt" are designed to point this out in no uncertain terms, to offend sensibilities, and to draw attention to a condition perceived to be unacceptable and getting worse.

The community at SDA thinks it is equally unacceptable that people continue to deny the correlations between Islam, violence, and intolerance.

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<sup>144</sup> Kate McMillan, "'I vaguely recall a fable'," SDA, December 18, 2007, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/007650.html>

<sup>145</sup> R. Jackson, "Constructing Enemies: 'Islamic Terrorism' in Political and Academic Discourse," *Government and Opposition* 42, No. 3 (2007): 411.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid. 402.

<sup>147</sup> Kate McMillan, "Religion Of ~~Peace~~ Death," SDA, August 15, 2004, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/000678.html>

Edward Said claimed that Islam “is doctrinally as blameless in this regard as any other of the great universal religions,”<sup>148</sup> and many have since echoed his sentiment. Richard Jackson dismisses characterizations of Islam that portray it as any worse than the rest by saying “all religions have texts or traditions that allow a violent (or a pacifist) reading.”<sup>149</sup> Left-of-center discourse regarding terrorism often employs the term “Islamophobia” in reference to negative stereotypes of Islam, a term defined as “hostility toward Islam and Muslims that tends to dehumanize an entire faith, portraying it as fundamentally alien and attributing to it an inherent, essential set of negative traits such as irrationality, intolerance and violence.”<sup>150</sup> This is often how the Canadian conservative blogosphere portrays the connections between Islam and terrorism, but the conservatives deny that their depiction is illogical, as the suffix “phobia” implies.

With the information presented in this chapter in mind, it is now possible to analyze the rhetoric employed by the SDA community in making claims about Islamic terrorism. I will do so with the help of terms used by Joel Best and Randy Lippert in their analyses of claims regarding missing children in the U.S. and Satanism in Canada, respectively. The three key concepts are the rhetorical grounds, warrants, and conclusions at play in this discourse.<sup>151</sup> Grounds can be broken down into definitions, examples, and numeric estimates.<sup>152</sup> Joel Best further broke estimates down into incidence estimates, growth estimates, and range claims.<sup>153</sup>

### 5.13.1 Definitions

No clear definition of Islamic terrorism emerged during my content analysis. Despite being a very frequent topic of blog entries and comments, there

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<sup>148</sup> Ibid. lvi.

<sup>149</sup> R. Jackson, “Constructing Enemies: ‘Islamic Terrorism’ in Political and Academic Discourse,” *Government and Opposition* 42, No. 3 (2007): 415.

<sup>150</sup> J. Hollar & J. Naureckas, “Smearcasting: How Islamophobes spread Fear, Bigotry and Misinformation,” *Fairness & Accuracy In Reporting*, October 2008, [http://www.smearcasting.com/pdf/FAIR\\_Smearcasting\\_Final.pdf](http://www.smearcasting.com/pdf/FAIR_Smearcasting_Final.pdf)

<sup>151</sup> Randy Lippert, “The Construction of Satanism as a Social Problem in Canada,” 424.

<sup>152</sup> Joel Best, “Rhetoric in Claims-Making,” 104.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid. 106–108.

do not appear to be agreed criteria for determining what the phenomenon's boundaries are. Often the conservatives seem to view identified Muslims as representatives of Islam generally, without much discussion of their personal characteristics, country of origin, or the extent to which their actions deviate from "approved" Islamic behaviour. This is why the conservatives can point to both the actions of Jew-hating Muslims in Lebanon,<sup>154</sup> and the slaughter of a Christian bookstore owner in the Middle East,<sup>155</sup> as proof of Islam's tendency to foster violence. This is a common occurrence within the discourse of claims-makers. Best notes that, "most claims-makers preferred an inclusive definition of missing children. Some child-search organizations distributed photos of individuals who were in their twenties."<sup>156</sup> Lippert found that "no consistent definition of Satanism emerged from the claims about it."<sup>157</sup> Keeping definitions broad or vague allows claims-makers to attribute more examples and bigger estimates of the disliked behaviour to the threat they are trying to raise awareness about. This in turn increases the claims-makers' chances of grabbing the attention of others.

### 5.13.2 Examples

As far as examples are concerned, the Canadian conservative blogosphere frequently tells the "atrocious tales" so common to claims-making activity.<sup>158</sup> They stress the danger posed by their putative threat and recount incident after incident involving either Muslims or the West's unwillingness to stand up to them. Often these incidents are worst-case scenarios, but this too is a common element in claims-makers' rhetoric. Best noted that the missing children claims-makers routinely discussed examples of "stranger abductions," despite the fact that they are the rarest cause of such disappearances.<sup>159</sup> It is perhaps in part because of the blogging community's ability to scour the Internet

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<sup>154</sup> Kate McMillan, "Wrzesnewskyj And Nash - 'Death To Jews'," SDA, August 21, 2006, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/004475.html>

<sup>155</sup> Kate McMillan, "Religion of Peace Greater Understanding Outreach Program," SDA, October 11, 2007, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/007191.html>

<sup>156</sup> Joel Best, "Rhetoric in Claims-Making," 106.

<sup>157</sup> Randy Lippert, "The Construction of Satanism as a Social Problem in Canada," 423.

<sup>158</sup> Weitzer, "The Social Construction of Sex Trafficking," 448.

<sup>159</sup> Joel Best, "Rhetoric in Claims-Making," 107.

in search of examples of Islamic terrorism that the conservatives make them seem more common than they really are.

### 5.13.3 Estimates

The claimed prevalence of a threat falls under the final sub-ground category of “estimates.” Best broke estimates down further into three groups: incidence estimates, growth estimates, and range claims, all of which I found at SDA. Incidence claims include the “number of cases, incidents, or people affected”<sup>160</sup> by the social problem in question. Blog entries at SDA citing public opinion research of Canadian Muslims documenting their support for terrorist attacks in Toronto, research south of the border documenting support for suicide bombings among Muslim-Americans, and research from the Middle-East documenting uncertainty there as to who truly attacked the World-Trade Centres on 9/11, are all examples of incidence estimates.

Best claims that growth estimates are intended to show “that things are getting worse, that the problem is growing and, unless action is taken, there will be further deterioration.”<sup>161</sup> At SDA, dire warnings of the decline of Western Civilization coupled with a steady stream of news stories involving the abnormal, offensive or outright criminal behaviour of some Muslim(s) are the order of the day. Entries documenting the increased support for militant Islam among younger Muslims in Britain, the growing popularity of the name Muhammad in Britain, and entries titled “Baby Boomer” or “The Children are our Future” all serve as growth estimates.

The final type of estimate Joel Best speaks of is the range claim, which seeks to show “that people may be indiscriminately affected, that the problem extends throughout the social structure.”<sup>162</sup> Kate’s posts entitled “When the concept of ‘multiculturalism’ was introduced to Canadians...” fall into this category, as she intends them to emphasize the fact that these problems affect all Canadians.

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<sup>160</sup> Joel Best, “Rhetoric in Claims-Making,” 106.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid. 107.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid. 108.

### 5.13.4 Warrants

Moving on from grounds, warrants are the crucial but often implicit values connecting grounds to, and justifying, conclusions.<sup>163</sup> There is debate within the social constructionist ranks as to how researchers should approach the concept of “values.” Spector and Kitsuse warned against viewing any motive as a causal explanation of behaviour, suggesting that researchers view things like values as putative, just like claims about social problems.<sup>164</sup> Those of a more objectivist persuasion have stressed the importance of considering what people’s interests are, and whose interests benefit from any given social problem, as a means towards better understanding why they act the way they do.<sup>165</sup> Subsequent research indicates that there is often a causal connection between motives and ideology, allowing us to predict who will make claims about what.<sup>166</sup> As such, I will make two points about the implicit values of the conservatives making claims about Islamic terrorism.

First, as other authors have noted, the conflict between the “West” and “Islam” is too often a conflict between Judaeo-Christianity and Islam.<sup>167</sup> Though Kate is not a religious woman, many commentators in the SDA community are Jews or Christians. Their religious affiliations become apparent in the comment threads of various entries on Islam, such as an early-October 2007 series of posts entitled “Fundamentally Flawed.” During a lengthy discussion about the potential for Islam to become less fanatical, several commentators identified themselves as Christians and Jews; there was even one priest.<sup>168</sup> Similarly, an American conservative blog [littlegreenfootballs.com](http://littlegreenfootballs.com), previously quite popular in the SDA community, was attacked once it started devoting as much time to

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<sup>163</sup> Ibid.

<sup>164</sup> Spector & Kitsuse, *Constructing Social Problems*, 91–95.

<sup>165</sup> Goode & Ben-Yehuda, *Moral Panics*, 94.

<sup>166</sup> S. Bockman, “Interest, Ideology, and Claims-Making Activity,” *Sociological Inquiry* 61, No. 4 (1991): 454, 457–458.

<sup>167</sup> D. Celermajer, “If Islam is our other, who are ‘we’?” *Australian Journal of Social Issues* 42, No. 1 (2007): 114.

<sup>168</sup> Apollyon, comment on “Fundamentally Flawed...con’t,” SDA, comment posted October 5, 2007, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/007162.html#c200499>; Joe, comment on “Fundamentally Flawed...con’t,” SDA, comment posted October 6, 2007, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/007162.html#c200580>

criticising Christian creationists as Islamic terrorists.<sup>169</sup> The extent to which the faith of certain members of the conservative blogging community guides their view of Islam is perhaps best illustrated by the final words from a comment Kathy Shaidle once left at SDA: "...Also, the difference between what Christianity teaches and what Islam teaches is that Christianity is true."<sup>170</sup>

Given the existence of a correlation between being a Jew or Christian and being particularly concerned about issues surrounding Islamic terrorism, the observation that Kate is neither is noteworthy. It indicates that religious grounds are far from the only motives at work, a fact made all the clearer on July 10, 2009, when some of her readers criticized Kate for mocking media coverage in Canada of Prime Minister Stephen Harper's acceptance of a communion wafer at a Catholic funeral. As a Protestant, the Prime Minister ostensibly does not believe in transubstantiation; that the wafer is in fact the body of Christ. Kate thought the whole situation was ridiculous, and said as much, calling the wafer a "cracker," for which she was criticized by Kathy Shaidle among others. In response, Kate posted a picture of the Prophet Muhammad under the title "Religions Of Submission [emphasis added],"<sup>171</sup> and commented "If it is now an insult to describe a small wafer as a 'cracker,' then there's a whole row of boxes in my grocery aisle guaranteed to bring some of you to your knees."<sup>172</sup>

### 5.13.5 Conclusions

Despite their warrants differing somewhat, the conclusions offered by Kate and the rest of the community at SDA are very similar. One of the secondary conclusions expressed by the conservative bloggers, a desire for increased will and a tougher stance against potential concessions, is consistent with conservative ideology over the past several decades. Goode and Ben-Yehuda

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<sup>169</sup> Penny, comment on "Farewell, Footballs," SDA, comment posted on April 14, 2009, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/011200.html#c380806>

<sup>170</sup> Kathy Shaidle, comment on "Religions Of Submission," SDA, comment posted July 11, 2009, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/011801.html#c406420>

<sup>171</sup> Kate McMillan, "Religions Of Submission," SDA, July 10, 2009, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/011801.html>

<sup>172</sup> Kate McMillan, comment on "Religions Of Submission," comment posted July 10, 2009, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/011801.html#c406232>

note that in response to highly publicized scuffles between youth “gangs” in Britain during the 1960s, the older, war-hardened generation thought “the problem was that the younger generation had been coddled, indulged, treated with kid gloves; the solution—a tougher parental hand, stricter social control, harsher penalties for transgressions, stiffer fines and jail sentences.”<sup>173</sup>

However, the primary conclusion or goal expressed in conservative discourse is an increased awareness of the threat posed by Islamic terrorism. During the first stage of a claims’ natural history, increased awareness is often the goal,<sup>174</sup> and one Best found among the missing children claims-makers as well.<sup>175</sup> By its very nature the primary weapon of the conservative blogosphere is discourse, which conservatives believe is the key to fending off militant Islam, an ideology that refuses to allow slandering of its Prophet Muhammad. The conservatives’ use of this weapon has brought them into conflict with Canada’s Human Rights Commissions and Tribunals, which, among other things, have a mandate to prevent hate speech in Canada. I will next document the conservative blogosphere’s battle against “politically correct censorship” by discussing its struggle with these institutions.

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<sup>173</sup> Goode & Ben-Yehuda, *Moral Panics*, 26.

<sup>174</sup> Spector & Kitsuse, *Constructing Social Problems*, 142.

<sup>175</sup> Joel Best, “Rhetoric in Claims-Making,” 108.

## **6: THE BATTLE WITH THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSIONS (HRCS)**

### **6.1 Stages 2 through 4 of a Natural History**

Given the importance that the Canadian conservative blogging community places in the right to criticize anything deemed anti-Western, it should come as no surprise that they get extremely upset when attempts are made to censor their criticisms of Islamic fundamentalism and Islamic terrorism, as has recently been the case in Canada. This chapter describes the ideological and legal battle between Canada's Human Rights Acts, Commissions and Tribunals, and the Canadian conservative blogging community.

Spector and Kitsuse suggested that the first stage of a social problem's natural history would culminate in some sort of conflict between the problem's claims-makers and others who "do not use the same values or who have opposite interests in the condition in question."<sup>1</sup> The Canadian Human Rights Commissions' investigation of conservative claims regarding Islamic terrorism is precisely such an event. Of course, the creation of the Commissions, like so many institutions, was probably itself the product of claims-maker activities.<sup>2</sup> The fact that they exist, in part, to deal with allegations of "hate speech" meets a key criterion of the natural history's second stage, which is said to be complete "when complaints about some condition have become domesticated and routinized by some agency that develops a vested interest in doing something about the complaints."<sup>3</sup> The third stage involves the original claims-makers from stage one, in this case the conservative blogging community, focusing their attention on the institution from stage two, in this case the Canadian Human Rights Commission,

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<sup>1</sup> Spector and Kitsuse, *Constructing Social Problems*, 148.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 129.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 151.



and making new claims against that institution.<sup>4</sup> In the fourth and final stage, the claims-makers question the legitimacy of the established institutions and propose alternate mechanisms for resolving the problem(s).<sup>5</sup> As I will explain below, the Canadian conservative blogging communities' claims have followed this trajectory.

I start with a quick overview of these legal institutions and then review two incidents that brought Canadian conservatives before them. The first is Ezra Levant's publication of the *Jyllands-Posten* Muhammad cartoons in the *Western Standard*, and the second is the Canadian Islamic Congress's complaint against *Maclean's* Magazine for publishing an excerpt from Steyn's *America Alone*. The review of these incidents is followed by a discussion of the libel lawsuit launched against Kate and several other bloggers for their attacks on the federal Commission's star plaintiff, Richard Warman. Finally, I discuss the potentially reformative impact the conservative blogging community is having on Canada's Human Rights Acts.

## 6.2 Canadian Human Rights Commissions

The 1977 *Canadian Human Rights Act (CHRA)* established the Canadian Human Rights Commission and Tribunal. The *Act's* purpose was "to extend the laws in Canada that proscribe discrimination" and ensure at the federal level that Canadians are not discriminated against on the basis of "race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, marital status, family status, disability or conviction for an offence for which a pardon has been granted."<sup>6</sup> The Commission investigates complaints and the Tribunal hears cases that the Commission deems warranted. Each province has a similar act and system.

Most of the acts and upwards of 98% of the complaints investigated do not deal with hate speech.<sup>7</sup> They seek to fight discrimination against marginalized

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid. 152–153.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. 153.

<sup>6</sup> *Canadian Human Rights Act*, "Purpose Of Act," [www.efc.ca/pages/law/canada/canada.H-6.part-0.html#1%3Esection%201%3C/a%3E%3C/ul%3E%3Cul%3E%3Cli%3EPurpose,%3Ca%20href=](http://www.efc.ca/pages/law/canada/canada.H-6.part-0.html#1%3Esection%201%3C/a%3E%3C/ul%3E%3Cul%3E%3Cli%3EPurpose,%3Ca%20href=)

<sup>7</sup> Lisa Gregoire, "War Of The Words," *Canadian Lawyer Mag*, <http://www.canadianlawyermag.com/War-of-the-words.html>

citizens who are having trouble securing lodging, employment, equal pay, etc., because of their membership in one or more of the prohibited grounds for discrimination. To ensure that impoverished citizens can access the system the legislation requires the government to bear the costs of the complainant's case, while the respondents pay their own way.<sup>8</sup> Tribunal hearings are less formal than criminal or civil court proceedings to allow "those who appear before it a chance to tell their cases more fully without having to follow strict rules of evidence."<sup>9</sup> Tribunals register their decisions with the Federal Court of Canada. Failure to comply with a tribunal ruling can, and has, resulted in imprisonment.<sup>10</sup>

Section 13(1) of the *CHRA*, section 7(1) of the *British Columbia Human Rights Act*, and section 3(1) of the *Alberta Human Rights Act* deal with the communication of hate messages. Section 13(1) of the federal *Act* states:

It is a discriminatory practice for a person or a group of persons acting in concert to communicate telephonically or to cause to be so communicated, repeatedly, in whole or in part by means of the facilities of a telecommunication undertaking within the legislative authority of Parliament, any matter that is likely to expose a person or persons to hatred or contempt by reason of the fact that that person or those persons are identifiable on the basis of a prohibited ground of discrimination.<sup>11</sup>

Since 2001 the word "telephonically" has been interpreted as applying to Internet communications.<sup>12</sup> Most of the other provinces have very similar sections, with the exception of Ontario. Two of the most criticized aspects of these sections are the fact that the term "likely" is vague and "truth" is not a defence.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Joseph Breaun, "Rights group defends itself," *National Post*, April 5, 2008, [http://www.nationalpost.com/most\\_popular/story.html?id=423135](http://www.nationalpost.com/most_popular/story.html?id=423135)

<sup>9</sup> Canadian Human Rights Tribunal, "About the CHRT," [http://www.chrt-tcdp.gc.ca/about/index\\_e.asp](http://www.chrt-tcdp.gc.ca/about/index_e.asp)

<sup>10</sup> Richard Moon, "Report to the Canadian Human Rights Commission Concerning Section 13 of the *Canadian Human Rights Act* and the Regulation of Hate Speech on the Internet," 5.

<sup>11</sup> *Canadian Human Rights Act*, "Part I – Proscribed Discrimination," <http://www.efc.ca/pages/law/canada/canada.H-6.part-1.html>

<sup>12</sup> Moon, "Report to the Canadian Human Rights Commission," 6.

<sup>13</sup> Kathy Shaidle, "Interview with MP Keith Martin," *The Small Dead Animals: THE ROADKILL DIARIES (SDA) Blog*, February 16, 2008, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/008059.html>; Gregoire, "War Of The Words," <http://www.canadianlawyermag.com/War-of-the-words.html>

While such legislation may violate Canada's *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, entrenched five years after the *CHRA* was enacted, a 1990 *Charter* challenge dealing with section 13 was unsuccessful. In *Canada (Human Rights Commission) v. Taylor*, the Supreme Court ruled four to three that:

as long as the Human Rights Tribunal continues to be well aware of the purpose of s. 13(1) and pays heed to the ardent and extreme nature of feeling described in the phrase 'hatred or contempt,' there is little danger that subjective opinion as to offensiveness will supplant the proper meaning of the section.<sup>14</sup>

According to many right-wing commentators this heed has not been paid, which is why Ezra Levant and *Maclean's* magazine were forced to defend the allegation that they had spread "hatred and contempt."

### **6.3 Ezra Levant and the *Jyllands-Posten* Cartoons Controversy**

Conservative claims to free speech confronted Muslim claims to religious freedom and protection from discrimination during the Muhammad cartoons controversy. It started in September of 2005 in Denmark when the right-of-center newspaper *Jyllands-Posten* discovered that a Danish writer, Kaare Bluitgen, was having trouble finding an illustrator willing to depict the Prophet for a children's book he was writing. Because Islamic culture strongly disapproves of idolatry and depictions of the Prophets, many artists feared negative repercussions and consequently refused the work. In response, *Jyllands-Posten* commissioned several artists who were prepared to depict Muhammad as they perceived him. On September 30, *Jyllands-Posten* printed 12 cartoons, one of which depicted Muhammad wearing a bomb as a headdress.<sup>15</sup> The Danish Muslim community's outrage was immediate, though not immediately violent. A peaceful protest of 5,000 people outside the newspaper's offices in mid-October was among the first public reactions. The situation worsened when the Danish government told

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<sup>14</sup> *Canada (Human Rights Commission) v. Taylor*, [1990] 3 S.C.R. 892. Available at: <http://scc.lexum.umontreal.ca/en/1990/1990rcs3-892/1990rcs3-892.html>

<sup>15</sup> Images available at <http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/7/75/Jyllands-Posten-pg3-article-in-Sept-30-2005-edition-of-KulturWeekend-entitled-Muhammeds-ansigt.png>

ambassadors from almost a dozen Muslim countries that they could not force their free press to apologize, as free speech was sacred in Danish society.<sup>16</sup>

Insulting the Prophet Muhammad is a very serious offence for Muslims. Many Islamic scholars hold that to commit blasphemy is to commit apostasy punishable by death when perpetrated by Muslims, or by at least hatred and contempt when perpetrated by non-believers.<sup>17</sup> The publication of the cartoons coupled with the defiant attitude of the Danish government caused the situation to escalate. By mid-February protests of around 70,000 people in Pakistan resulted in trampling deaths,<sup>18</sup> the Danish and Norwegian embassies in Syria were set on fire,<sup>19</sup> and there were attempted bombings in Denmark and Germany.<sup>20</sup>

In response to the February 2008 discovery and arrest of three men in Denmark who were allegedly plotting to murder one of the cartoonists,<sup>21</sup> several Danish newspapers republished the cartoons.<sup>22</sup> Kate posted a link discussing a subsequent bombing in Copenhagen on February 21.<sup>23</sup> On June 2, 2008 the Danish embassy in Islamabad was bombed.<sup>24</sup> The CBC ran a television news story on the republication but chose to blur the cartoons, much to the dismay of the SDA community, who were not surprised by CBC's action.<sup>25</sup>

The act of publishing or republishing the cartoons became a political

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<sup>16</sup> Times Online, "Timeline: the Muhammad cartoons," February 6, 2006, <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/article725158.ece>

<sup>17</sup> For a collection of commentary on this topic see Shaykh Muhammad S al-Munajjid's "Ruling on one who insults the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him)," fatwa No. 22809, <http://www.islam-qa.com/en/ref/22809>

<sup>18</sup> Times Online, "70,000, gather for violent Pakistan cartoons protest," February 15, 2006, <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/asia/article731005.ece>

<sup>19</sup> CNN World, "Embassies torched in cartoon fury," February 5, 2006, <http://www.cnn.com/2006/WORLD/meast/02/04/syria.cartoon/>

<sup>20</sup> New York Times, "9 arrested by Denmark in reported terror plot – Europe – International Herald Tribune," February 9, 2008, <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/09/05/world/europe/05iht-denmark.2708471.html>

<sup>21</sup> Jyllands-Posten, "Murder plot against Danish cartoonist," December 2, 2008, <http://jp.dk/uknews/article1263133.ece>

<sup>22</sup> Kim McLaughlin, "Danish papers republish Prophet cartoon," *Reuters*, February 13, 2008, <http://uk.reuters.com/article/worldNews/idUKL139371220080213>

<sup>23</sup> Kate McMillan, "Today A Bomb Exploded In Copenhagen," SDA, February 21, 2008, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/008089.html>

<sup>24</sup> Candace Rondeaux, "Car Bomb Hits Danish Mission In Islamabad," *Washington Post Foreign Service*, June 3, 2008, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/06/02/AR2008060200236.html?hpid=topnews>

<sup>25</sup> Kate McMillan, "Indeed," SDA, February 13, 2008, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/008037.html>

litmus test for the media during this controversy. Some media opted not to republish the cartoons in fear of retaliation, or out of respect for Muslim sensibilities. Others published them without apology, either with the purpose of provoking a response, or because they wanted their readers to see what all the fuss was about. Ezra Levant, an Albertan born and educated Jewish lawyer, political pundit, author and conservative blogger claimed to be in the latter camp.<sup>26</sup> Co-founder of the *Western Standard*, a newspaper decidedly to the right-of-center, Ezra approved the printing of the cartoons. He also ran opinion pieces by Canadian Muslims in the same edition of the newspaper, some of whom reported that they did not move to Canada to have Shari'ah law follow them and have Western media submit to Islamic restrictions on expression. Others argued that republishing the cartoons was in poor taste.

The publication of the cartoons angered many Canadian Muslims, some of whom felt it went beyond poor taste. Syed Soharwardy, president of the Islamic Supreme Council of Canada, challenged Ezra to a public debate on the matter. During the debate, Ezra refused to back down from both his right to publish the cartoons and his critique of Islamic fundamentalist. After the debate, Soharwardy allegedly attempted to have Ezra arrested by the police for hate crimes.<sup>27</sup> When the police declined, Soharwardy filed a complaint with the Albertan Human Rights Commission.<sup>28</sup> This complaint was to become one of the primary catalysts for conservative calls to abolish such Commissions because, as CJunk explained in a January 2008 posting, militant Islam is a disease and free speech its antidote.<sup>29</sup>

Many bloggers, like Kate, happily helped to disseminate the cartoons. Permanently housed on her work server, [katewerk.com](http://katewerk.com), Kate has archived all the

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<sup>26</sup> Ezra Levant, "Was the CBC afraid to show the Danish cartoons? 'Well, yeah'," The Ezra Levant Blog, April 14, 2008, <http://ezrlevant.com/2008/04/was-the-cbc-afraid-to-show-the.html>

<sup>27</sup> Ezra Levant, "How the complaint came about," The Ezra Levant Blog, January 17, 2008, <http://ezrlevant.com/2008/01/how-the-complaint-came-about.html>

<sup>28</sup> Graeme Morton, "Imam drops rights dispute," *Calgary Herald*, February 13, 2008, <http://www.canada.com/calgaryherald/news/city/story.html?id=7e0d6665-0c5d-41b8-a706-d95f3b0329be>

<sup>29</sup> CJunk, "Destroying the Antidote," SDA, January 16, 2008, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/007846.html>

cartoons.<sup>30</sup> In support of Ezra, she republished them on her blog when he was compelled to appear at a preliminary Human Rights hearing in January of 2008.<sup>31</sup> Never one to miss an opportunity to grandstand, Ezra managed to video-record the proceedings. In a series of YouTube postings that have now been watched well over a half million times, he launched scathing polemics in response to such questions as “what was your intent and purpose of your article with the cartoon illustrations published on February 27, 2006?”<sup>32</sup> The widespread attention Ezra’s YouTube videos received was in large part due to the efforts of the conservative blogosphere in Canada and the U.S., where there have been numerous posts on the subject.

In August of 2008, after 900 days of investigation, the Albertan Human Rights Commission dismissed the case against Ezra. The Commission did so because he and the *Western Standard* had published the cartoons in “context,” taking care to include letters to the editor and contrary opinions, and thus were not overly or intentionally offensive towards, or denigrating of Muslims.<sup>33</sup> This was not what the conservatives wanted to hear. At the bottom of her entry linking to Ezra’s post regarding the dismissal, Kate not only re-published the cartoons but added “Editor’s Note: The above image is reproduced here for the sole purpose of offending. No editorial value or news worthiness is intended. No letters of criticism will be published. Thank you.”<sup>34</sup>

## 6.4 The Steyn and *Maclean’s* Controversy

For a while, Mark Steyn was a regular contributor to *Maclean’s* magazine. In October of 2006, the editors of that magazine decided to publish online the

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<sup>30</sup> See <http://www.katewerk.com/cartoons/>

<sup>31</sup> “Kate McMillan, “Solidarity,” SDA, January 12, 2008, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/007814.html>

<sup>32</sup> Ezra Levant, “What was your intent?” January 12, 2008, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3iMNM1tef7g&eurl>

<sup>33</sup> Case dismissal letter available at <http://ezrlevant.com/Complaint%20rejected.pdf>

<sup>34</sup> Kate McMillan, “Now - *Fire. Them. All.*” SDA, August 6, 2008, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/009252.html>

prologue from *America Alone*, entitled “The Future Belongs to Islam.”<sup>35</sup> As might be expected, many Muslims found the prologue offensive. When The Canadian Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR-CAN) started a letter writing campaign to persuade *Macleans*’s to stop publishing Islamophobic articles, many bloggers including Kate responded by starting their own campaign in support of *Macleans*’s.<sup>36</sup> But in December of 2007 the conservative bloggers got really excited when Muslim Osgoode law students Khurram Awam, Muneeza Skeikh, and Naseem Mithoowani,<sup>37</sup> with the help of the Canadian Islamic Congress, launched formal human rights complaints against the magazine in Ontario, British Columbia, and federally.<sup>38</sup>

The complainants wanted to use the Human Rights Commissions and Tribunals to force *Macleans*’s to publish a rebuttal, by an author sympathetic to the discrimination faced by Muslims in North America, of equal length to Steyn’s prologue.<sup>39</sup> *Macleans*’s refused to have outside parties control its editorial decisions and declared that it was confident the complaints would fail.<sup>40</sup> In the meantime, conservatives harshly criticized the complainants for attempting to resolve their grievance via these channels, and against the Commissions for hearing their complaints. Kate and other right-wing commentators argued that the complainants were attempting to manipulate Western laws to undermine Western values, and that their grievances were disingenuous. The conservative bloggers argue that no one needs the government to command a magazine editorial board to publish an opinion, as anyone who wants to can publish a blog entry online.<sup>41</sup>

In April of 2008, the Ontario Commission ruled that, because Ontario’s

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<sup>35</sup> Mark Steyn, “The future belongs to Islam,” *Macleans.ca*, October 20, 2006, [http://www.macleans.ca/culture/books/article.jsp?content=20061023\\_134898\\_134898](http://www.macleans.ca/culture/books/article.jsp?content=20061023_134898_134898)

<sup>36</sup> Kate McMillan, “Dear Macleans,” SDA, November 2, 2006, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/004912.html>

<sup>37</sup> CBC News, “Muslim students file rights complaints over Maclean’s article,” December 5, 2007, <http://www.cbc.ca/arts/media/story/2007/12/05/muslim-macleans.html>

<sup>38</sup> Kate McMillan, “MACLEANS MAGAZINE: A CASE STUDY OF MEDIA-PROPAGATED ISLAMOPHOBIA,” SDA, December 10, 2007, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/007605.html>

<sup>39</sup> Ezra Levant, “Elmasry emerges from hiding, cites the Jewish Congress for support,” The Ezra Levant Blog, June 25, 2008, <http://ezrelevant.com/2008/06/elmasry-emerges-from-hiding-ci.html>

<sup>40</sup> Kate Lunau, “Maclean’s editor responds to CIC allegations,” *Macleans.ca*, December 4, 2007, [http://www.macleans.ca/article.jsp?content=20071204\\_165238\\_4452](http://www.macleans.ca/article.jsp?content=20071204_165238_4452)

<sup>41</sup> Kate McMillan, “This is the saddest and most pathetic thing I have ever heard.” SDA, December 20, 2007, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/007674.html>

Human Rights legislation has no equivalent to section 13(1) of the *CHRA*, it was unable to hear the case. It did however opine that Steyn's prologue was "xenophobic," "Islamophobic" and "promoted prejudice."<sup>42</sup> *Maclean's* legal defence and supporters of Steyn expressed outrage at these comments, claiming they amounted to passing judgement without a trial.<sup>43</sup> Faisal Joseph, the lawyer for the complainants, claimed that the Commission's statement demonstrated that the legislative framework in Ontario needs updating.<sup>44</sup> In response, Barbara Hall, Chief Commissioner of the Ontario Human Rights Commission, clarified that the OHRC's mandate is to uphold the human rights of Ontario residents, including both freedom of speech and freedom from discrimination.<sup>45</sup>

In late June of 2008, the federal Human Rights Commission told *Maclean's* it had decided not to forward the case to the Tribunal. Although pleased with the decision, *Maclean's* lamented the way, at its expense, the current legislative system allowed actions against it in several jurisdictions at once.<sup>46</sup>

The British Columbia hearings lasted a week beginning on June 2, 2008, and were the subject of many entries at SDA and other sites in the Canadian conservative blogosphere. These included liveblogging information from *Maclean's* Andrew Coyne,<sup>47</sup> with supplementary posts from Ezra and Steyn,<sup>48</sup> and the occasional commentary emailed to various bloggers by readers watching the proceedings.<sup>49</sup> The most notable excerpt from the liveblog "transcript," at least in terms of the reaction it provoked on the right, was the June 4, 2008

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<sup>42</sup> Ontario Human Rights Commission, "Commission Statement Concerning Issues Raised By Complaints Against *Maclean's* Magazine," <http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/resources/news/en/resources/news/statement>

<sup>43</sup> Kate McMillan, "Ontario Human Rights Commission Backs Away From *Maclean's*," SDA, April 9, 2008, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/008454.html>

<sup>44</sup> Joseph Breaun, "Rights body dismisses *Maclean's* case," *National Post*, April 9, 2008, <http://www.nationalpost.com/news/story.html?id=433915>

<sup>45</sup> Barbara Hall, "Letter to the Editor published in *Maclean's* Magazine," Ontario Human Rights Commission, April 22, 2008, <http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/resources/news/macleanletter>

<sup>46</sup> Marnie Peters, "*Maclean's* responds to recent decision from the Canadian Human Rights Commission," *Newswire.ca*, June 26, 2008, <http://www.newswire.ca/en/releases/archive/June2008/26/c8368.html>

<sup>47</sup> Kate McMillan, "The BC Human Rights Tribunal VS *Maclean's* And The Free World," SDA, June 2, 2008, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/008819.html>

<sup>48</sup> Kate McMillan, "The Robson Square Witch Trials," SDA, June 3, 2008, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/008831.html>

<sup>49</sup> Kate McMillan, "The Robson Square Witch Trials," SDA, June 6, 2008, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/008857.html>



admission that the complainants “anticipate that success in this case will provide the impetus for prohibiting discriminatory publications in the other provinces.”<sup>50</sup>

Do the Human Rights Commissions and Tribunals have the power to prohibit such publications? Yes, though what remedies are available depends on the jurisdiction in question. A precedent often pointed to by conservatives comes from Alberta. In 2007 Reverend Stephen Boissoin, a pastor and executive member of the Christian Coalition, was determined to have exposed homosexuals to hatred and contempt for a letter to the editor entitled “Homosexual agenda wicked” published in 2002 by the *Red Deer Advocate*.<sup>51</sup> The Alberta Human Rights Panel—Alberta’s equivalent of a Tribunal—determined the letter claims:

[H]omosexuals conspire against society; homosexuals are sick, diseased and mentally ill; homosexuals are a threat to children or are seeking to have sexual relations with children, linking homosexuality with paedophilia; homosexuality or a gay agenda was a homosexual machine or a homosexual conspiracy; [and that the effect of the letter was to] make it more acceptable to others to manifest hatred against homosexuals.<sup>52</sup>

Two weeks after the publication of the letter, a homosexual teenager was beaten in Red Deer, resulting in his cheekbone being broken, an event the Panel found had a “circumstantial connection” to Boissoin’s letter.<sup>53</sup>

The Panel remedy in May of 2008 required Boissoin to stop commenting in person, print, or online disparaging comments about homosexuals. It ordered him to write an apology to appear in the *Red Deer Advocate*, and to pay the complainant—a university professor not known to be a homosexual—\$5,000 in

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<sup>50</sup> Kate McMillan, “Day Three,” SDA, June 4, 2008, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/008842.html>

<sup>51</sup> CBC News, “Pastor, Christian coalition violated human rights law, Alberta panel rules,” November 30, 2007, <http://www.cbc.ca/canada/calgary/story/2007/11/30/boissoin-ruling.html>

<sup>52</sup> *Darren E. Lund v. Stephen Boissoin and The Concerned Christian Coalition Inc.*, Decision Summary, Human Rights Panels of Alberta, November 30, 2007, <http://www.albertahumanrights.ab.ca/decisions/summaries/1249.asp>

<sup>53</sup> *Darren E. Lund v. Stephen Boissoin and The Concerned Christian Coalition Inc.*, Decision, para 350, Human Rights Panels of Alberta, November 30, 2007, <http://www.albertahumanrights.ab.ca/LundDarren113007Pa.pdf>

The full text of the letter is available at <http://canadianpastor.blogspot.com/2005/09/letter-that-started-it-all.html>

damages.<sup>54</sup> For right-wing advocates of free speech this decision represents oppressive government tyranny at its worst. Conservatives claim there is a double standard at work whereby white, male Christians face prosecution and censorship while Canadian Muslims spreading hatred and contempt do not. Just because such decisions are possible does not make them likely or frequent. Indeed, after four months of deliberation, the British Columbia Human Rights Tribunal decided to dismiss the complaint against *Maclean's* magazine.<sup>55</sup> Not all conservatives were happy about this decision, as some had hoped to appeal a decision against *Maclean's* to the Supreme Court of Canada.<sup>56</sup>

## 6.5 Richard Warman and Questionable HRC Tactics

The complaint against Stephen Boissoin was made possible by legislation that enables third parties to file complaints on behalf of others who have been discriminated against, and to seek personal compensation if the respondents retaliate against the complainant. Thus the door is open for activists to try to make a career out of the complaint process by making complaints and seeking compensation for their trouble. In this regard, Richard Warman, a lawyer and Canadian Human Rights Commission employee between 2002 and 2004,<sup>57</sup> has come to epitomize all that the conservative blogosphere thinks is wrong with Canada's Human Rights Commissions. Although he is not responsible for the cases against Ezra or *Maclean's*, of the 17 federal cases referred to the Tribunal by the Commission between 2001 and 2008, Warman filed 13.<sup>58</sup> Nine of his complaints resulted in websites being shut down. For his work, which has primarily dealt with anti-Semitism and targeted neo-Nazis, he was awarded a certificate of appreciation from the Law Society of Upper Canada in 2005, and the Saul Hayes Human Rights Award by the Canadian Jewish Congress in

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<sup>54</sup> *Darren E. Lund v. Stephen Boissoin and The Concerned Christian Coalition Inc.*, Remedy, Human Rights Panels of Alberta, May 30, 2008, [http://albertahumanrights.ab.ca/Lund\\_Darren\\_Remedies053008.pdf](http://albertahumanrights.ab.ca/Lund_Darren_Remedies053008.pdf)

<sup>55</sup> Kathy Shaidle, "FLASH! Mark Steyn NOT GUILTY -- but..." The Five Feet of Fury Blog, October 10, 2008, <http://www.fivefeetoffury.com/entry:fivefeet-2008-10-10-0005/>

<sup>56</sup> Kate McMillan, "The Big Blink," SDA, October 10, 2008, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/009764.html>

<sup>57</sup> Gregoire, "War Of The Words," <http://www.canadianlawyermag.com/War-of-the-words.html>

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

2007.<sup>59</sup> To many observers this would seem like an impressive track record of successfully fighting hate speech in Canada. For conservatives whose speech is now threatened, Richard Warman is a financially motivated censor who has shamelessly exploited faulty legislation and previous employment connections to promote his personal agenda.<sup>60</sup>

The ideological nature of the disagreement over the value of Warman's work is made most clear when the opposing camps invoke images of Nazi Germany. Warman has stated that part of his motivation to pursue these cases comes from having family members who fought the Nazis during World War II: "It's really a betrayal of the veterans and all those who contributed in World War II to ignore the ongoing threat from these groups that are seeking to resurrect an idea that should have died 60 years ago in a bunker in Berlin."<sup>61</sup> For him and other supporters of the legislation—such as Bernie Farber, current leader of the Canadian Jewish Congress—allowing the act of speaking or acting extremely negatively towards an identifiable group encourages Nazi-like atrocities. In this vein Wahida Valiante, vice president of the Canadian Islamic Congress, has compared Mark Steyn's writing to that of anti-Jewish conspiracy theorist James Keegstra, and warns that in Germany "it was the words that set the stage for what happened later on... We may end up with the same fate, and that is at the heart of why [the complainants] wanted to take this on."<sup>62</sup>

For Kate and other members of the conservative blogosphere, the Commissions are not fighting Nazi-like Jew haters; rather they constitute a form of state censorship,<sup>63</sup> a manifestation of the very type of totalitarianism and

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<sup>59</sup> Don Butler, "One man's war on Internet hate," *The Ottawa Citizen*, July 11, 2007, <http://www.canada.com/ottawacitizen/news/story.html?id=7704be24-8e3a-4090-b4f3-a5a4909e1d54&p=1>

<sup>60</sup> Ezra Levant, "CHRC Bigoted Comment of the Day: gays are "sexual deviants" who are a "cancer," The Ezra Levant Blog, May 25, 2008, <http://ezralevant.com/2008/05/chrc-bigoted-comment-of-the-da-1.html>

<sup>61</sup> Don Butler, "One man's war on Internet hate," *The Ottawa Citizen*, July 11, 2007, <http://www.canada.com/ottawacitizen/news/story.html?id=7704be24-8e3a-4090-b4f3-a5a4909e1d54&p=1>

<sup>62</sup> Joseph Brean, "Human rights issues open to vigorous debate," *National Post*, June 21, 2008, <http://www.nationalpost.com/news/canada/story.html?id=602841>

<sup>63</sup> Kate McMillan, "The Richard Warman Conundrum," SDA, December 18, 2007, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/007660.html>

thought control that facilitated the Holocaust.<sup>64</sup> For the pro-Commission camp, discrimination is evil in and of itself. All religions are assumed to be equal and treating members of one differently than members of another is wrong. In opposition to this view conservatives argue that freedom of expression trumps freedom from discrimination, that equality and respect cannot be assumed but must be earned, and that the ability to criticize that which is inferior is an integral part of the principles that made Western society great in the first place.

Disagreements between these two political camps go beyond the causes of Nazism into more personal grievances. Conservatives argue that members of the Human Rights Commission have not only acted as *agent provocateurs*, posting hateful messages on Internet chat forums to drum up business, but also have used private wireless Internet accounts to cover their tracks. Personal attacks against Mr. Warman and the Human Rights Commissions have reached a fever pitch, resulting in a libel suit being filed against “The Freedom Five”: Kate, Kathy, Ezra, the *National Post’s* Jonathan Kay and the Free Dominion conservative chat-forum moderators, Mark and Connie Fournier.

The facts are a matter of heated debate, but it is certain that investigators for the Canadian Human Rights Commission (CHRC) have created user accounts on so-called “hate” websites. Lead CHRC investigator Dean Steacy has, under oath, admitted creating the username Jadewarr on the neo-Nazi site Stormfront as well as the Canadian conservative chat forum Free Dominion.<sup>65</sup> Allegations have been made that Steacy posted racist comments on these sites to provoke similar responses, and that he did so before complaints were lodged against the operators of the sites and people who post on them.<sup>66</sup> During a federal Section 13 Human Rights Tribunal hearing against Marc Lemire for

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<sup>64</sup> Kate McMillan, “The Road To Totalitarianism,” SDA, March 11, 2008, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/008238.html>; Kate McMillan, “The Nazis Didn't Carry Out The Holocaust,” SDA, March 23, 2008, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/008328.html>; Kate McMillan, “Late you come, but still you come,” SDA, April 14, 2008, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/008477.html>

<sup>65</sup> Margot Blight, “Re: Lemire v. Warman (Federal Court File: T-860-07),” Blight Cabinet Juridique Law Office, December 20, 2007, <http://www.freedominion.com.pa/images/answers.pdf>

<sup>66</sup> Mark Fournier, “CHRC operative Dean Steacy is a Free Dominioner,” *freedominion.com*, January 18, 2008, <http://www.freedominion.com.pa/phpBB2/viewtopic.php?p=1129565&sid=624e76a1bc8411cf0528d1f3f23bd2ab>

material on his freedomsite.org website, a subpoenaed Bell Canada employee testified that the Jadewarr account had been accessed in December of 2006 from an IP address that now matched private citizen Nelly Hechme's wireless account. Hechme has no involvement with the CHRC other than living a block from its main office.<sup>67</sup> During a March 25 hearing it was revealed that Richard Warman knew about and had access to the Jadewarr account before he initially indicated he had access to it, and also after he had finished his contract working for the Commission.<sup>68</sup> Richard Warman under oath also admitted creating the username Lucy on Freedomsite and other websites. During a February 2007 hearing in the complaint against Marc Lemire, Mr. Warman denied ever having set up an account on that site, but had to recant when presented with the registration information.<sup>69</sup>

Suspicious about the Commission were heightened by the fairly unorthodox steps it took to keep the public from hearing the testimonies that implicated it in questionable practices. The subpoena to have Dean Steacy and a Bell Canada employee testify was issued in early March 2008.<sup>70</sup> Citing public safety concerns, the CHRC sought to have the hearing involving that testimony closed to the public,<sup>71</sup> a request that was initially granted by the Tribunal. Liberal Member of Parliament Keith Martin publicly demanded that the Tribunal reverse its decision,<sup>72</sup> a request which was backed by the *Maclean's* legal defence team among others. On March 20 the reversal was granted.<sup>73</sup> After the testimony of the Bell Canada employee the RCMP started an investigation into the incident at

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<sup>67</sup> Joseph Brean, "Jeers and loathing at tribunal," *National Post*, March 26, 2008, [http://www.nationalpost.com/most\\_popular/Story.html?id=399125&p=2](http://www.nationalpost.com/most_popular/Story.html?id=399125&p=2)

<sup>68</sup> Ezra Levant, "Richard Warman misleads the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal about "Jadewarr", under oath," The Ezra Levant Blog, April 21, 2008, <http://ezralevant.com/2008/04/richard-warman-misleads-the-ca.html>

<sup>69</sup> See *Warman V. Lemire* transcript excerpts at <http://www.freedominion.com.pa/images/transcript.gif>

<sup>70</sup> Gregory M. Smith, "Re: Tribunal – Richard Warman v. Marc Lemire," Canadian Human Rights Tribunal, March 3, 2008, [http://www.freedomsite.org/legal/rulings/20080303-Ruling\\_on\\_jadewarr\\_and\\_Bell\\_subpoena.pdf](http://www.freedomsite.org/legal/rulings/20080303-Ruling_on_jadewarr_and_Bell_subpoena.pdf)

<sup>71</sup> Kate McMillan, "From Public View," SDA, March 9, 2008, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/008226.html>

<sup>72</sup> Deborah Gyapong, "MP Keith Martin wants Mar. 25 tribunal hearing opened to public," The Deborah Gyapong Blog, March 15, 2008, <http://deborahgyapong.blogspot.com/2008/03/mp-keith-martin-wants-mar-25-tribunal.html>

<sup>73</sup> Mike Brock, "Journalists Win Right to Access Star Chamber," The Forward and Onward Blog, March 20, 2008, <http://www.mikebrockonline.com/blog/2008/03/journalists-win-right-to-acces.html>

the request of Marc Lemire.<sup>74</sup> Beyond trying to get the March 25 hearing closed to the public, the Tribunal neglected to record a transcript of that hearing. Fortunately for the conservatives, Ezra had considered this possibility and made his own copy.<sup>75</sup>

## 6.6 Ezra's Blog, Attacks on Warman, and the Libel Suit

Ezra has been something of a one man Human Rights Commission wrecking ball. He has written a best-selling book, combining his most important blog entries on the subject, entitled *Shakedown: How Our Government is Undermining Democracy in the Name of Human Rights*.<sup>76</sup> Ezra's blog, designed and maintained by Blogging Tory webmaster Stephen Taylor,<sup>77</sup> was started in January 2008 and is dedicated to documenting his battle with the HRCs. Because of the interest conservatives have in Ezra's battle it has become one of the most popular blogs in Canada.<sup>78</sup>

Ezra's blog entries include detailed descriptions of expenses and presentations from the 2008 annual Canadian Human Rights meeting, which took place at Niagara-on-the-Lake at taxpayer expense.<sup>79</sup> With the help of his readers he has investigated the previous work experience of various Commission members such as Sandy Kozak, who was assigned to the *Maclean's* case and whom Ezra discovered was previously fired from the Carleton Municipal Police force for improprieties related to her romantic involvement with a criminal.<sup>80</sup> Ezra has become a magnet for HRC whistleblowers, and people have been leaking him internal reports from the Canadian Human Rights Commission. One of these

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<sup>74</sup> Ezra Levant, "RCMP launches investigation into CHRC tactics," The Ezra Levant Blog, May 20, 2008, <http://ezrlevant.com/2008/05/rcmp-launches-investigation-in.html>

<sup>75</sup> Ezra Levant, "I accuse the Canadian Human Rights Commission of corruption," The Ezra Levant Blog, May 8, 2008, <http://ezrlevant.com/2008/05/i-accuse-the-canadian-human-ri.html>

<sup>76</sup> Kate McMillan, "Shakedown," SDA, March 25, 2009, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/011059.html>

<sup>77</sup> Ezra Levant, "Thanks to my webmaster," The Ezra Levant Blog, July 28, 2008, <http://ezrlevant.com/2008/07/thanks-to-my-webmaster.html>

<sup>78</sup> Robert Jago, "Canada's Top 25 Political Blogs - August," A dime a dozen political blog, August 2, 2008, <http://rijago.wordpress.com/2008/08/02/canadas-top-25-political-blogs-august/>

<sup>79</sup> Ezra Levant, "An angry woman named Pearl Eliadis," The Ezra Levant Blog, June 25, 2008, <http://ezrlevant.com/2008/06/an-angry-woman-named-pearl-eli.html>

<sup>80</sup> Ezra Levant, "Too corrupt for the real police, just right for the CHRC," The Ezra Levant Blog, April 7, 2008, <http://ezrlevant.com/2008/04/too-corrupt-for-the-real-polic.html>

reports detailed the HRC's investigation into the *Maclean's* case and seemed to indicate that Steyn's prologue did warrant censorship, causing many observers in the conservative blogosphere to speculate that the Commission only dropped the case for fear of public scrutiny. Another leaked document was a several year old internal audit regarding the HRC's need for an ethics code.<sup>81</sup> Ezra has also deconstructed HRC pamphlets distributed in Alberta that encourage people to file complaints and describe fictitious scenarios as if they were actual incidents.<sup>82</sup>

Similar investigations have been launched into the background of Richard Warman, with many conservative bloggers and readers contributing information. When it was discovered that an independent YouTube documentary of a Canadian speaking tour by David Icke—a conspiracy theorist who thinks Jews are not only running the planet but also descended from extra-dimensional lizards<sup>83</sup>—featured Warman counselling anti-Icke activists to disrupt a Vancouver bookstore presentation by throwing a cream pie at Icke, conservative bloggers had a field day. Kate hosted a poll asking if her readers thought Warman had counselled assault, with predictable results.<sup>84</sup> Similarly, when a speech Warman gave at the Anti-Racist Action conference in July 2005, entitled “Maximum Disruption: Stopping neo-Nazis By (Almost) Any Means” was dug up, many bloggers took issue with it. In the speech Warman characterized his efforts against alleged neo-Nazis as “fun,” and lamented that the Commission was hesitant to pro-actively seek Human Rights violations. Conservatives pointed to Warman's admission that he occasionally targets individuals because he finds them to be “particularly annoying” as further evidence that his motivations are less than honourable.<sup>85</sup> When it was discovered that Mr. Warman is now working

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<sup>81</sup> Ezra Levant, “Two new documents: CHRC's internal Maclean's report, and confidential CHRC ethics audit,” The Ezra Levant Blog, July 2, 2008, <http://ezralevant.com/2008/07/two-new-documents-chrcs-intern.html>

<sup>82</sup> Ezra Levant, “Alberta's HRC: breeding the next generation of complainers,” The Ezra Levant Blog, June 14, 2008, <http://ezralevant.com/2008/06/albertas-hrc-breeding-the-next.html>

<sup>83</sup> Will Offley, “Selected Quotes Of David Icke,” *PublicEye.org*, February 23, 2000, <http://www.publiceye.org/Icke/Ickequotes.htm>

<sup>84</sup> Kate McMillan, “Wink Wink,” SDA, January 30, 2008, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/007931.html>

<sup>85</sup> Richard Warman, “Stopping Neo-Nazis By (Almost) Any Means Necessary,” July 6, 2005, [http://www.richardwarman.com/ARA\\_connection/WarmanSpeechoARA-6July2005.pdf](http://www.richardwarman.com/ARA_connection/WarmanSpeechoARA-6July2005.pdf)

for the Canadian Armed Forces as the Director of Special Grievances, Ezra posted a request on his blog for information about any questionable ethical conduct in which Warman may have been involved.<sup>86</sup>

While these conflicts reveal the extent to which bloggers and their readers can cyber-stalk someone, none of the above described actions are illegal, as they involve the republication and discussion of true and publicly available information. However, the personal attacks on Richard Warman have allegedly crossed the line into defamation. While the court has not yet ruled on the libel suit, the key issues and facts under dispute are clear enough.

On January 18, 2008, Mark Fournier posted a long message that claimed that Richard Warman had, in 2003, posted a derogatory attack on Canadian Conservative Senator Anne Cools on Mark Lemire's Fredomsite forum, which subsequently came under investigation and eventual hearing by the Canadian Human Rights Commission and Tribunal. Among other things, this message calls Anne Cools a "preachy c\*nt," notes her African heritage, and states that Canada needs to go back to a time when "women nigger imports knew their place... And that place was NOT in public!" The posting attributes the attack to Richard Warman and provides "proof" from "technology expert" Bernard Klatt. In an affidavit presented at the Lemire hearings, Klatt matched the IP address and various other computer characteristics, such as the operating system and browser used by Richard Warman when logging in as Lucy, with the poster of the Anne Cools message, whose username was 90sAREover.<sup>87</sup>

Claims of proof documenting malfeasance on the part of Warman were music to the ears of conservative bloggers. Already extremely suspicious and critical of Warman they were delighted to learn of an alleged smoking gun. One of the first to pick up and echo the Cools allegation was Kathy Shaidle, who on January 20 posted the Free Dominion entry on her own blog, fivefeetoffury.com, and on SDA where she was guest blogging. Though it is quite possible Kate

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<sup>86</sup> Ezra Levant, "Calling all Canadian Forces and DND staff," The Ezra Levant Blog, March 31, 2008, <http://ezralewant.com/2008/03/calling-all-canadian-forces-an.html>

<sup>87</sup> Mark Fournier, "'Time to go back to when the women nigger imports knew their place... And that place was NOT in public!' - Richard Warman referring to Sen. Anne Cools -," *freedominion.com*, January 18, 2008, <http://www.freedominion.com.pa/phpBB2/viewtopic.php?p=1130657>



would have made mention of the allegations had she been in town that day, she might have hedged her bets slightly, making it clear that the matter was far from settled. Kathy, however, is known for being incautious. For example, she relentlessly attacked the law students who brought the complaint against *Maclean's*, posting their email addresses online and questioning their faith in Islam.<sup>88</sup> However, she was not the only one to reiterate the accusations made by Free Dominion based on Kaltt's affidavit. In a January 20 post entitled "Questions for Rob Nichols," Ezra claimed that Warman had authored the Cools post, as did Jonathan Kay of the *National Post* on February 19 in the FreeComments section of the newspaper's website.<sup>89</sup>

Here we see a danger of the political blogosphere in full force. In his 2007 book *Republic.com 2.0* Cass Sunstein describes "information cascades," which he claims are the heightened tendency of polarized cyber-communities to believe claims that bolster their beliefs while simultaneously downplaying contrary evidence.<sup>90</sup> In the libel suit he eventually launched against the "Freedom Five," Warman claims that the accusations against him have been echoed on almost every neo-Nazi website in the Western world, all of which were very quick and happy to defame him. There is still the little matter of whether he is guilty of course, and it seems quite possible he may yet one-up his opponents. As he reminded the audience in his infamous Maximum Disruption speech, "there's that old expression that says if you're making everyone mad you must be doing something right."<sup>91</sup>

One of the first defenses of Warman quickly came after Kathy's cross-post. On January 21, responding to questions asking if they were aware of Warman's shenanigans, the Canadian Jewish Congress replied:

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<sup>88</sup> Kathy Shaidle, "Tearing Khurram a new Awan (with update on Awan's distinctly un-Muslim Friday night par-TAYS!)," The Five Feet of Fury Blog, June 28, 2008, <http://www.fivefeetoffury.com/:entry:fivefeet-2008-06-28-0009/>

<sup>89</sup> *Richard Warman v. The National Post et al.*, Court File Number 08-CV-352197SR, April 7, 2008, Warman, Libel Claim of April 7<sup>th</sup>, 2008, 14; 18, <http://ezrrelevant.com/Warman%20v.%20Post%20et%20al.pdf>

<sup>90</sup> Cass Sunstein, *Republic.com 2.0* (Princeton University Press, 2007), 83.

<sup>91</sup> Richard Warman, "Stopping Neo-Nazis By (Almost) Any Means Necessary," July 6, 2005, [http://www.richardwarman.com/ARA\\_connection/WarmanSpeechtoARA-6July2005.pdf](http://www.richardwarman.com/ARA_connection/WarmanSpeechtoARA-6July2005.pdf)

We have done our own investigation into this matter. Considering the sources of the allegations and taken into account that Mr. Warman has specifically, under oath, denied that he authored the posting, we deem the allegation to be without basis. It is the targeted vilification of an honourable man that should be drawing your concern.<sup>92</sup>

This response was gleefully posted at Warren Kinsella's blog, arch nemesis of Kate and company, and raised a few eyebrows. Evidently both Warman's sworn testimony and the questionable nature of the technology expert were news to many in the conservative blogging community.

It turns out the "expert" witness the Fourniers cited is Bernard Klatt, whose involvement in litigation consists almost entirely in testifying on behalf of white supremacist groups. He has been used as an expert witness in the Ernst Zundel case, the Western Canada for Us case, the BC White Pride case, and now the Marc Lemire case, where his claims against Warman emerged.<sup>93</sup> None of this would matter if his claims are correct, but a closer look at the list of "matching characteristics" between the Lucy and the 90sAREover usernames reveals that most are characteristics that a vast majority of computers would have had in 2003. The only characteristic that could actually amount to a "digital fingerprint"—as the *National Post* entry called all the traits—was the IP address.

Perhaps because of the Canadian Jewish Congress's defense, perhaps because someone else thought to question the motivations and qualifications of the "expert," and perhaps because of legal threats going on behind the scenes, Kathy posted a January 22 "Update" to her original entry at SDA explaining that confidence was contagious and she had mistakenly reproduced the Free Dominion allegations uncritically, a particularly grievous sin when writing on someone else's blog in their absence. The updated entry was much less certain of its claims, asked readers to "make up your own mind" and encouraged them to

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<sup>92</sup> Warren Kinsella, "THE CANADIAN JEWISH CONGRESS ON RICHARD WARMAN," The Warren Kinsella Blog, January 21, 2008, <http://warrenkinsella.com/index.php?entry=entry080121-131742>

<sup>93</sup> Barbara Kulaszka, "Re: Warman v. National Post et al. SCJ File No. 08-CV-352197SR," *ezrlevant.com*, May 15, 2008, 12-13, <http://ezrlevant.com/Fournier%20defence%20redacted.pdf>

publicize the update to all the addresses they had sent the original allegations.<sup>94</sup> The back peddling had begun, although many conservative bloggers continued attempting to prove Warman had made the Anne Cools post. On January 28 after her return, Kate provided a link to a blog making a technical argument regarding the matching IP addresses, which are often shared over time by various users of a given Internet Service Provider or geographical area. The posting concluded that only one out of 341 people could have been using that IP address during the time of the posting.<sup>95</sup> Unfortunately for the ideological enemies of Richard Warman, subsequent analysis and peer review of this claim by other members of the blogosphere revealed it made erroneous assumptions, and thousands of people would actually have accessed the Internet using the very same IP address.<sup>96</sup> None of the conservative bloggers who made the original claims posted this updated information.

This lack of evidence might help explain why, after being made aware of all these facts by Warman's lawyer immediately following their reiterating the accusations online, the *National Post* removed the article and replaced it with a retraction, and then printed a retraction in the physical version of the newspaper even though the original accusations did not appear in that medium.<sup>97</sup> Despite these retractions, Warman proceeded to sue the Freedom Five on April 7, 2008, for \$50,000 in damages, a full apology and legal costs.<sup>98</sup>

Standing behind their allegations about the Anne Cool post, Ezra and the Fourniers have accused Mr. Warman of having posted more homophobic and racist comments under usernames he testified to having created on both the Stormfront and VNN discussion forums. In addition to Lucy, he testified that he

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<sup>94</sup> Kathy Shaidle, "Richard Warman: not a racist -- he just plays one on the internet?" SDA, January 20, 2008, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/007870.html>

<sup>95</sup> Kate McMillan, "What benefit can there be in allowing him to speak?" SDA, January 28, 2008, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/007921.html>

<sup>96</sup> Lance, "Mea Culpa," The Catprint Blog, April 11, 2008, <http://www.catprint.ca/blog/blog/misc/meaculpa.html>

<sup>97</sup> Schiller, Brian, "Re: Richard Warman Notice pursuant to section 5(1) of the *Libel and Slander Act*, R.S.O. 1990, c. L. 12." Shillers LLP, February 20, 2008, 7, <http://ezrlevant.com/Letter%20-%20Levant%20-%202008.02.20.pdf>

<sup>98</sup> *Richard Warman v. The National Post et al.*, Court File Number 08-CV-352197SR, April 7, 2008, Warman, Libel Claim of April 7<sup>th</sup>, 2008, <http://ezrlevant.com/Warman%20v.%20Post%20et%20al.pdf>

had created the usernames Pogue Mahone on Stormfront, and Axetogrind on the Vanguard News Network (VNN).<sup>99</sup> Warman claims that he did this to access information on those forums in the process of investigating complaints, but his detractors claim he has been acting as an *agent provocateur*, posting hateful messages in the hope that others will respond in kind. His accusers allege that when they do respond Warman launches complaints against them hoping to collect money in ensuing libel suits and Tribunal decisions. This is not the first libel suit Mr. Warman has launched against Internet posters. In 2007, he received \$30,000 plus costs in a suit against Paul Fromm, an associate of both Marc Lemire and Bernard Klatt. The judge in that case held that Fromm had deliberately attempted to sully Warman's reputation with a "steady diet of diatribe and insults, couched in half truths and omissions."<sup>100</sup>

## 6.7 Community Involvement

The battle for free speech and against the Human Rights Commissions was a dominant topic at SDA and throughout the Canadian conservative blogosphere in 2008. The actions and reactions of the bloggers and their support base of readers took many forms. For the bloggers, chief among these were fostering anger among their readers and directing it towards the HRCs, the act of offending in solidarity, and promoting letter writing campaigns. Readers have participated in these campaigns and provided financial support for legal fees. Both bloggers and readers have engaged in first-person news reporting, Internet sleuthing, and protests.

Because the *CHRA* and *British Columbia Human Rights Act* apply to the Internet, conservative bloggers are hyper-aware of the fact that they, too, could be targeted, and are keen to clarify that they will fight any action brought against them and will not be censored. Kate's republishing of the Muhammad cartoons

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<sup>99</sup> See *Richard Warman v. Western Canada For Us and Glenn Bahr* transcript excerpts at <http://www.freedominon.com.pa/images/pogue.pdf>; full text available at [http://richardwarman.com/transcripts/2005-10-Tomasz\\_Winnicki/transcript\\_051018.pdf](http://richardwarman.com/transcripts/2005-10-Tomasz_Winnicki/transcript_051018.pdf)

<sup>100</sup> Don Butler, "Anti-racism activist wins libel judgment," *The Ottawa Citizen*, November 24, 2007, <http://www2.canada.com/ottawacitizen/news/story.html?id=d6a84a0b-b5af-4f45-a492-7d29dfe30345>

just before Ezra's preliminary Human Rights hearing is a good example of such action. Similarly, the conservative blogosphere was quick to come to the defence of the Free Dominion operators and commentators when it was announced that they were under investigation for comments a user named Bill Whatcott had made regarding Muslims.<sup>101</sup> A complaint had been filed by Marie-Line Gentes, a Quebec college teacher who is not a Muslim. Among the offending comments Whatcott is alleged to have made include the following:

I can't figure out why the homosexuals I ran into are on the side of the Muslims. After all, Muslims who practice Sharia law tend to advocate beheading homosexuals... I defy Islamic censorship and speak about what I believe is the truth about violent Islamism and its threat to religious liberty in Canada.<sup>102</sup>

In response to these revelations Kate stated:

I can't figure out why women in academia are on the side of the Muslims, either. After all, Muslims who practice Sharia law tend to advocate executing women who learn to read, expose their ankles and appear in public in the presence of men who are not family members. I defy Islamic censorship and speak about what I believe is the truth about violent Islamism and its threat to womens' liberty in Canada.<sup>103</sup>

In January of 2008, just after Ezra had been questioned by an Alberta Human Rights investigator, SDA guest blogger CJunk made a point of posting excerpts from articles that openly criticize Islam as a whole. "Let me make it clear that the point is not to attack Muslims as individuals... but to attack the doctrinal basis of their faith."<sup>104</sup> Ezra not only posted his preliminary questioning by an Albertan Human Rights Commission employee on YouTube, but also plastered the questioner's name, Shirlene McGovern, all over his blog. Because of the

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<sup>101</sup> Mark Fournier, "Human Rights attack on Free Dominion," *freedominion.com*, July 18, 2007, <http://www.freedominion.com.pa/phpBB2/viewtopic.php?t=84457>

<sup>102</sup> Suzanne Fortin, "Human Rights complaint against Free Dominion—DETAILS!" *bluewavecanada.blogspot.com*, July 20, 2007, <http://bluewavecanada.blogspot.com/2007/07/human-rights-complaint-against-free.html>

<sup>103</sup> Kate McMillan, "Free Dominion Targeted by HRC, Updated," SDA, July 21, 2007, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/006692.html>

<sup>104</sup> CJunk, "Your Daily Islamophobic," SDA, January 14, 2008, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/007828.html>

public backlash against her in the form of phone calls, emails, and Internet discussions, Shirlene resigned from Ezra's case within days. In response, Ezra unapologetically stated, "I believe that any government bureaucrat who makes a living interrogating citizens about their political beliefs ought to be held in public contempt."<sup>105</sup> In a similar vein Ezra has not only re-published the Muhammad cartoons several times, but also re-published Stephen Boissoin's editorial condemning the "homosexual agenda," stating afterwards "I feel like a dashing rogue."<sup>106</sup>

For this last re-publication, in August of 2008 yet another Human Rights complaint was filed against Ezra, this time at the federal level, by Mr. Rob Wells. The CHRC subsequently declined to pursue the matter—despite the Albertan Commission having successfully prosecuted Boissoin for publishing it—on the grounds that Ezra's publication was intended to foster debate, not hatred. In response, on August 20 Ezra re-republished the "Homosexual Agenda Wicked" letter, saying:

I'm not publishing these words as part of any "debate". I am publishing them for the express purpose of promoting contempt—contempt for Rob Wells, and contempt for his gophers at the Canadian Human Rights Commission. I'm publishing it to promote contempt for Jennifer Lynch, the chief commissioner of the CHRC who presides over an anti-Christian inquisition, and for all of the other commissioners—David Langtry, Robin Baird, Roch Fournier, Sandi Bell and Yvonne Boyer—who have joined forces with the real bigots of this country, people like Rob Wells, and even the corrupt thugs working at the commission who gaily join neo-Nazi groups like Stormfront, with the commissioners' full approval. I have contempt for you, and I wish to spread it to all of my fellow Canadians.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> Ezra Levant, "Shire Network News," The Ezra Levant Blog, February 18, 2008, <http://ezrlevant.com/2008/02/shire-network-news.html>

<sup>106</sup> Ezra Levant, "I feel like a dashing rogue," The Ezra Levant Blog, June 12, 2008, <http://ezrlevant.com/2008/06/i-feel-like-a-dashing-rogue.html>

<sup>107</sup> Ezra Levant, "I have been hit with another human rights complaint," The Ezra Levant Blog, August 20, 2008, <http://ezrlevant.com/2008/08/i-have-been-hit-with-another-h.html>

Following Ezra's lead, Kathy Shaidle also republished the letter.<sup>108</sup> Endless offensive material is posted in the comments off all the blogs on a regular basis, often arguing that Islam is fundamentally a violent religion. As SDA regular commentator Irwin Daisy put it, "Islam's corruption and violence is not just based in its institutions, the foundation is in the texts of the trilogy [Qur'an, Hadiths and Sirah] and the acts and sayings of its founder and prophet."<sup>109</sup>

The conservative bloggers know that posting offensive content to make a point will not result in any substantive change to existing law. They work hard to raise awareness about the detrimental nature of human rights legislation in infringing free speech. To the extent such objectives can be accomplished by letter writing campaigns the conservative blogosphere is an ideal place to garner support, filled as it is with opinionated people sitting in front of keyboards and upset about the current state of affairs.

In mid-January of 2008 Kathy was guest blogging at SDA and posted an email that had been forwarded to her, written by one Conservative MP's assistant to several others, asking if any of them knew anything about a situation involving Canada's Human Rights Commission. It seems the MP in question had received several letters from concerned citizens, but had not heard anything from the mainstream media or other politicians and was not sure what to make of the letters.<sup>110</sup> An unnamed SDA reader—possibly Stephen Taylor, Blogging Tories webmaster—saw the post and proceeded to compose a detailed email that was then sent to many staffers on Parliament Hill.<sup>111</sup> Just over a week later Keith Martin proposed a private member's Motion to repeal Section 13 of the *CHRA*. Kate applauded this action and provided contact information to thank him,<sup>112</sup> as she did again in March when Liberal MP Dan McTeague voiced his support for

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<sup>108</sup> Kathy Shaidle, "Ezra Levant and the 'fags hate God' dude," The Five Feet of Fury Blog, August 21, 2008, <http://www.fivefeetoffury.com/entry:fivefeet-2008-08-21-0000/>

<sup>109</sup> Irwin Daisy, comment on "Doing as the Leader Did," SDA, comment posted June 1, 2008, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/008806.html#c276696>

<sup>110</sup> Kathy Shaidle, "Steyn, Levant and the HRCs: How do we break out of the echo chamber?" SDA, January 18, 2008, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/007860.html>

<sup>111</sup> Kathy Shaidle, "SDA: Keeping Conservative MPs well informed," SDA, January 19, 2008, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/007867.html>

<sup>112</sup> Kate McMillan, "Keith Martin, MP," SDA, January 31, 2008, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/007943.html>

Martin's Motion M-446.<sup>113</sup> In June when Saskatchewan Premier Brad Wall was still yet to speak out on the matter, Kate posted his contact information and encouraged her readers to "contact our most timid provincial premier."<sup>114</sup> Ezra, Steyn, the Free Dominion hosts and others have successfully employed similar tactics. In late March Ezra stated that "Last night, one minister's aide reported that his office alone had received, in the last month, 40 letters about human rights commissions, and 0 letters about the Chuck Cadman matter and 0 letters about the Obama/NAFTA leak, for comparison."<sup>115</sup>

Similarly, when the Human Rights Commission attempted to keep the Tribunal's March 25 hearing closed to the public, the Free Dominion moderators launched a letter writing campaign that helped change its mind.<sup>116</sup> Kate posted a request from Connie Fournier of Free Dominion to help encourage concerned citizens to lobby groups like the Civil Liberties Association and Poets, Essayists and Novelists (PEN) Canada to request intervener status in a Section 13 *Charter* Challenge case being brought forward by Marc Lemire.<sup>117</sup>

Because the HRC complaint process is ostensibly open to everyone, conservatives have started making use of it to prove a point. A reader of the conservative blog proudtobecanadian.ca lodged a complaint with the CHRC against the CBC for allowing hateful things to be said about Catholics in the comment threads of their website.<sup>118</sup> A B.C. resident has filed a complaint with the OHRC against Showcase TV for an episode of *Kenny vs. Spenny* in which

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<sup>113</sup> Kate McMillan, "Kill Section 13(1)," SDA, March 5, 2008, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/008203.html>

<sup>114</sup> Kate McMillan, "To Our Most Timid Minister Of Justice," SDA, June 4, 2008, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/008838.html>

<sup>115</sup> Ezra Levant, "A day in the life of Canada's kangaroo court," The Ezra Levant Blog, March 26, 2008, <http://ezrlevant.com/2008/03/a-day-in-the-life-of-canadas-k.html>

<sup>116</sup> Connie Fournier, "CHRC taking submissions on issue of closed hearing! WRITE!" *freedominion.com*, March 12, 2008, <http://www.freedominion.com.pa/phpBB2/viewtopic.php?t=96805>

<sup>117</sup> Kate McMillan, "Freespeechers Take Note," SDA, May 3, 2008, <http://www.smalldeanimals.com/archives/008616.html>

<sup>118</sup> Joel Johannesen, "PTBC reader launches complaint against CBC for hate speech against Catholics in its reader comments," The Proud to Be Canadian Blog, July 11, 2008, [http://www.proudtobecanadian.ca/index/weblog/comments/ptbc\\_reader\\_launches\\_complaint\\_against\\_cbc\\_for\\_hate\\_speech\\_against\\_catholic/](http://www.proudtobecanadian.ca/index/weblog/comments/ptbc_reader_launches_complaint_against_cbc_for_hate_speech_against_catholic/)



Kenny flew a banner over Toronto reading “Jesus Sucks.”<sup>119</sup> In mid-April of 2008 a man named Marc Lebus filed a CHRC Complaint against Montreal Imam About Hammaad Abu Sulaiman al-Hayiti, whose online book *L'Islam ou l'Intégrisme?* argues against both Western conceptions of democracy and equality rights for women, homosexuals, and non-Muslims.<sup>120</sup> Two excerpts about homosexuals are as follows (translated using Google-Translate):

The unbelievers of the West, and some misguided Muslims, do not know what being a man or a woman means. The woman wants to become man and man wants to become a woman or [is] afraid to be a true man. Not to mention the incredible number of homosexuals and lesbians (may Allah curse them and destroy [them] in this life and in the other) who sow disorder in the land and want more and more [to] appear.<sup>121</sup>

Moreover, Islam has prescribed for crimes, [such] as fornication, adultery, homosexuality, punishment very severe. As for the unbelievers, these crimes they are lawful and [so is] propaganda to make them normal and accepted by society! For example, Allah has prescribed... The homosexuals found doing sodomy, cut the head of one who makes it and the one who suffers as the Prophet ordered.<sup>122</sup>

When asked about his thoughts on the complaint, al-Hayiti said “maybe the complaint should have been against the Qor'an, the Word of God! Or maybe even against the bible also! Do you think the commission should censor God? Everything I said in my book is from the revelation, not from me! I have nothing else to say. Thank you!”<sup>123</sup> Kate has noted that, as with Stephen Boisson's letter, there appear to be links between al-Hayiti's homophobic statements and violence

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<sup>119</sup> Susan Lazaruk, "B.C. man files human-rights complaint over 'Jesus sucks'," *Canwest News Service*, August 2, 2008, <http://www.canada.com/vancouver/news/story.html?id=b120c918-ce63-426a-8406-3cf50d2025f2>

<sup>120</sup> Marc Lebus, "Why I filed a complaint with the Canadian Human Rights Commission against a Montreal Salafi imam for 'hate propaganda'," *Point de BASCULE*, April 15, 2008, <http://pointdebasculecanada.ca/spip.php?article365>; Ezra Levant, "CHRC: it's OK to say gays should be 'beheaded', Jews 'spread corruption', Hindus must 'be killed'," *The Ezra Levant Blog*, December 17, 2008, <http://ezrlevant.com/2008/12/chrc-its-ok-to-say-gays-should.html>

<sup>121</sup> About Hammaad Sulaiman al-Hayiti, *L'Islam ou l'Intégrisme? À la lumière du Qor'an et de la Sounnah*, 2006, 181.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.* 237.

<sup>123</sup> Michael J. Murphy, "Meet Salman Hossain, Poster Boy For Section 13," *The Big City Lib Blog*, July 1, 2009, <http://bigcitylib.blogspot.com/2009/07/meet-salman-hossain-poster-boy-for.html>

towards homosexuals. In February of 2009 two Muslim men were sentenced to seven years in prison for plotting to abduct, rob, and murder gay men in Montreal in 2007, mere months after the publication of *L'Islam ou l'Intégrisme?*<sup>124</sup> When in December of 2008 the CHRC announced it would not forward the case against al-Hayiti to the Tribunal, Kate's title read "Canadian Human Rights Commission Ruling Gives OK To 'Exterminate The Gays.'"<sup>125</sup>

Some commentators in the conservative community feel that filing complaints is inappropriate because it lends legitimacy to Human Rights Commissions.<sup>126</sup> Others feel it places the conservatives in a win-win situation; either the CBC, the television network and the Imam are charged for exposing identifiable groups to hatred and contempt, which conservatives feel is the simple fact of the matter, or the Commissions decline to pursue such issues and make their alleged biases all the more evident.

Then there is the matter of legal fees. Here again the SDA community specifically and the North American conservative blogosphere more generally have done much to help. Kate announced she was being sued by Richard Warman for libel on April 10, 2008, in a post titled "Warman vs The Entire Free World." Dozens of conservative bloggers wrote entries about Kate's situation, making her post one of the most read entries she has ever written. The result was thousands of dollars in donations to her legal defence fund from old and new fans:

I'm humbled by your generosity. Donations, small and large, have been pouring in since yesterday morning, at one point more quickly than I was able to send thank you notes. It continued through the day and there were many more waiting this morning. Many of you have indicated you're mailing cheques... Contributors include Americans as well as Canadians, university students and retirees, US and Canadian military, lawyers, and other bloggers, of course—you get the picture... Many have indicated they're redirecting their

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<sup>124</sup> Kate McMillan, "Web of Hate," SDA, February 12, 2009, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/010755.html>

<sup>125</sup> Kate McMillan, "Canadian Human Rights Commission Ruling Gives OK To 'Exterminate The Gays'," SDA, December 17, 2008, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/010301.html>

<sup>126</sup> Jaeger, "Is Turn-around fair game?" SDA, August 3, 2008, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/009220.html>

CPC donations to this effort, and have copied their MP's as to why.<sup>127</sup>

Kate's post generated 263 comments, almost all of which involved words of encouragement, attacks on Warman and the HRCs, or both.

The financial support did not stop there. On April 23, Mark Steyn lent his considerable support to the Freedom Five, announcing that he would be donating all profits from sales of *America Alone* and related merchandise during the following 24 hour period to the legal defence funds of those targeted by Warman.<sup>128</sup> This was quite successful in generating a spike in sales of the book across Europe, Australia, Asia and North America.<sup>129</sup> On July 22, 2008, Kate had to ask her readers to stop sending her money for the legal battle, as she felt she did not need any more.<sup>130</sup>

On the topic of investigative journalism, in mid January, 2008, when Khurram Awan and Muneeza Sheikh—two of the Osgoode law students who filed the complaint against *Maclean's*—held a public forum at Ryerson University, conservative blogger Mike Brock attended and recorded the event.<sup>131</sup> When his questions made it clear he was critical of their Human Rights complaint, the conservative blogging community regarded audience and student attempts to interrupt Brock as further proof of totalitarian leanings among political leftists.<sup>132</sup> Likewise, at the end of April when the complainants held another forum in Toronto and invited the *Maclean's* legal defence team to attend so the complainants could make it clear they would drop their complaint if *Maclean's* agreed to publish a rebuttal, conservative bloggers Kathy Shaidle and RightGirl

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<sup>127</sup> Kate McMillan, "Warman vs The Entire Free World (Bumped)," SDA, April 10, 2008, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/008452.html>

<sup>128</sup> Kate McMillan, "Warman Wednesday," SDA, April 23, 2008, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/008543.html>

<sup>129</sup> Kate McMillan, "Warman Wednesday - Thank You!" SDA, April 24, 2008, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/008553.html>

<sup>130</sup> Kate McMillan, "Warman VS The Whole Free World," SDA, July 22, 2008, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/009155.html>

<sup>131</sup> Mike Brock, "Ryerson-Macleans "Public Forum" Audio: Law Students Call For Expanded Commission Powers," The Forward and Onward Blog, January 18, 2008, <http://noncogent.blogspot.com/2008/01/ryerson-macleans-public-forum-audio.html>

<sup>132</sup> Kathy Shaidle, "Mike Brock's adventures among the pro-censorship Muslims," SDA, January 19, 2008, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/007864.html>

were in attendance.<sup>133</sup>

On the first day of the *Maclean's* hearing in Vancouver, a pro-Steyn group called The Covenant Zone Bloggers staged a protest in front of the courthouse.<sup>134</sup> They handed out pamphlets with information collaboratively contributed by readers of their blogs and carried blank signs—which were Kate's idea<sup>135</sup>—to protest the censorship imposed by the Human Rights Commissions.

## 6.8 HRC Reform: A Battle Won?

Various formal political actions have been and are being taken regarding section 13 of the *CHRA*, and similar sections of provincial legislation, thanks in large part to the initiatives undertaken by the Canadian conservative blogging community. MP Keith Martin led the charge by submitting private member's Motion M-446 proposing the deletion of section 13,<sup>136</sup> that later turned into M-153.<sup>137</sup> Conservative MPs Jason Kenney,<sup>138</sup> Brad Trost,<sup>139</sup> John Williams, Rick Casson,<sup>140</sup> John Baird and Helena Guergis<sup>141</sup> have also spoken out against the use of the Commissions to silence speech. In June of 2008, the federal Human Rights Chief Commissioner Jennifer Lynch hired University of Windsor law professor Richard Moon to investigate the Commission's role in regulating

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<sup>133</sup> Kate McMillan, "Subscription Of Submission?" SDA, April 30, 2008, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/008602.html>

<sup>134</sup> For protest information see <http://covenantzone.blogspot.com/2008/05/we-are-all-mark-steyn-call-for-slogans.html>

<sup>135</sup> Kate McMillan, "The BC Human Rights Tribunal VS Macleans And The Free World," SDA, June 2, 2008, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/008819.html>

<sup>136</sup> Motion available at <http://www2.parl.gc.ca/HousePublications/Publication.aspx?Language=E&Mode=1&Parl=39&Ses=2&DocId=3227597&File=11>

<sup>137</sup> Michael J. Murphy, "Keith Martin Strikes Back!" The Big City Lib Blog, November 21, 2008, <http://bigcitylib.blogspot.com/2008/11/you-daily-nazi-keith-martin-is-back.html>

<sup>138</sup> Kate McMillan, "Lucy, Look What You Started!" SDA, May 3, 2008, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/008623.html>

<sup>139</sup> Ezra Levant, "Government MP: HRCs are 'kangaroo courts that selectively oppress Canadians'," The Ezra Levant Blog, August 5, 2008, <http://ezrlevant.com/2008/08/government-mp-hrcs-kangaroo-co.html>

<sup>140</sup> Ezra Levant, "Two for freedom," The Ezra Levant Blog, July 27, 2008, <http://ezrlevant.com/2008/07/two-for-freedom.html>

<sup>141</sup> Ezra Levant, "Two more cabinet ministers call for review of the CHRC," The Ezra Levant Blog, August 26, 2008, <http://ezrlevant.com/2008/08/two-more-cabinet-ministers-cal.html>

Internet hate speech.<sup>142</sup> The principal recommendation of Moon's report "is that section 13 be repealed so that the censorship of Internet hate speech is dealt with exclusively by the criminal law."<sup>143</sup> Moon recommended the establishment of police hate-squads and mandatory press councils to prevent discrimination against identifiable groups. If discrimination occurs, these press councils could force media outlets to publish rebuttals.<sup>144</sup>

At a federal Conservative Party's policy-convention in November of 2008, conservative bloggers circulated a flyer containing a strong statement advocating the repeal of Section 13 of the *CHRA*.<sup>145</sup> The statement passed "overwhelmingly" when put to a vote.<sup>146</sup> Unfortunately, from the point of view of conservative bloggers, it is difficult for a minority federal government to translate their support for policy changes into substantive action. This difficulty might explain why Prime Minister Stephen Harper said he "has no plans" to amend the *CHRA* in the near future.<sup>147</sup> Nevertheless, a parliamentary review of the federal Commission's mandate regarding speech began in June 2009.<sup>148</sup>

In preparation for this review, the CHRC submitted a Special Report to Parliament recommending changes to the *CHRA* and the Commission's policies. The Commission recommended changes to facilitate the faster dismissal of baseless complaints, to allow the awarding of costs to respondents in exceptional circumstances if complainants abuse the Tribunal process, and to remove the Commission's power to levy fines against respondents. This last change would result in the Commission's primary remedy being cease and desist orders.<sup>149</sup> The Commission pledged to work more closely with its provincial counterparts to

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<sup>142</sup> Market Wire, "Canadian Human Rights Commission Launches Independent Review on Hate Messaging on the Internet," June 17, 2008, <http://www.marketwire.com/mw/release.do?id=869626>

<sup>143</sup> Moon, "Report to the Canadian Human Rights Commission," 31.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.* 42.

<sup>145</sup> Kate McMillan, "Support Resolution P-203," SDA, November 12, 2008, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/010008.html>

<sup>146</sup> Kate McMillan, "P-203," SDA, November 14, 2008, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/010031.html>

<sup>147</sup> Michael J. Murphy, "Speechy War Officially Over. Speechys Lose," The Big City Lib Blog, January 8, 2009, <http://bigcitylib.blogspot.com/2009/01/speechy-war-officially-over-speechys.html>

<sup>148</sup> Ezra Levant, "Parliamentary hearings into CHRC's censorship begin, Lynch refuses to attend," The Ezra Levant Blog, June 16, 2009, <http://ezrlevant.com/2009/06/parliamentary-hearings-into-ch.html>

<sup>149</sup> Canadian Human Rights Commission, "Special Report to Parliament: *Freedom of Expression and Freedom from Hate in the Internet Age*," June 2009, 3.

prevent complainants from filing the same complaint in more than one jurisdiction, as was the case with the *Maclean's* complaints.<sup>150</sup>

Initiatives to reform the provincial Commissions are also under way. In Ontario, the Human Rights Commission held hearings in February 2009 on potential changes to the *Ontario Human Rights Act*.<sup>151</sup> Randy Hillier<sup>152</sup> and Tim Hudak,<sup>153</sup> candidates in the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario's leadership race, proposed abolishing the Ontario Commission altogether. In Alberta, MLA Lindsay Blackett proposed repealing Section 3 of that province's *Human Rights Act*, which deals with hate speech, but Premier Ed Stelmach decided not to proceed with the reform.<sup>154</sup>

Many commentators, such as Jonathan Kay of the *National Post*, are already claiming a form of victory, saying the intense publicity surrounding the cases against Ezra and *Maclean's* has "been one of the biggest shots in the arm to Canadian conservatives in general."<sup>155</sup> The Canadian Civil Liberties Association, which played a key role in establishing Canada's human rights legislation in the first place, is now calling for its reform,<sup>156</sup> as is B'nai Brith Canada.<sup>157</sup> Several Canadian Muslims also have called for reform of the HRCs, most notably Tarek Fatah, himself a victim of radical Islam. Fatah was relentless in his attacks on the *Maclean's* complainant "cry babies" and their "utter driv[er]."

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<sup>150</sup> Canadian Human Rights Commission, "Special Report to Parliament: *Freedom of Expression and Freedom from Hate in the Internet Age*," June 2009, 37.

<sup>151</sup> Kate McMillan, "The Ontario Human Rights regime is incompatible with a free society." SDA, February 9, 2009, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/010729.html>

<sup>152</sup> Michael J. Murphy, "Will Randy Hillier Call For The Abolition Of The Ontario Human Rights Commission," The Big City Lib Blog, March 30, 2009, <http://bigcitylib.blogspot.com/2009/03/will-randy-hillier-call-for-abolition.html>

<sup>153</sup> Ezra Levant, "Tim Hudak proposes to abolish Ontario HRCs," The Ezra Levant Blog, May 18, 2009, <http://ezrlevant.com/2009/05/tim-hudak-proposes-to-abolish.html>

<sup>154</sup> Michael J. Murphy, "Alberta Human Rights Reform Spiked! I Was Right! I Was Gawddamn Fucking Right! And Ezra Got Stiffed In Alberta!!!" The Big City Lib Blog, April 28, 2009, <http://bigcitylib.blogspot.com/2009/04/alberta-human-rights-reform-spiked-i.html>

<sup>155</sup> Jonathan Kay, "Jonathan Kay: The Canadian Islamic Congress tries for a ceasefire — but it's already lost the war," *National Post*, April 29, 2008, <http://network.nationalpost.com/np/blogs/fullcomment/archive/2008/04/29/jonathan-kay-the-canadian-islamic-congress-tries-for-a-ceasefire-but-they-ve-already-lost-the-war.aspx>

<sup>156</sup> Janet Albrechtsen, "Too many rights make a wrong," *The Australian*, January 16, 2008, [http://blogs.theaustralian.news.com.au/janetalbrechtsen/index.php/theaustralian/comments/too\\_many\\_rights\\_make\\_a\\_wrong](http://blogs.theaustralian.news.com.au/janetalbrechtsen/index.php/theaustralian/comments/too_many_rights_make_a_wrong)

<sup>157</sup> B'nai Brith Canada, "Major overhaul of human rights commissions urgently needed," July 31, 2008, <http://bnaibrith.ca/prdisplay.php?id=1360>

Fatah claims that the only harm to Islam resulting from these cases is that average Canadians will perceive Muslims as the enemies of free speech.<sup>158</sup> It is for this very reason Syed Soharwardy claims he dropped his complaint against Ezra Levant, although an Edmonton Muslim group immediately filed a replica suit.<sup>159</sup> Soharwardy says he is unhappy to see Christians, such as Reverend Boissoin, persecuted.<sup>160</sup>

## 6.9 The Claims-Makers' Rhetoric, Part II

Just like the rhetorical analysis of claims made in the first stage of this social problem's natural history, discussed in Chapter 5, it is instructive to analyze the rhetoric employed in the third and fourth stage claims. Here again the definition of the problem is broad, as the conservative bloggers seem to have deliberately blurred the line between concerns regarding the Human Rights Commissions and the defamation lawsuit filed against the bloggers by Richard Warman. Before critics drew attention to its inaccurate portrayal, Kathy Shaidle had an icon on her blog's sidebar soliciting donations and claiming she was "being taken to court for criticising Canada's 'Human Rights' Commissions."<sup>161</sup> Kate stated "this lawsuit has come about as a direct result of the scrutiny bloggers have directed towards one of the CHRC's lynch pins."<sup>162</sup>

The specific examples cited in these later stages were repeated much more frequently by the conservative bloggers, who focused most notably on the plights of Ezra, Steyn, and that of Stephen Boissoin. This repetition is likely because the "pool of sins" is much smaller than that for Islamic terrorism. Conservative bloggers have also scoured the case history of the provincial and federal

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<sup>158</sup> Kate McMillan, "The Robson Square Witch Trials," SDA, June 6, 2008, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/008857.html>

<sup>159</sup> Syed Soharwardy, "Why I'm withdrawing my human rights complaint against Ezra Levant," *The Globe and Mail*, March 30, 2008, <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/servlet/story/RTGAM.20080215.wcomment0215/BNStory/National/home>

<sup>160</sup> Kate McMillan, "Change Of Heart," SDA, July 11, 2008, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/009080.html>

<sup>161</sup> Red Tory, "It Pays to be a Hateful Racist," *Red Tory V.3.0*, <http://redtory.wordpress.com/2008/07/23/it-pays-to-be-a-hateful-racist/>

<sup>162</sup> Kate McMillan, "Warman vs The Entire Free World (Bumped)," SDA, April 10, 2008, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/008452.html>

Commissions looking for additional outrageous cases, with some success. One such case involved two British Columbian lesbians who filed a complaint about a stand up comic who responded to their heckling by making light of their sexual orientation. The BC Commission investigated the complaint and, in a move that earned the institutions the additional pejorative “joke police,” in June 2008 forwarded it to the Tribunal for a hearing.<sup>163</sup>

The conservatives made many claims about specific examples of malfeasance on the part of HRC employees. In hindsight, not all of them were well founded. Many conservatives were upset when it looked like private citizen Nelly Hechme’s wireless Internet had been hacked by CHRC employees in order to post hateful messages on those sites. Kate posted information on May 20, 2008, about an investigation launched into the alleged hacking,<sup>164</sup> but did not report that the investigation, completed in January of 2009, found no malfeasance by CHRC staff.<sup>165</sup> Ezra likewise mentioned the hacking investigation in *Shakedown*, but he did not report the findings.<sup>166</sup> These omissions seem to have been the cause of Russ Hiebert,<sup>167</sup> Chair of the June 2009 Parliamentary review of the CHRC’s role in regulating hate speech, treating the hacking allegation as fact when he questioned the CHRC’s David Langtry about the alleged stolen wireless Internet.<sup>168</sup>

Claims that CHRC investigator Dean Stacey posted racist comments on websites to drum up business have been deemed unfounded,<sup>169</sup> as has the claim that he was investigating Free Dominion before a complaint against that site was

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<sup>163</sup> Ezra Levant, “Did you hear the one about the Joke Police?” *ezralevant.com*, June 26, 2008, <http://ezralevant.com/2008/06/did-you-hear-the-one-about-the.html>

<sup>164</sup> Kate McMillan, “Jadewarr, Son Of Encryption: Updated,” SDA, May 20, 2008, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/008724.html>

<sup>165</sup> Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada, “Investigation finds no evidence that Canadian Human Rights Commission accessed individual’s Internet connection,” January 29, 2009, [http://www.priv.gc.ca/cf-dc/pa/2008-09/pa\\_20090127\\_e.cfm](http://www.priv.gc.ca/cf-dc/pa/2008-09/pa_20090127_e.cfm)

<sup>166</sup> Michael J. Murphy, “A Faint Hope,” The Big City Lib Blog, April 20, 2009, <http://bigcitylib.blogspot.com/2009/04/faint-hope.html>

<sup>167</sup> Conservative Member of Parliament for South Surrey.

<sup>168</sup> Michael J. Murphy, “Dean Steacy Gets Another Opportunity To Sue People,” The Big City Lib Blog, July 9, 2009, <http://bigcitylib.blogspot.com/2009/07/dean-steacy-gets-another-opportunity-to.html>

<sup>169</sup> Michael J. Murphy, “Lemire Retreats! Speechies Get Stiffed!” The Big City Lib Blog, September 6, 2008, <http://bigcitylib.blogspot.com/2008/09/lemire-retreats-speechies-get-stiffed.html>



lodged with the commission.<sup>170</sup> There appears to be no credible evidence connecting Richard Warman to the “Anne Cools” post. However, in March of 2009, in his Canadian Human Rights Tribunal decision for the case *Richard Warman v. Northern Alliance and Jason Ouwendyk*, Tribunal chair Edward Peter Lustig found that Richard Warman had been actively participating on “hate” websites. Lustig found that Jason Ouwendyk had been spreading hatred and contempt, but refused to award damages to Warman because:

[63] I do not see any acceptable reason for Mr. Warman to have participated on the Stormfront or Vanguard sites, since there appears to be ample easily obtained messages on these sites available without his involvement. Moreover, it is possible that his activity in this regard, could have precipitated further hate messages in response. His explanation for including other hate messages in his postings by mistake seems very weak to me.

[64] Mr. Warman has, with the assistance of the Commission, instituted most of the s. 13 (1) complaints under the *Act* that have come before the Tribunal. He has been very successful in these cases and has garnered accolades for his work in this regard. The evidence in this case of his participation on Internet sites similar to the Northern Alliance site is both disappointing and disturbing. It diminishes his credibility.<sup>171</sup>

In September 2009 the Canadian Human Rights Commission opened an investigation into Richard Warman’s tactics.<sup>172</sup>

The estimates employed by the conservative blogosphere in their claims about the HRCs have been less quantitative than those made about Islamic terrorism. No doubt this is in part due to the fact that, from a global perspective, this is a much smaller problem and has thus attracted little if any research attention. However, this has not stopped the conservatives from making estimates. On his book tour in the spring of 2009 Ezra claimed that “the

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<sup>170</sup> Michael J. Murphy, “Free Dominion And The CHRC: Another Section 13 Complaint Coming Down The Pipe,” The Big City Lib Blog, December 27, 2008, <http://bigcitylib.blogspot.com/2008/12/free-dominion-and-chrc-another-section.html>

<sup>171</sup> *Richard Warman v. Northern Alliance and Jason Ouwendyk*, Canadian Human Rights Tribunal, March 13, 2009, [http://www.chrt-tcdp.gc.ca/search/files/t1216\\_2807chrt10.pdf](http://www.chrt-tcdp.gc.ca/search/files/t1216_2807chrt10.pdf)

<sup>172</sup> EMG, “The hunter becomes the hunted,” SDA, September 25, 2009, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/012282.html>

Canadian Human Rights Commission is the largest publisher of hate speech in Canada, full stop.”<sup>173</sup> He offered no concrete evidence for this assertion. Kate made a range claim when she asserted that the battle with the HRCs “***is an existential threat to the Canadian blogosphere. This is not about what we say—this is about who we are*** [emphasis in original].”<sup>174</sup> This statement emphasizes conservative concern about this threat.

Since their battle with the HRCs came about as a byproduct of their claims about Islamic terrorism, the warrants for their claims are likely quite similar—a mix of religious conviction and belief in the importance freedom of expression plays in the maintenance of a just society. The active role played in the struggle against the HRCs by both Ezra and Steyn is a feature of claims-making activities noted by other researchers, who often find that claims-makers get involved because they have very personal interests in a matter.<sup>175</sup>

Finally, the conclusion that conservatives offer at the fourth and final stage is much clearer than that offered during the first stage, where the paramount concern was raising awareness of the threat posed by Islamic terrorism. Once they had turned their sights on the HRCs, the conservative blogging community’s preferred solution was to dismantle these institutions entirely. The refrain constantly echoed throughout this saga, from one end of the community to another, was “*Fire. Them. All.*”<sup>176</sup>

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<sup>173</sup> Ezra Levant, “Ezra Levant Q & A - Part 4,” May 14, 2009, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yT946TGtjvo>

<sup>174</sup> Kate McMillan, “People wonder why I quit university teaching,” The Small Dead Animals: THE ROADKILL DIARIES (SDA) Blog, April 11, 2008, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/008462.html>

<sup>175</sup> Cynthia Gentry, “The Social Construction of Abducted Children as a Social Problem,” 414.

<sup>176</sup> Kate McMillan, “Fire. Them. All.” SDA, August 16, 2008, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/009316.html>; Ezra Levant, “Fire. Them. All.' goes mainstream!” The Ezra Levant Blog, July 16, 2008, <http://ezralevant.com/2008/07/fire-them-all-goes-mainstream.html>; Revnant Dream, comment on “Frankly, My Dear,” SDA, comment posted June 22, 2008, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/008949.html#c282224>

## 7: A NATURAL HISTORY IN REVIEW

Spector and Kitsuse defined social problems as “the activities of individuals or groups making assertions of grievances and claims with respect to some putative conditions.”<sup>1</sup> They believed the activities of all groups in society that try to make claims regarding such conditions follow a “common portrait,”<sup>2</sup> or “natural history,”<sup>3</sup> with four distinct stages. The claims made by the Canadian conservative blogging community first regarding Islamic terrorism, and later about Canada’s Human Rights Commissions, have proceeded through each of these four stages. In the first stage groups assert the existence of some condition they feel society has ignored in an attempt to stir up controversy and make their concern an issue.<sup>4</sup> In Chapter 5, I documented the many claims the Canadian conservative blogosphere is making to raise awareness of Islamic terrorism’s threat to Western Civilization. Stage 1 is said to be complete when these claims result in a conflict with other groups who “do not use the same values or who have opposite interests in the condition in question.”<sup>5</sup> The Human Rights complaints lodged against Ezra and *Maclean’s* magazine meets this criterion.

Stage 2 requires the involvement of official agencies to help resolve the dispute,<sup>6</sup> and Stage 3 represents a shift in focus away from the Stage 1 threat towards the institution designed to resolve the conflict:

The important and distinctive feature of Stage 3 social problems, then, is that the claims are not concerned directly with the imputed conditions asserted in Stage 1. Rather, the claims are made against the organizations established to ameliorate, eliminate, and otherwise change those conditions.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Spector & Kitsuse, *Constructing Social Problems*, 73.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 136.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 141.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 142.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* 148.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* 152.

The subsequent conservative concern regarding the HRCs meets these criteria. The battle against the HRCs was a proxy war fought by Canadian conservative bloggers in their larger struggle against Islamic terrorism. Ronald Weitzer notes that moral crusaders often “turn their sights on evils that were not originally targeted but come to be associated with the foundational problem.”<sup>8</sup>

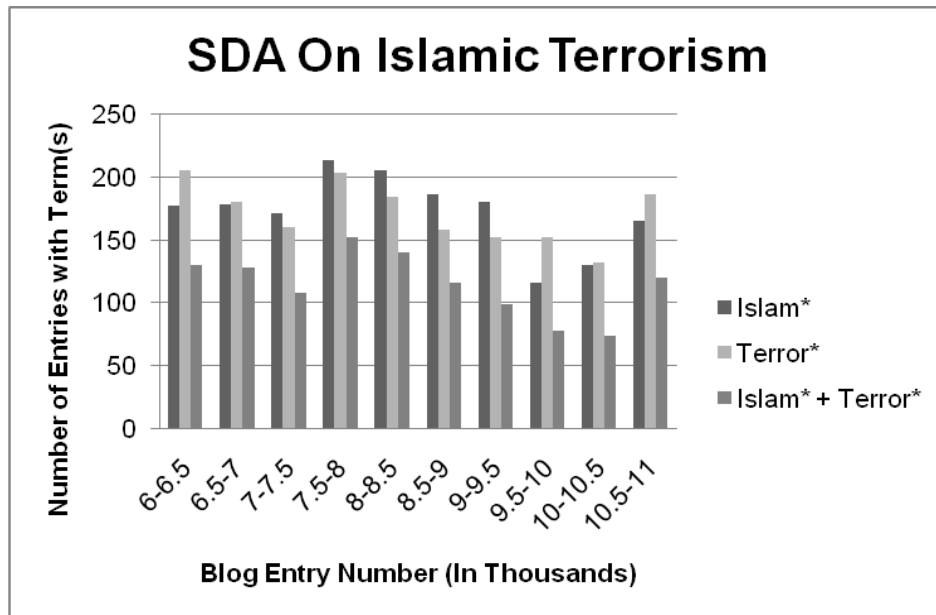
Conservative concern over the HRCs reached a fever pitch in late April until June of 2008. To illustrate this, I have constructed the following bar graphs to depict the amount of blog entries at SDA over a two-year period, including comments, which contain certain key words related to Islamic terrorism and the HRCs. The graphs display search results for the period April 18, 2007 through to March 17, 2009, during which time the SDA bloggers posted approximately 5,000 entries. There are ten bar-clusters in each graph, with each cluster representing approximately 500 entries and a 2.4-month time period. Each cluster contains three bars, and each bar represents the frequency of a different key-word search term for that period.

The first graph, “SDA On Islamic Terrorism,” shows the results for entries containing any word that starts with “Islam,” such as “Islamic” or “Islamofascism,” any word that starts with “Terror,” such as “Terrorist” or “Terrorism,” and any entry that contains both words starting either with “Islam” and “Terror.” These terms co-vary. The number of entries containing words starting with both “Islam” and “Terror” range from 74 to 152, with an average of 113 out of 500, or 22.6% of all entries. Further, the distribution is quite stable over time, starting with 130 and ending with 120.

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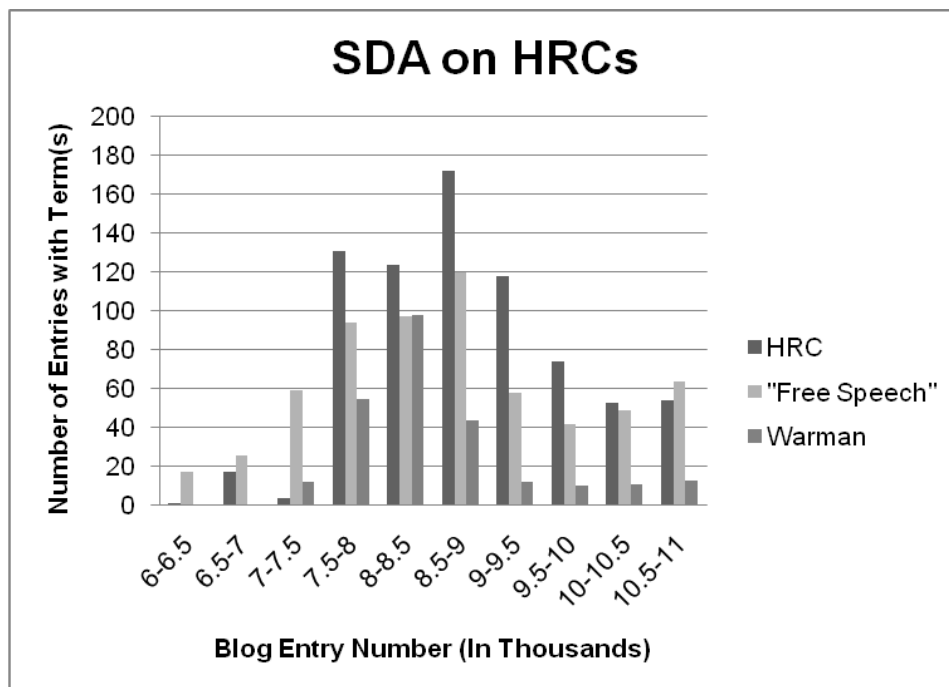
<sup>8</sup> Weitzer, “The Social Construction of Sex Trafficking,” 464.

Figure 7.1 Islamic Terrorism Related Terms in SDA Entries



This stability is clearer when compared to the bar graph depicting the incidence of HRC related terms over the same period (Figure 7.2). The depicted terms searched for in this second graph are “HRC,” “Free Speech,” and “Warman.”

Figure 7.2 Human Rights Commission Related Terms in SDA Entries



This is a much more volatile distribution than in the first graph. The number of entries containing the term “HRC” range from 1 to 172, starting with 1 and ending with 54. Both “HRC” and “Free Speech” peak in the entry #8500 through to #8999 periods, which corresponds to April 16, 2008, through to June 29, 2008. It was during this time that the *Maclean’s* trial started in Vancouver and a battle was fought to keep the Marc Lemire hearing open to the public. This is also when Richard Warman filed suit against Kate and the others for defamation. During this time, Kate installed a comment filter to prevent readers from defaming Richard Warman, which explains why search results for the term “Warman” drop off so quickly. The distribution of both these graphs says a lot about the connections between objective reality and claims-making activities. When the conservatives felt that they were under attack by Canada’s Human Rights Commissions and Tribunals, the conservatives fought back as hard as they could, and their discourse reflects the increased awareness and attention they were paying to these institutions. Once the immediate legal battles had ended or memories of them had faded, conservative concerns regarding them fizzled.

The final stage of a social problem’s natural history involves the claims-makers advocating alternate mechanisms and institutions to deal with the original threat, or concluding “that it is no longer possible to ‘work within the system.’”<sup>9</sup> For Canadian conservative bloggers, the solution is to dismantle the HRCs entirely. The refrain constantly echoed throughout this saga from one end of the community to another was “*Fire. Them. All.*”<sup>10</sup> Their hope is that a political climate can be established in which everyone is free to espouse their worldview, where ideas can truly compete in an open marketplace without any special advantage bestowed by the State. In support of a fundraiser for the left-wing comedian Guy Earle, soon to be before the BCHRC for mocking two lesbian hecklers in a Vancouver comedy club, Mark Steyn wrote:

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<sup>9</sup> Spector & Kitsuse, *Constructing Social Problems*, 153.

<sup>10</sup> Kate McMillan, “Fire. Them. All.” SDA, August 16, 2008, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/009316.html>; Ezra Levant, “‘Fire. Them. All.’ goes mainstream!” The Ezra Levant Blog, July 16, 2008, <http://ezralevant.com/2008/07/fire-them-all-goes-mainstream.html>; Revnant Dream, comment on “Frankly, My Dear,” SDA, comment posted June 22, 2008, <http://www.smalldeadanimals.com/archives/008949.html#c282224>

the reality is that any truly free society will have its share of anti-Semites and homophobic pastors and right-wing blowhards and left-wing pottymouth comics, and, if you give the government license to squash the liberties of selected citizens, you soon find they're selecting all kinds of other folk.<sup>11</sup>

The Canadian conservative blogging community sees such a stance as necessary to clear a path towards sounding the alarm on the threat of Islamic terrorism. The fact that their discourse contained a high incidence of terms related to Islam and terrorism before, during, and after the peak of their concern for the HRCs supports this contention, and helps validate Spector and Kitsuse's natural history of claims-making activities.

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<sup>11</sup> Kathy Shaidle, "Steyn on Guy Earle's Toronto fundraiser this Saturday," The Five Feet of Fury Blog, July 15, 2008, <http://www.fivefeetoffury.com/:entry:fivefeet-2008-07-15-0000/>

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