


2015

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## KORA Citation

Joubert, Tara L. S., "'Crisis', 'Crime', and the Power to Heal: A Content Analysis of Online Canadian News Articles Regarding a National Inquiry on Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women" (2015). KORA *Student Works*: Paper 6.  
<http://kora.kpu.ca/studentwork/6>

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# **“Crisis”, “crime”, and the power to heal: A content analysis of online Canadian news articles regarding a national inquiry on missing and murdered Aboriginal women**

**Tara Joubert**

## **ABSTRACT**

*Over the past four years, the call for a national inquiry on missing and murdered Aboriginal women in Canada has grown in momentum. After several highly publicized murders and the recent release of a Royal Canadian Mounted Police report, the topic of missing and murdered Aboriginal women has garnered considerable media attention. Thus, the purpose of this descriptive study is to examine how the issues surrounding the call for a national inquiry on missing and murdered Aboriginal women have been represented in online Canadian news between 2010-2014. Employing content analysis on news articles from four online news websites, the results indicated that issues were framed through a model of conflict between opposing sides. International and domestic advocates framed the inquiry as a need for justice, while the opposing federal government suggested it was redundant.*

## **KEY WORDS**

Content analysis; qualitative research; Aboriginal; women; Canadian; online news; missing; murdered; national inquiry; news articles; media representations; Indigenous; First Nations; Metis

## **INTRODUCTION & LITERATURE REVIEW**

There have been 1,181 women lost. According to several comprehensive research reports conducted between 2004 and 2013 by Amnesty International Canada, the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC), The United Nations (UN), and by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) respectively, a disproportionate amount of Aboriginal women are found to be at heightened risk of violence due to social and economic marginalization opposed to non-indigenous women. The most current findings further indicate that there have been approximately 1,181 police reported incidents of Aboriginal female homicides and disappearances in Canada between 1980 and 2012 (Royal Canadian Mounted Police, 2014, p. 7).

Aboriginal women, including Canadian First Nations, Metis, and Inuit, have been overrepresented in such homicide statistics throughout the past 30 years (NWAC, 2009, p.94). In the highly publicized 2004 joint police investigation into British Columbia's Robert Pickton, sixteen out of the reported sixty missing and subsequently murdered women were Aboriginal. Although this number may appear low, research conducted by Amnesty International Canada found that the number of Pickton's Aboriginal victims was disproportionate to the percentage of Aboriginal women living in Vancouver at the time of the disappearances (Amnesty International Canada, 2004, p. 14). The RCMP (2014) further confirmed this trend of disproportionality in their *National Operational Overview* on missing and murdered Aboriginal women, which found that Aboriginal women account for 16% of all female homicides in Canada, and for 11% of all missing women - statistics that are three to four times higher than the overall representation of Aboriginal women in the Canadian population.

These statistics have become difficult to ignore with the recent murders of two more Aboriginal females within this past year. With the highly publicised deaths of Loretta Saunders, a 26-year old Inuit women found slain along the Trans-Canada Highway near Moncton, New Brunswick, and 15-year old Tina Fontaine whose body was found in Winnipeg's Red River, Canadian news media has directed much of its attention towards the topic of missing and murdered Aboriginal women and the re-inspired calls for government action. Although missing and murdered Aboriginal women in Canadian news is not a new phenomenon and has been studied in the past, the renewal of calls for a national inquiry into this issue have appeared to be growing in momentum amidst the release of the RCMP's *National Operational Overview*, and the deaths of two Aboriginal women. Thus, these events have created an opportunity to study the topic within a new context.

While previous research studies have thoroughly examined media representations of missing and murdered Aboriginal women, the findings of these studies provide a foundational understanding of how Canadian news media has previously presented vulnerable and victimized Aboriginal women to the greater public. In the study “Reproducing Marginality in News Discourses” by Jiwani and Young (2006), the victims of British Columbia’s Robert Pickton, the man responsible for the death of 60 missing and murdered women from Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside, were represented by The Vancouver Sun newspaper as women synonymous with prevailing and historic stereotypes. These stereotypes, which included constructions of Aboriginal women as deviants and drug-addicted sex workers, situated Picton’s victims on the margins both in life and after death (Jiwani & Young, 2006, p. 897-899). Additionally with “Newsworthy Victims,” Gilchrist’s (2010) comparison of news discourses on missing and murdered White women and Aboriginal women in Canada revealed clear inconsistencies between the press coverage of White and Aboriginal victims. While the Aboriginal women had been presented as degenerate beings and had been stigmatized as prostitutes and addicts, Gilchrist further found that the idealization of the White victims re/produced narratives of colonization, racism, and sexism within the sampled articles (Gilchrist, 2010, p. 4).

Building upon these findings, the central purpose of this descriptive study is to examine how the issues surrounding the call for a national inquiry on missing and murdered Aboriginal women have been represented in online Canadian news from 2010-2014. I additionally employed two guiding research questions to ensure in-depth analysis for this study. My first guiding research question is which voices have been included and excluded in news reports, and what are the different perspectives that have been presented? I chose to adopt the NWAC’s definition of “Aboriginal” for this study so that my examination of various voices would

encompass the distinct First Nations, Metis, and Inuit groups of Canada in my sample of articles (NWAC, 2009, p.98). My second guiding research question focused on how the need for a national inquiry has been framed by different interest groups. This question allowed for “thick descriptions” of how the call for a national inquiry has been framed in the Canadian media, drawing upon the rich language that has been used to create such frames (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011, p. 11). Throughout this paper the method of data collection, the coding processes, the findings of study and their meanings will be discussed.

### **RESEARCH DESIGN & METHOD**

To describe how the issues surrounding the call for a national inquiry on missing and murdered Aboriginal women have been represented in Canadian online news, I employed content analysis as a method of data collection for this study. Content analysis, traditionally understood as the “systematic examination” of text, is a qualitative method of data collection used to examine “non-living material” (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011, p. 228). While other qualitative research methods rely on collecting data from individuals or groups through interactions and means of observation, the use of content analysis for this study permitted me to remain non-interactive with my data, as it is an “unobtrusive” method (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011, p. 227). This is significantly important because as I was specifically interested in examining news articles and therefore non-living data, the use of this particular method enabled the data to be “naturalistic” (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011, p. 228). I did not need to interview or observe participatory individuals in relation to the call for a national inquiry, and thus I was not required to intrude upon the social life of my data and risk influencing it through my interaction. Online news articles existed independently from my research and this “unobtrusive” element of

content analysis added authenticity and integrity to the data (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011, p. 227-228).

The unobtrusiveness of content analysis additionally strengthened this research study as the use of non-living data permitted the bypassing of certain ethical issues that surround other methods of data collection. If an interviewing method was alternatively employed as opposed to content analysis, there would have been ethical issues concerning informed consent of human subjects, such as the families and friends of victims who previously disappeared or have been killed. Furthermore, it would have been challenging to find individuals willing to partake in an interview, as the subject of missing and murdered women is a sensitive topic for many who have experienced the loss of a family member, friend, or acquaintance. This would further raise ethical concerns as participation could possibly bring up painful memories and emotions for those individuals. Content analysis additionally strengthened this particular study as it aligned with my area of curiosity and mission question. For my area of curiosity, I was fascinated by the phenomenon of calls for a national inquiry of missing and murdered Aboriginal women (Chenail, 1997, para 16). To explore this topic of interest, the mission question governing this research was created to examine how issues surrounding the call for a national inquiry have been represented in Canadian online news. Content analysis enabled for the analysis of such news articles and therefore contributed to keeping this study plum and in line (Chenail, 1997, para 16-17).

In keeping in line with selecting non-living data for the purpose of examining media representations of the issues surrounding the call for a national inquiry on missing and murdered Aboriginal women, this study employed a combination of a purposive and convenience sampling strategy to obtain a final sample of 75 online news articles. For this research study, I specifically wanted to examine news articles published after Robert Pickton's investigation and trial, as both

Jiwani and Young's (2006) and Gilchrist's (2006) studies pertained to that time. To build upon their research, certain parameters were created for the selection of articles as criteria for inclusion. Such parameters consisted of a timeframe, which required articles to be published between 2010 and October 2014. Articles further had to address or refer to the call for a national inquiry into missing and murdered Aboriginal women. These specific parameters were chosen to create a purposive sample, and thus, ensure that the data collected would achieve the overall research goals of this study.

As the central research question was very specific and limited in nature, purposive sampling provided an in-depth and detailed data set as the creation of such parameters permitted the exclusion of articles (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011, p. 48). Such exclusions consisted of articles that discussed an inquiry into other events such as the Robert Pickton investigation or violence against women, rather than a national inquiry of missing and murdered Aboriginal women. I furthermore employed a convenience sampling strategy with the use of the internet in my data collection process. Although the use of print newspapers was an alternative to online news websites, it would have been difficult to find an appropriate number of older articles that spanned the past four years as newspapers are generally discarded after having been read. It is possible that issues would have arisen concerning obtaining a sufficient final sample and ultimately having accurate results.

The internet facilitated the data collection as it is easily accessible to the public, allows for quick searches, and is a convenient way to explore a variety of online news organizations. In the process of selecting suitable online data sources, from which I drew a convenience sample of news articles, the concept of a national inquiry and the topic of missing and murdered Aboriginal women were factors I considered. The term "national inquiry" in relation to the issue of missing

and murdered Aboriginal women seemed not only to refer to a nationwide investigation, it further appeared to denote that the topic of missing and murdered Aboriginal women is a nationwide issue as well. For that reason, I decided to utilize two national news websites: *The National Post* and the *Canadian Broadcasting Center (CBC)*. Additionally, as Jiwani and Young (2006) had previously explored the representations of missing and murdered Aboriginal victims in *The Vancouver Sun* during the Robert Pickton investigation, *The Vancouver Sun* news website was further included as a local data source.

The purpose of employing multiple news websites in this study was to ensure that the final sample of articles would be reflective of both local and national representations, and therefore serve as a triangulation technique. Data triangulation, which refers to the use of multiple data sources within the same study, for example, *The National Post*, *The CBC*, and *The Vancouver Sun*, is an effective technique to enhance the validity of one's research and gain the confidence of a reader. As there may have been a variety of representations and media frames on the issues surrounding the call for national inquiry on missing and murdered Aboriginal women, collecting data from multiple data sources increased the likelihood that the final sample of articles would encompass alternative and varying representations. Data triangulation further enhances the validity of the research if similar findings are drawn (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011, p. 48-52). In the initial stages of collecting data from these three news websites, there appeared to be a lack of varying news articles that covered the call for a national inquiry on missing and murdered Aboriginal women as they had only provided a preliminary sample size of 43 selected online news articles. In deciding to employ the *Canadian Television News (CTV)* website as a fourth data source, it was discovered that there had been numerous news articles published at both *CTV's* national and local level that had not been included in the other data sources. The



addition of a fourth news website filled in gaps that were initially unknown, further increasing the validity of the research.

In order to create a sample of articles, I initially employed an additional website that permitted one to conduct a simultaneous search of various selected online newspapers. Upon conducting a search via the *Infomart* website, it was learned that one had to pay for access to the articles. To avoid the cost, the search engines of *The National Post*, *The Vancouver Sun*, *The CBC*, and *CTV News* were alternatively utilized. Employing the key terms “national inquiry” and “missing and murdered Aboriginal,” each news websites’ search engines produced approximately 18 pages of articles that contained the search terms within its body or headline. As articles had been listed chronologically with the most recent publications on the first page, I first examined articles at the end of the lists to identify ones that had been published in 2010, and subsequently examined articles thereafter up to October 2014. Each article was examined for relevance to issues surrounding a national inquiry on missing and murdered Aboriginal women. To ensure that additional articles pertaining to this research topic were not overlooked, the search terms “national inquiry” and “Aboriginal” were further used to draw a sample until no new results were given. This process was repeated for each data source to the point of saturation (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011, p. 47).

In the process of selecting suitable news articles for this research study, several of the same articles resulted in two or more news websites, *The National Post* and *The Vancouver Sun*. If the two articles posted on different websites contained the same content, only one was included in the final sample. If the majority of one’s content was similar yet had additional information regarding the call for a national inquiry on missing and murdered Aboriginal women which the other did not address, both articles were included in the final sample. Initially the final

sample consisted of 77 articles. When reviewing the collected articles, however, two of the 77 were identified as opinion pieces written from the perspective of a *National Post* journalist and had belonged to the editorial section of the news website. As I wanted a final sample of articles that appeared objective and void of the author's personal thoughts and opinions, the two articles were excluded. This exclusion created a final sample of 75 online Canadian news articles, all drawn from the four data sources. There was, however, one article included in the final sample of 75 articles that did not come from one of the four data sources. During the preliminary stages of data collection, news articles that appeared to be of some relevance to the research topic were saved on my computer for future review. When I went back to review articles that had been initially collected, the link to an article published on *The Vancouver Sun* website no longer existed. As I wanted to include this article in my final sample, I used the Google search engine to find the article from an alternative news website. Fortunately, *The Prince George Citizen* posted the article on its website and accredited it to *The Vancouver Sun*. This article was included in the final sample.

Although I excluded the two articles, as they seemed to present the journalist's views and perspectives on issues surrounding the call for a national inquiry, it is important to note that the articles included in the final sample are not completely void of bias and possible inaccuracies. Journalists face a number of challenges when writing news articles or columns that can possibly affect the way in which their information is presented to the public. One of the issues that might have affected my final sample of articles is that some of the journalists could have faced strict deadlines. As they may have had limited time to collect important information before submitting their work, such as interviewing and fact gathering, these journalists might have imparted their own knowledge of an event or topic to draw connections between facts in a manner that made

sense to not only them, but to the greater public as well. Doing so, however, can open an article to a journalist's biases and to possible inaccurate information that is not necessarily driven by fact.

A second issue that may have affected the articles in my final sample is that journalists may have condensed or left out vital information to ensure that their article met the required length and word limitations. It is possible that some of the articles included in my final sample are not completely representative of the larger issue regarding missing and murdered Aboriginal women as information may not have been fully presented or may not have been included. These are limitations to the use of content analysis and serve as a weakness to this study. Although content analysis is a useful method for data collection as it involves the analysis of text or content and does not require interaction with participants, there are limitations associated concerning author bias and the possibility of inaccurate information. If such biases or inaccuracies were incorporated into several of the articles obtained for the final sample, the misinformation could have skewed the entire sample thus affecting the validity of my findings and the study's credibility (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011, p. 82). For these reasons, data triangulation and the use of four different online news websites additionally served an important and beneficial purpose as it established rigor. Similar findings drawn from the final sample would enhance the validity of the research as previously mentioned (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011, p. 52)

Throughout process of selecting appropriate raw data followed by coding, a memo pad was used to keep track of the decisions made, the challenges that arose, and changes to the central and guiding research questions. It is important to note that one of the main changes that occurred during the process of coding was a change in the central research question and guiding

research questions. When starting this study, the central question initially sought to examine news discourses on the call for a national inquiry, however, when the coding process began, it was noticed that what was being observed and coded did not necessarily pertain to discourse analysis. The central research question was then refined to focus on media representations and frames as it more appropriately aligned with the area of curiosity and the data that was collected (Chenail, 1997, para 16-17). Additionally throughout the data selection and coding process, several guiding questions were added, excluded, and refined a number of times before being finalized as the guiding questions that govern this study. One of the initial questions used had asked what events had transpired throughout the past four years that re-ignited calls for a national inquiry. Blocks of text relating to this question were selected for raw data, and subsequently were used for coding; however, the guiding research question was ultimately omitted as it inferred causality and did not appear to pertain to media representations.

While the use of memos was beneficial to keep track of thoughts, decisions made, and the progression of the study, transparency was ensured with the use of memo-ing. When employing content analysis, there is a risk of researcher bias in addition to author bias as this particular research method is open to subjective observation. If a researcher possesses any biases or personal connections to their topic of research, there is a risk that those biases can negatively affect the way in which one codes and interprets data, and thus ultimately skew one's findings. As both a woman and a Metis, I was aware that I carried a personal connection to the topic of missing and murdered Aboriginal, and therefore, I chose to track each step of this study to ensure that my opinions and preconceptions did not influence my decision making process. Although I employed neutral language when creating the central and guiding research questions so that they did not convey bias, I admit that this research study began with initial assumptions critical of the

Canadian government and sympathetic toward Aboriginal peoples (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011, p.253). Although memo-ing did not take place as often as it should have during the coding process, memo-ing was used to provide transparency regarding the progression of the study and the decision-making process concerning question formation, sampling, and analysis. In keeping a record of my critical assumptions, what was observed and the decisions made, memo-ing ensured accountability and enabled me to evaluate whether my bias had slanted the way in which research questions were formed, or how my final sample was collected.

### **CODING PROCESS**

After articles were examined for suitability and collected for the final sample, content was reviewed once more in preparation for the inductive coding process. Coding, which refers to the extraction of meaning from non-numerical data such as words, is a process of analysis in which meaningful segments of text are identified and examined for larger themes and patterns (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011, p. 309). The aim is that these themes and patterns will provide understanding of the greater phenomenon or social process being studied (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011, p. 309). During the data preparation phase which involved preparing for what was going to be analyzed in relation to my central and guiding research questions, I specifically observed the news articles for individuals and organizations; who people were and the perspectives they offered in relation to issues surrounding the call for a national inquiry on missing and murdered Aboriginal women. Using a word document, certain blocks of text and sentences that seemed to address these components and areas of focus were imported into a chart that was used to identify each article by the source of its location, its headline, and the date it was published. I first placed each article in chronological order by year and month, and then subsequently assigned a code on the top right-hand corner of the page that corresponded to a separate log of the articles. This

chart enabled a neat organization of the articles and relevant blocks of text that served as the raw data for the coding process.

Once the raw data was collected and appropriately organized, I “open coded” each block of text or each sentence (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011, p. 311). Text was carefully analyzed for different voices represented as well as opinions and statements, which were then subsequently assigned literal and descriptive codes. As individuals and groups were identified in the text by an official title or as a representative of an organization, words signifying that individual’s position or title were used as a literal code. Literal codes were additionally utilized when individuals used rich language to describe their opinions or perspectives on issues surrounding the call for a national inquiry on missing and murdered Aboriginal women (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011, p. 311). To keep in line with the descriptive purpose of this research study, specific words used to characterize thick descriptions were also employed as literal codes. This was done so that the rich language would bring a level of understanding and contextualization in the analysis and interpretation phase of coding. Descriptive codes were additionally assigned to segments of text if a perspective appeared to be overtly implied, such as with statistics and numerical information. A descriptive code was used to describe what appeared to be insinuated, as well as to describe what the numerical information was. In allowing my data to determine the codes assigned to different blocks of text through my interpretation rather than beginning the coding process with a predetermined set of codes, I employed an inductive coding procedure. This involved engaging with the data until larger categories, themes, and patterns became visible apart from the literal text (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011, p. 309-310).

After literal and descriptive codes were assigned to segments of text, a poster board was used to help specify and visually make sense of what was initially coded. With the headings

“national inquiry” and “missing and murdered Aboriginal women” placed in the middle of the poster, I started to sort alike codes around the headings using arrows and lines to draw connections between different groups. Doing so helped direct my train of thought. The use of a poster was especially helpful as several categories and sub-categories began to emerge from the groupings of codes. To keep track of what emerged, I labelled several of the posters’ groupings with interpretive codes that were not drawn directly from the text (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011, p. 311). I then started to reorganize the codes into smaller groupings on different pieces of paper as only a few categories had materialized from the poster. As certain typologies became evident, I created a word document to reorganize my codes once again with distinct analytical categories and subcategories under sections regarding various interest groups and voices, how they framed the issue of missing and murdered Aboriginal, as well as their perspectives regarding the call for a national inquiry. Each section was then broken down into key classifications and subcategories with its corresponding initial descriptive and literal codes charted underneath. I decided to format the key categories in this manner with the initial codes underneath for transparency and to demonstrate how such categories were conceptualized. Some of the charts appeared to have very few initial codes in comparison to other categories; however, this does not mean there was a lack of news content regarding that topic. It simply meant that when certain information or quotes were repeated throughout the final sample of articles, the same descriptive and literal codes assigned to that text were additionally repeated, and no new codes were created. Once the analytical categories appeared finalized and no new patterns emerged, each category was highlighted with a different colour. Corresponding codes were additionally colour coordinated throughout the pieces of paper, the poster, and the raw data, to aid in the interpretation of concepts and to track how the findings of this study developed.

## **FINDINGS & DISCUSSION**

*Issues have been framed through a model of conflict between two opposing sides: Advocates vs. the federal government*

<b>INTERNATIONAL ADVOCATES</b> Individuals who represent international organizations, and / or countries			
U. N. Envoy	U.N. Human Rights Investigator	New York Human Rights Watch	Amnesty International Canada
U. N. Special Rapporteur of The Rights of Indigenous Peoples	U. N. Committee	Cuba	Iran
Belarus	Russia	Switzerland	Norway
Slovenia	Slovakia	New Zealand	United Kingdom
Netherlands	Senior U. N. Rights Official		

\*Located in Appendix C

One of the first prevailing patterns that emerged from the coding process was a distinct dichotomy of interest groups that have supported issues surrounding the call for a national inquiry and interest groups that have not. Throughout the initial coding phase, descriptive and literal codes were assigned to different voices that had “supported,” “endorsed,” “called” or had spoken in favor of a national inquiry on missing and murdered Aboriginal women. By employing literal codes that tied to a person’s title or position such as the code “Premier of Manitoba,” different typologies of interest groups emerged throughout the process of sorting and resorting literal and descriptive codes. What I found during this process of reorganization was that these interest groups and voices appeared to be “advocates” for the call of a national inquiry, and initially consisted of “political advocates,” “organizational advocates,” “family of victims” and “community members.” A process of synthesis and reorganization, however, produced two primary typologies. The first typology of advocacy interest groups was “international advocates.” This consisted of individuals who represented international organizations such as “New York Human Rights Watch” and a “United Nations (UN) human rights investigator,” as well as international countries such as “Cuba” and “Iran.”



The second typology discovered involved “domestic advocates” which consisted of several sub-typologies of supporters in Canada. The initial category of “political advocates” developed into “domestic political advocates” which encompassed Canadians with political status at the federal, territorial, provincial, or municipal level such as a “Federal Liberal Leader.” The second sub-typology was “domestic specialized advocates” who were representatives or members of organizations with expertise regarding human rights, the law, and or Aboriginal peoples. Individuals pertaining to this typology included the codes “Chief Commissioner of Canada Human Rights Commission” and “Native Women’s Association of Canada (NWAC).” The final “domestic grassroots advocates” typology encompassed various community members including “Winnipeg protestors” and a “Metis celebrity,” as well as relatives of Aboriginal victims that have either disappeared or have been murdered.

The findings of these two primary typologies are important as they contextualize how issues surrounding this social phenomenon have been framed in online Canadian news reports. The prominent patterns of “international advocates” and “domestic advocates” appear to show that not only have voices in support of a national inquiry been included in news reports between 2010-2014, they are the voices of various international and Canadian human rights organizations, politicians with decision making powers, and Aboriginal peoples with a connection to missing and murdered Aboriginal women. These advocacy groups are not solely comprised of ordinary people; they consist of individuals with personal experience, knowledge, and expertise on the issues surrounding missing and murdered women.

In contrast to the various interest groups that were found to have supported the call of a national inquiry, the initial coding phase further identified voices that had “rejected,” “rebuffed,” “ignored,” or spoken against the call for a national inquiry on missing and murdered Aboriginal

women. In a similar manner to coding advocacy voices, I assigned literal codes to voices or interest groups that pertained to their title such as the code “Prime Minister,” and subsequently organized the codes. A pattern of Canadian political voices emerged from this process and appeared as unsupportive to the call for a national inquiry on missing and murdered Aboriginal women. These political voices were further categorized as “domestic political opposition,” which consisted of individuals with political status at the federal, territorial, provincial, or municipal level, such as the “Federal Conservative government” and “Federal Aboriginal Affairs Minister.” One other voice was categorized as “domestic specialized opposition” which consisted of a “professor and director of Canadian studies – University of Toronto.”

Finding the patterns of distinct advocates for a national inquiry as well as for the federal government as opposition, fostered the interpretation that issues presented in online Canadian media have been framed through a model of conflict. It appears that there have been two sides in contention with one another regarding issues surrounding the call for a national inquiry on missing and murdered Aboriginal women, and this theme of conflict between advocacy interest groups and federal government is consistent with the findings in other literature. In a report for violence against Indigenous women, Amnesty International Canada identified several interest groups that have previously criticized the federal government for a perceived lack of response towards issues facing Aboriginal women. These interest groups identified in Amnesty’s report are consistent with several advocacy interest groups found in this study. They included the “UN Committee of Human Rights” which was found to be an “international advocate,” Canadian frontline organizations which is consistent with “domestic specialized advocates,” as well as “relatives of victims ” which is comparable to the finding of “domestic grassroots advocates” (Amnesty International Canada, 2004, p. 20).

Advocates demand a national inquiry into a nationwide catastrophe

**HOW THE ISSUE OF MISSING & MURDERED ABORIGINAL WOMEN HAS BEEN FRAMED**

By Advocatory Interest Groups

**Frame 1: A National Catastrophe That Needs to Address**

Codes: “a national tragedy”, “national disgrace”, “epidemic”, “unresolved issue”, “Canadian – national issue”, “disturbing phenomenon”, “a persistent and serious issue”, “a severe problem”, “a severe problem”, “reached crisis proportions”, “a crisis”, “issue of magnitude”, “affects everyone”, “a community issue”, “ongoing national crisis”, “black eye for Canada”, “needs attention”, “issue been ignored for too long,” unacceptable”, “a human being issue”, a human rights issue”,

- “long-term pattern”, “many victims “–“ growing number of victims”, “statistics are shocking”

o RCMP Report/ Statistic, Native Women’s Association of Canada Statistic, Sister In Spirit Statistic

\*Located in Appendix C

A second prevailing pattern that emerged from the coding process was a frame that advocacy interest groups have employed in their demand for a national inquiry. During the initial phase of coding, literal and descriptive codes were assigned to text that contained rich and thick descriptions regarding the issue of missing and murdered Aboriginal women in Canada and the need of a national inquiry. With codes consisting of “a national tragedy”, a “disturbing phenomenon”, “an issue of magnitude” and a “crisis”, it appeared that advocacy interest groups have been framing the issue of missing and murdered Aboriginal women as a nationwide epidemic, and thus have been calling for a national inquiry. This pattern of rich language used by advocates to describe the issue of missing and murdered women were in some cases supplemented with statistics provided by the NWAC, as well as statistics provided by the RCMP (2014) from their recently released *National Operational Overview*. In 2009, the NWAC estimated that about 126 Aboriginal women and girls had disappeared and about 347 had died by homicide within the last 30 years. When these statistics appeared in the text, they were coded as “many victims” or “NWAC statistic” (NWAC, 2009, p. 88). When the RCMP released their *National Operational Overview* on missing and murdered Aboriginal women in Canada in 2013, however, their numbers were double of what had been previously estimated. In comparison to the NWAC’s estimate of 500 women, the RCMP identified that there have been 1,181

Aboriginal women that have gone missing or that have been killed between 1980 and 2012 (RCMP, 2014, p. 7). While I initially coded this numerical information as “many victims” or as “RCMP statistics” throughout the coding process, the statistics provided by the RCMP in its report appear to support the claims and arguments made by advocates. The stark difference between the NWAC’s numbers and the RCMP’s 1,181 women, as well as the police’s claims that the numbers were higher than anticipated seem to further support the frame that the issue of missing and murdered Aboriginal women is not only “a severe problem”; it is an “unresolved issue” that has “reached crisis proportions”.

Throughout the coding process, I found additional patterns of frames employed by both “international advocates” as well as “domestic advocates” connected to the need for a national inquiry. Having assigned literal codes to opinions and perspectives regarding the benefits of a national inquiry, such as to “demonstrate commitment to positive change,” “bring closure to families” and “mend relationships,” the purpose of healing emerged as a prominent category. Connected to this hope for healing was another pattern of social and moral justice. This prominent category consisted of the perspectives of advocacy interest groups that had stressed the need for a national inquiry to ensure the “accountability for murders”, “to contribute to solutions”, and to “force government acknowledgement of the issue” as the “Prime Minister has a constitutional duty” to ensure “justice”. Various elements that make up the frame of healing and how it is connected to social and moral justice have not only emerged as findings from this study, they have further aligned with previous literature. Amnesty International Canada has identified in their report by Stolen Sisters that under international human rights standards and law, all victims of violent crime have a right to justice. However, this “international advocate” has suggested that justice is not only achieved through the punishment of the crime, justice

involves the public acknowledgment of the issue so that healing and closure can begin to occur (Amnesty International Canada, 2004, p. 19). Amnesty International has further claimed in their report by Stolen Sisters that violence against indigenous women is the violation of human rights and the abuse of the right to be free and safe by the protection of state. These findings support the frame that the purpose of a national inquiry is not only needed for social and moral justice as the issue of missing and murdered Aboriginal women is “a matter of human rights”, it is needed to provide healing and “validation” through the upholding of justice.

*The federal government argues that a national inquiry is redundant*

PERSPECTIVES ON THE ISSUE OF MURDERED AND MISSING ABORIGINAL WOMEN PRESENTED BY OPPOSING INTEREST GROUPS			
Issue of crime	A police responsibility	Not a sociological phenomenon	Of law and order
Murders are crimes	Is a serious crime		

\*Located in Appendix C

A third prevailing pattern that emerged from the coding process was the frame the federal government appeared to have used in dismissing calls for a national inquiry on missing and murdered Aboriginal women. Throughout the coding process, the perspectives and opinions presented by opposing interest groups such as the “Justice Minister” were coded using literal codes to retain thick descriptions. After having grouped the codes together, a pattern emerged that suggested the federal government viewed the issue of missing and murdered Aboriginal women as an “issue of crime” that pertained to “law and order,” and was “not a sociological phenomenon.” While the issue of missing and murdered Aboriginal women in Canada has been acknowledged as a crime by advocacy interest groups such as Amnesty International Canada, and the RCMP which has remained neutral in its position to the call for a national inquiry, the government’s claim that it is “not a sociological phenomenon” challenges the findings of

previous literature. According to the RCMP's *National Operational Overview* (2014), certain characteristics and risk factors have been found to increase an Aboriginal women's susceptibility to violent victimization. Acknowledging a pattern of unemployment in cases of missing and murdered victims and the use of intoxicants, the police have suggested that social interventions, which should encompass a response to health, education, and social services, are needed to address the issue of missing and murdered Aboriginal women in addition to police action (RCMP, 2014, p.17). The NWAC has further identified that Aboriginal women's vulnerability to violence is often linked to socioeconomic factors regarding low income and historical trauma, and that improving their social and economic wellbeing would increase their safety and security (NWAC, 2009, p. 104).

In comparing these findings with the "crime" frame, it appears that the federal government has framed the issue of missing and murdered Aboriginal women as a crime for its dismissal of a national inquiry. An additional pattern that emerged from the raw data connecting to this "crime" frame consisted of various literal and descriptive codes that addressed the national inquiry as "unnecessary," "too costly," and a "misguided approach" as "too many studies have been done." These and other literal codes appeared to form a pattern that further contextualized the government's position on the call for a national inquiry. Along with a category of "alternative solutions" which encompassed codes such as "police funding", "passing legislation", and "DNA index", the larger theme appeared to suggest that the federal government has dismissed calls for a national inquiry on murdered and missing Aboriginal women as it is redundant. The oppositional position of the government has suggested that there have been "too many studies", and alternative solutions such as "renewed funding for programs" and "a DNA index" have been implemented as the "problems have been identified" as an "issue of crime."

## **CONCLUSION**

The purpose of this descriptive study was to examine how issues surrounding the call for a national inquiry on missing and murdered Aboriginal women have been represented in online Canadian news from 2010-2014. It additionally sought to examine the voices included and excluded in articles, the perspectives presented, as well as how various interest groups have framed the call to action. Building upon previous qualitative research, this study found that issues surrounding the call for a national inquiry on missing and murdered Aboriginal women have been framed through a model of conflict between two opposing sides. One side represented the advocates that have consisted of both international and domestic interest groups such as the “United Nations” and the “relatives of victims.” These advocates were the voices that “supported” the call for a national inquiry in the final sample of news articles and further appeared to view the issue of missing and murdered Aboriginal women as a national catastrophe. From this perspective, advocates framed the call to action as necessary to ensure social and moral justice, through which community healing could occur. On the other side of the conflict model, opposition to the national inquiry prominently consisted of the Canadian federal government. This opposition was the voice that “ignored” or “rebuffed” calls for a national inquiry, as it appeared to view the issue of missing and murdered Aboriginal women as an issue of “crime” rather than a “sociological phenomenon.” From this perspective, the federal government seemed to frame the national inquiry as both redundant and “unnecessary,” as the topic of missing and murdered Aboriginal women had been previously studied, and alternative solutions had been employed. One aspect of the guiding research questions that this study did not fully identify were voices that have been excluded from news articles. This was difficult to observe and code for, as the sample of articles did not mention voices that have been missing

from the larger discussion. Although I was unable to identify absent voices or interest groups, I alternatively coded and identified a pattern of Canadian police organizations that have appeared to remain impartial regarding their stance on the subject of a national inquiry. This pattern was rather interesting because while organizations such as the “RCMP” and “Vancouver Police Department” have appeared to want “action” directed toward addressing underlying issues of missing and murdered Aboriginal women, they have not explicitly endorsed the call for a national inquiry. As federal and municipal police departments serve both the Canadian public and the government, one may conclude that the police have chosen to appear neutral and non-partisan in their position regarding such a sensitive matter.

Throughout the progression of this study, of reviewing articles, collecting data, coding and finding prominent patterns and themes, one of the main conclusions drawn is that the media has appeared to be sympathetic towards Aboriginal peoples and the issue of missing and murdered Aboriginal women. When comparing Jiwani and Young’s (2006) and Gilchrist’s (2010) findings of racialization and marginalization in media representations to this study, it appears that there has been a shift in the way vulnerable Aboriginal women are represented in Canadian online news. This conclusion challenged my initial assumptions that news reports from 2010-2014 would reinforce themes of dominance, racism, and hegemonic ideologies as was found in previous literature. While these findings may appear trustworthy as they aligned with research conducted by Amnesty International, NWAC, and the RCMP on the topic of missing and murdered Aboriginal women, it is important to note that they are not conclusive or exhaustive. Although content analysis strengthened this study as it enabled the data to be “naturalistic” and therefore have a level of authenticity, content analysis also served as a limitation as it is open to subjective interpretation (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011, p. 228). When a



method of interpretation is used, there is a risk that one can misunderstand what one is observing. Words can contain various meanings depending on its context, and researchers are susceptible to misinterpreting data. If I misinterpreted data throughout the process of this study and employed incorrect analytical codes, this misinformation could have skewed the final sample and thus could have skewed the findings.

If this project was to be conducted a second time, I would want to employ an additional researcher for investigator triangulation. Although it would be a time-consuming and possibly frustrating process as disagreements may arise regarding codes and competing analytic interpretations, utilizing a second researcher to study the same phenomenon could alleviate certain personal biases and further enhance the validity of the research results if similar interpretations are drawn (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011, p. 51). Additionally with a second researcher, one could continue this research process and expand upon the findings of this study. As online articles regarding new developments on the call for a national inquiry were published after the data collection phase, it is essential that this research is furthered to include such rich data. By adopting additional news websites as data sources and in including news articles pertaining to the recent discussions of governmental roundtable talks and compromises, further research could provide more comprehensive results, and perhaps strengthen or contradict the conclusion that the media has shifted towards a more sympathetic representation of vulnerable Aboriginal women in online Canadian news.

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## Data Sources

<http://www.nationalpost.com/index.html>

<http://www.vancouversun.com/index.html>

<http://www.ctvnews.ca/>

<http://www.cbc.ca/news>

# APPENDIX A: Article Log

## 2010

DATA SOURCE	MONTH	ARTICLE HEADING
CTV News	October	<i>Missing, murdered women gain attention of ministers</i>
TOTAL ARTICLES:1		

## 2011

DATA SOURCE	MONTH	ARTICLE HEADING
Vancouver Sun	December	<i>Brother of Pickton victim welcomes possibility of UN missing women probe</i>
TOTAL ARTICLES:1		

## 2012

DATA SOURCE	MONTH	ARTICLE HEADING
National Post	June	<i>Police search for links between alleged Winnipeg serial killer and other missing women cases</i>
CTV News	July	<i>FSIN backs call for inquiry into missing women</i>
CTV News	July	<i>Saskatchewan group call for inquiry into missing, murdered Native women</i>
CTV News	October	<i>Provincial ministers to discuss missing, murdered Aboriginal women</i>
CTV News	October	<i>Summit on missing, murdered women lacks local insight: Manitoba chiefs</i>
CTV News	November	<i>Rally calls for inquiry of missing, murdered women</i>
CTV News	December	<i>Death of B.C. teen renews calls for public inquiry</i>
CTV News	December	<i>National chief keeps up calls for inquiry after B.C. teen's murder</i>
CTV News	December	<i>Murder of B.C. teen renews calls from First Nations over public inquiry</i>
CTV News	December	<i>After B.C. teen's murder, Assembly of First Nations call for inquiry to hundreds of cases</i>
TOTAL ARTICLES:10		

## 2013

DATA SOURCE	MONTH	ARTICLE HEADING
National Post	January	<i>First Nations chief threaten to boycott meeting with Harper unless he comes to him</i>
CTV News	March	<i>Call for action plan to investigate violence against Aboriginal women</i>
Vancouver Sun	April	<i>UN report finds Canada not doing enough to stop violence against Aboriginal women</i>
Vancouver Sun	July	<i>Canadian Premiers call for national public inquiry over missing Aboriginal women</i>
CTV News	July	<i>Premiers call for public inquiry into violence against Aboriginal women</i>
CTV News	July	<i>Federal Tories dismiss calls for inquiry into missing, murdered Aboriginal women</i>
National Post	July	<i>Tories dismiss call from premiers' conference for inquiry into missing and murdered Aboriginal women</i>
CTV News	September	<i>Canada criticized for rejecting UN call to review violence against Aboriginal women</i>
CTV News	October	<i>UN official endorses call for inquiry into missing and murdered Aboriginal women</i>
National Post	October	<i>UN human rights official endorses call for Canadian inquiry into missing and murdered Aboriginal women</i>
<b>TOTAL ARTICLES:10</b>		

## 2014

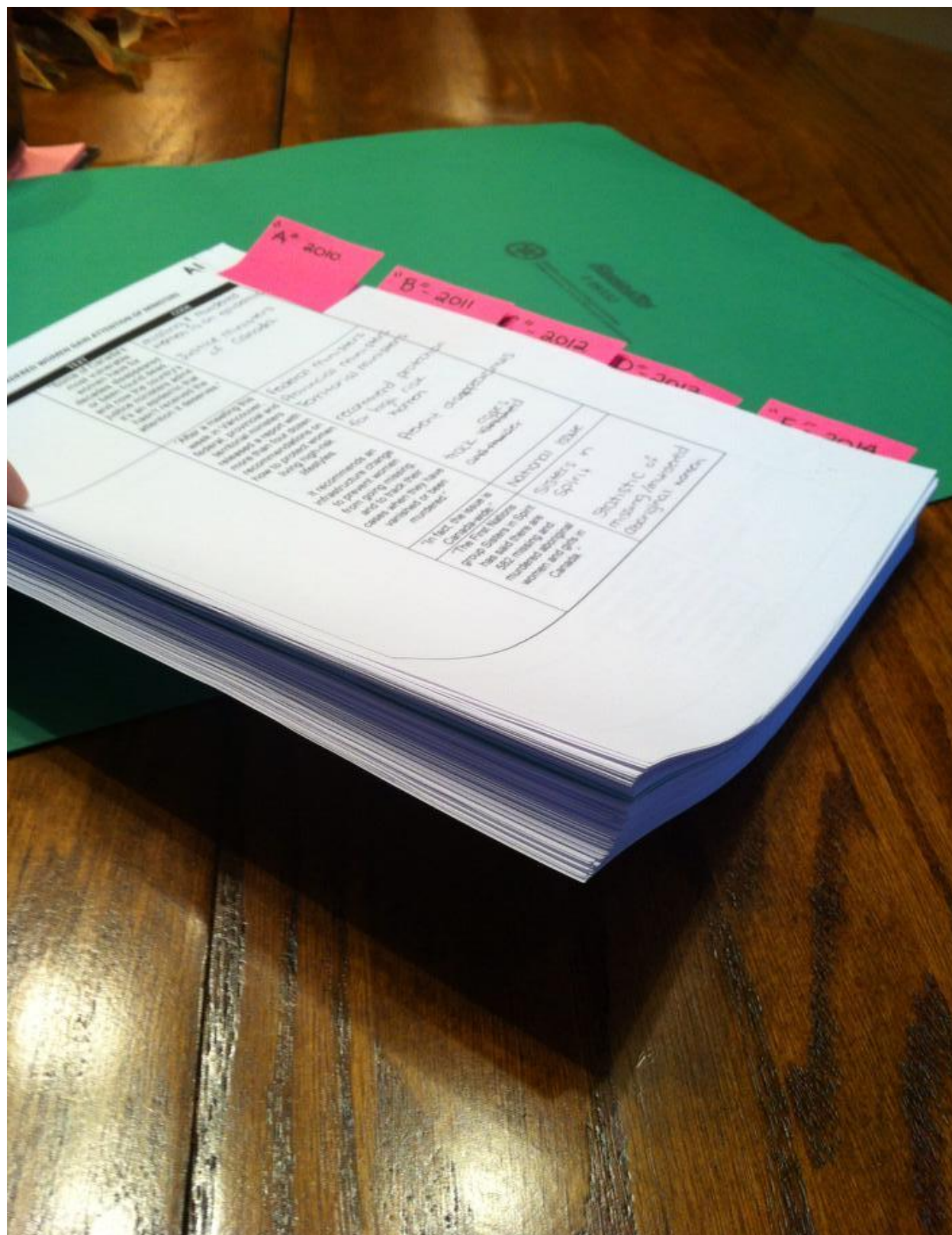
DATA SOURCE	MONTH	ARTICLE HEADING
CTV News	February	<i>Group calls for inquiry into missing and murdered Aboriginal women</i>
CTV News	February	<i>Saunders' family says her legacy will live on</i>
CBC	March	<i>Pressure mounts for inquiry into missing and murdered Aboriginal women</i>
CBC	March	<i>Nova Scotia parties unite to urge slain Aboriginal women inquiry</i>
CTV News	March	<i>Native group hopes Loretta Saunders vigil will prompt inquiry</i>
CTV News	March	<i>N.S. parties unite in call for inquiry into slain Aboriginal women</i>
National Post	May	<i>RCMP report on missing and murdered Aboriginal women says Native women 4.3% of female population, but 16% of female homicides</i>
Vancouver Sun	May	<i>Case not closed on missing and murdered Aboriginal women: RCMP</i>

CTV News	May	<i>Aboriginal women more prone to violent death: RCMP report</i>
CTV News	May	<i>Demands for inquiry follow report of more than 1000 murdered, missing Aboriginal women</i>
CTV News	May	<i>Rising number of missing, murdered women renews call for inquiry</i>
CTV News	May	<i>UN report on Aboriginals warn of crisis in Canada</i>
CTV News	May	<i>United Nations representative pushes Conservative on First Nations</i>
CTV News	June	<i>Winnipeg cold-case arrest renews calls for inquiry into missing, murdered women</i>
CTV News	July	<i>Aboriginal leaders renew calls for public inquiry into missing, murdered women</i>
CBC	August	<i>Aboriginal women inquiry support grows ahead of premiers</i>
CBC	August	<i>Missing Aboriginal women 'a social-environmental disaster'</i>
CBC	August	<i>Murdered Aboriginal women: What to know about a national inquiry</i>
CTV News	August	<i>Death of Aboriginal girl, 15 dumped in Red River renews calls for inquiry</i>
CBC	August	<i>Tina Fontaine death renew calls for inquiry into missing women</i>
CBC	August	<i>Harper rebuffs renewed calls for murdered, missing women inquiry</i>
CTV News	August	<i>National inquiry not best way to deal with missing, murdered women: Harper</i>
CTV News	August	<i>Sask. Premier backs public inquiry on missing, murdered Aboriginal women</i>
CTV News	August	<i>Group calls on Manitoba to hold murdered, missing Indigenous women inquiry if feds wont investigate</i>
CTV News	August	<i>Harper's comments on missing Aboriginal women 'outrageous': Wynne</i>
CTV News	August	<i>Harper on wrong side of history in opposition to national inquiry: Trudeau</i>
CBC	August	<i>Inquiry on missing and murdered women could delay action, police chiefs assoc. warns</i>
CBC	August	<i>Stephan Harper's refusal of national inquiry shows Canada's shame: Metis leader</i>
CTV News	August	<i>Police chiefs take no action on Aboriginal women inquiry</i>
National Post	August	<i>Frustrated premiers call for national public inquiry into missing and murdered Aboriginal women</i>
National Post	August	<i>Harper on 'wrong side of history' by refusing to launch inquiry into murdered Aboriginal women: Trudeau</i>
National Post	August	<i>Case not closed on missing and murdered Aboriginal women</i>
National Post	August	<i>Social service investigation underway after Manitoba teen found dead in Red River, but public may never see report</i>

National Post	August	<i>Inquiry into murdered Aboriginal women would have great symbolic value, but would it be worth the cost?</i>
National Post	August	<i>PM rules out national inquiry into missing and murdered Aboriginal women after 15 year old found dead</i>
CTV News	August	<i>Missing, murdered Aboriginal women not just a police issue: Police chief</i>
CBC	August	<i>Thunder Bay police chief supports missing, murdered inquiry</i>
National Post	August	<i>Premiers call for Stephan Harper to join roundtable talk on murdered Aboriginal women</i>
CTV News	August	<i>Missing and murdered Aboriginal women: Premiers call for roundtable forum</i>
CBC	September	<i>Federal program focuses on 'root causes' of missing, murdered Aboriginal women</i>
CBC	September	<i>National inquiry should be led by Indigenous women, says Idle no more organizer</i>
CBC	September	<i>Alberta chiefs call for inquiry into missing, murdered Aboriginal women</i>
CTV News	September	<i>Youths take over protest camp calling for inquiry</i>
Prince George Citizen	September	<i>Judge in Legebokoff trial calls murdered and missing Aboriginal women a 'sociological issue'</i>
National Post	September	<i>Brian Mulroney blasts Stephan Harper over foreign affairs, Supreme Court spat</i>
CTV News	September	<i>NDP forces debate in House of Commons on murdered and missing Aboriginal women</i>
CTV News	September	<i>Reports contradict PM's view on Aboriginal women victims</i>
CBC	September	<i>Councilors back motion for inquiry into murdered, missing women</i>
National Post	September	<i>NDP forces debate on need for national inquiry into murdered and missing Aboriginal women</i>
CBC	October	<i>Saint John march focuses on murdered and missing Aboriginal women</i>
CTV News	October	<i>Protests over missing, murdered Aboriginal women take over Ontario highways</i>
CTV News	October	<i>Edmontonians join in national Sisters in Spirit march</i>
CTV News	October	<i>Health organization joins call for inquiry into murdered, missing women</i>
<b>TOTAL ARTICLES: 53</b>		

**GRAND TOTAL: 75 Articles**

## APPENDIX B: Photographs of Raw Data





## ARTICLE: DEATH OF B.C. TEEN RENEWS CALLS FOR PUBLIC INQUIRY

C7

MONTH - YEAR	TEXT	CODE
December 2012	"The parents of an aboriginal girl found murdered last week in Kamloops, B.C., have joined the call for a national inquiry into murdered and missing First Nations women"	Parents of murder victim supportive of NI Join call for NI
	"Matilda Fowler and Glen Wilson, the mother and father of 16-year-old CJ Fowler, joined Assembly of First Nations National Chief Shawn Atleo and other aboriginal leaders in Vancouver ..."	Mother and father of victim Assembly of First Nations National Chief Shawn Atleo
	"First Nations have committed to ending violence against and among our peoples, we have called for a national public commission of inquiry on missing and murdered indigenous women and girls, and we will not rest until this is achieved," Atleo said in a news release"	First Nations call for NI  First Nations won't give up
	"Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs Grand Chief Stewart Phillip ... said the growing issue of murdered and missing First Nations women across Canada is nothing short of a national disgrace."	Union of B.C. Indian Grand Chief murdered/missing First Nations women growing issue issue a "national disgrace"
	"The renewed demand comes as RCMP in Kamloops reveal that CJ Fowler's body was found by a man walking his dog ..."	Renewed calls for NI after murder

### APPENDIX C: Analytical Typologies

#### **INTEREST GROUPS THAT HAVE “CALLED”, “ENDORSED”, “SUPPORTS”, OR HAVE SPOKEN/ACTED IN FAVOUR OF A NATIONAL INQUIRY**

<b>INTERNATIONAL ADVOCATES</b> Individuals who represent international organizations, and / or countries			
U. N. Envoy	U.N. Human Rights Investigator	New York Human Rights Watch	Amnesty International Canada
U. N. Special Rapporteur of The Rights of Indigenous Peoples	U. N. Committee	Cuba	Iran
Belarus	Russia	Switzerland	Norway
Slovenia	Slovakia	New Zealand	United Kingdom
Netherlands	Senior U. N. Rights Official		

<b>DOMESTIC POLITICAL ADVOCATES</b> Those who have political status at the Federal, Territorial, Provincial or Municipal level			
NDP MP	Status of Women Minister	NDP Interim Leader	Federal New Democrats
NDP Aboriginal Affairs Critic	Canadian Premiers 2013	Manitoba Premier 2013	Alberta Premier 2013
Provincial Leaders 2013	Territorial Leaders 2013	Newfoundland Premier	Ontario Premier
NDP	Liberals	Green Party	Nova Scotia's 3 Main Party Leaders
Nova Scotia Tory Opposition Leader	Ottawa NDP Member	Federal Status of Women Minister	Liberal Premier
Liberal Opposition Critic	Liberal MP	Saskatchewan Premier	Opposition Leader of NDP
Manitoba Aboriginal Affairs Minister	Federal Liberal Leader	Brian Mulroney	PEI Liberal Premier
Opposition Critic	NDP MP of Northern Quebec	2 Conservative MPs	Winnipeg Councilors
New Democrats			

<b>DOMESTIC SPECIALIZED ADVOCATES</b> Organizations and/or members who have expert status (including those with human rights, legal, and Aboriginal peoples expertise)			
Feminist Alliance for International Action	President of Native Women's Association of Canada	Board Members of Native Women's Association of Canada	Alberta Grand Chief of Assembly of First Nations
Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations	Manitoba Assembly of Chiefs	Psychiatric Professor – University of Toronto	Federal Chief Negotiator on First Nation Treaties
National Chief of Assembly of First Nations	Union of BC Indian Chiefs	President of Ontario Native Women's Association of Canada	British Columbia Civil Liberties Lawyer
Nova Scotia Native Women's Association of Canada	Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission	Special Advisor on Aboriginal Issues	Chief Commissioner of Canadian Human Rights Commission
Thunder Bay Police	Co-director of Research for the 1996 Royal	Sisters In Spirit	Canadian Public Health Commission
Acting Chief Commissioner of Canadian Human Rights Commission	Assistant Native Studies Professor – University of Manitoba	Director of Canadian Studies Program – University of Toronto	Metis Nation Saskatchewan

<b>DOMESTIC GRASSROOTS ADVOCATES</b> Relatives of murdered and missing aboriginal women and community members/groups			
First Nations Groups	First Nations Leaders	Winnipeg Protestors	Mohawk Activist
Metis Celebrity	Family Resource Worker	Ontario Youth Protestors	Alberta First Nations Chiefs
Chief of Albert Driftpile Cree Nation	Ide No More	Edmontonion Rally Members	Chiefs of Mikisew Cree First Nations
Saint John Aboriginal Student Protestors	Six Nation's Men's Fire	Social Justice Groups	Metis Leader and Human Rights Activist

**INTEREST GROUPS THAT HAVE “*REJECTED*”, “*IGNORED*”, “*REBUFFED*”,  
“*RESISTED*”, “*DISMISSED*” OR HAVE SPOKEN AGAINST A NATIONAL INQUIRY**

<b>DOMESTIC POLITICAL OPPOSITION</b> Those who have political status at the Federal, Territorial, Provincial or Municipal level			
Federal Conservative Government	Federal Aboriginal Affairs Minister	Justice Minister	Prime Minister
Heritage Minister of Winnipeg	Parliamentary Secretary of Justice	Manitoba Minister of Northern and Aboriginal Affairs	

<b>DOMESTIC SPECIALIZED OPPOSITION</b> Organizations and/or members who have expert status (including those with human rights, legal, and Aboriginal peoples expertise)			
Professor & Director of Canadian Studies – University of Toronto			

## INTEREST GROUPS OF AN UNCERTAIN OR IMPARTIAL POSITION

<b>DOMESTIC</b> Organizations or members who want “action” to address the issue of MMAW, but do not endorse or have not yet committed to a National Inquiry			
Saskatchewan Police Chief	Royal Canadian Mounted Police	Sister In Spirit Member	Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police
Chief Constable of the Vancouver Police	Alberta’s Minister of Aboriginal Relations	Federal Public Safety Minister	Department of justice
Supreme Court Justice			

## PERSECTIVES ON THE ISSUE OF MURDERED AND MISSING ABORIGINAL WOMEN

PRESENTED BY ADVOCATORY INTEREST GROUPS			
A black eye for Canada	National tragedy	National disgrace	Epidemic
Unresolved issue	Canadian - national issue	Statistic - long-term problem	Disturbing phenomenon
A crisis	A persistent and serious issue	A severe problem	Reached crisis proportions
Issue of magnitude	A human being issue	Statistics are shocking	Systemic issue
A huge pattern	Unacceptable	Sociological issue	Societal issue
Affects everyone	A human rights issue	A community issue	A deep rooted social issue
An environmental crisis	Social environmental disaster	Sister in Spirit Statistic	Native Women's Association of Canada statistic
Statistic - RCMP Report	Women at higher risk	Systemic issues	Many victims - Growing number of victims
Affects everyone	Issue been ignored for too long	Needs attention	Disproportionate number of violent deaths – overrepresented
A long term pattern	Ongoing national crisis		

PRESENTED BY OPPOSING INTEREST GROUPS			
Issue of crime	A police responsibility	Not a sociological phenomenon	Of law and order
Murders are crimes	Is a serious crime		

## ISSUE OF A NATIONAL INQUIRY AND THE PRESPECTIVES ON THE NEED/CALL TO ACTION

MADE BY ADVOCATORY INTEREST GROUPS			
Demonstrate commitment to positive change	Accountability for murders	Hold government accountable	National inquiry is overdue
Sign of respect	Expression of support	Find cause of problem - A response to problem	Give voice to victims and families
Give validation to affected families	Demonstrate value of women	Bring closure to families	Mend relationship
Families deserve answers	Ongoing murders	Government transparency of failings	Prime Minister has constitutional duty
A matter of human rights	Need to look at systemic issues	Look at social causes	Sociological factors
Police accountability and review policies	Social causes	Economic causes/factors	Aboriginal involvement is crucial
Federal involvement is needed	Need government unification	Women must lead	Funding not the answer
No substitutes to an inquiry – only answer	Inquiry is justified as previous studies foundational	Alternatives not good enough	Alternatives unacceptable
Not enough action	Answers needed	Not enough being done	Validation of concerns
A must and a need	An important next step	Deepen systemic understanding	Force government acknowledgment of issue
National inquiry is necessary	Can bring awareness to problem	Contribute to solutions	Prevent murders
Is vital	Justice	Unanswered questions remain	

<b>MADE BY OPPOSING INTEREST GROUPS</b>			
Unnecessary	A misguided approach	Too costly	Studies already have been done
Too many studies	Cannot delay action	Problems have been identified	Action is the answer/needed
Steps already taken – alternative solutions	Action gives results	Financial resolve needed	Issue already dealt with
Has given safe housing	Given education rights to aboriginals	Has made progress	No calls for a NI has been made - Harper
Studies delay action			

<b>ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES</b>			
Police funding	Database	DNA index	Passing legislation
Renewed funding for programs	Preventative programs	National Centre For Missing Persons	Anti-violence programs
BC Downtown Eastside Inquiry	Roundtable talks	Compromise (roundtable)	Improve justice system
Federal government willing to compromise	Advocates willing for roundtable		

<b>CRITICISMS MADE BY ADVOCATES</b>			
Federal government has failed to act	Has rejected previous international recommendations	Ignored inquiry of 1996 and recommendations	Previous recommendations not a priority
Government response inaction/creates conflict	Government creates distrust	Issue has caused strained relationship between aboriginals & government	Policies not working
Not aggressive enough	Government hypocrisy	Inaction feels like a slap in the face	Prime Minister response is outrageous
Refusal is disrespectful	Prime Minister is wrong	Prime Minister inaction is wrong	Prime Minister is avoiding accountability
Abandoning responsibility	Criticized Canada's human rights record	Government gives excuses	Government action is insufficient/unacceptable
Ignoring demand is unconscionable	PM not interested in creating change		



## APPENDIX D: Analytical Frames

### **HOW THE ISSUE OF MISSING & MURDERED ABORIGINAL WOMEN HAS BEEN FRAMED**

#### **By Advocatory Interest Groups**

##### Frame 1: A National Catastrophe That Needs to be Addressed

###### Codes:

“a national tragedy”, “national disgrace”, “epidemic”, “unresolved issue”, “Canadian – national issue”, “disturbing phenomenon”, “a persistent and serious issue”, “a severe problem”, “a severe problem”, “reached crisis proportions”, “a crisis”, “issue of magnitude”, “affects everyone”, “a community issue”, “ongoing national crisis”, “black eye for Canada”, “needs attention”, “issue been ignored for too long,” unacceptable”, “a human being issue”, a human rights issue”,

- “long-term pattern”, “many victims – growing number of victims”, “statistics are shocking”
  - RCMP Report/ Statistic, Native Women’s Association of Canada Statistic, Sister In Spirit Statistic

##### Frame 2: Has Sociological Roots

###### Codes:

“a sociological issue”, “systemic issue”, “a deep rooted social issue”, “social environmental disaster”, “women at higher risk”, “Disproportionate number of violent deaths – overrepresented” “an environmental crisis”, “a societal issue”

#### **By Oppositional Interest Groups**

##### Frame 1: A Crime

###### Codes:

“issue of crime”, “a police responsibility”, “not a sociological phenomenon”, “of law and order”, “murders are crimes”, “is a serious crime”

## HOW THE NEED/CALL TO ACTION FOR A NATIONAL INQUIRY HAS BEEN FRAMED

### By Advocatory Interest Groups

#### Frame 1: Healing

##### Codes:

“demonstrate commitment to positive change”, “a sign of respect”, “expression of support”, “give voice to victims and families”, “validation to affected families”, “demonstrate value of women”, bring closure to families”, “mend relationships [between government & Aboriginals], “families deserve answers”, “validation of concerns”, “important next step”

#### Frame 2: Political & Moral Justice

##### Codes:

“accountability for murders”, “hold government accountable”, “national inquiry is overdue”, “find cause of problem – a response to problem”, “ongoing murders”, “government transparency of failings”, need to look at systemic issues”, “look at social causes”, “sociological factors”, “police accountability and review policies”, social causes”, “economic causes/factors”, “a must and a need”, “deepen systemic understanding”, “force government acknowledgement of issue” “national inquiry is necessary”, “can bring awareness to problem”, “contribute to solutions”, “prevent murders”, “unanswered questions remain” “prime minister has constitutional duty”, “justice”, “is vital”, “not enough being done”, “a matter of human rights”, “answers needed”, “not enough action”,

\*\* “aboriginal involvement is crucial”, “need government unification”, “federal involvement is needed”, “no substitutes to an inquiry – the only answer”, “alternatives not good enough”, “women must lead”, “funding is not the answer”, “alternatives unacceptable”,

### By Oppositional Interest Groups

#### Frame 1: Is Redundant

##### Codes:

“unnecessary”, “studies already have been done”, “too many studies”, “issue already dealt with”, “problems have been identified”, “has made progress”, “has given safe housing, “given educational rights to aboriginals”, “too costly”, “action is the answer/needed”, “action gives results”, “studies delay action”, “steps already taken with alternative solutions”, “cannot delay action”, “a misguided approach”

## Frame 2: Alternative Solutions

### Codes:

“police funding”, “database”, DNA index”, “passing legislation”, “renewed funding for programs”, “preventative programs”, “national centre for missing persons”, anti-violence programs”, downtown eastside inquiry”, “roundtable talks”, “compromise (roundtable)”, “improve justice system”, “advocates willing for roundtable”, “federal government willing to compromise”

## **CRITICISMS REGARDING THE ISSUE OF MISSING AND MURDERED ABORIGINAL WOMEN**

### **By Advocates Towards The Federal Government**

#### Frame 1: Federal Government Has Previously Failed to Address The Issue

##### Codes:

“has rejected previous international recommendations”, “ignored the inquiry of 1996 and recommendations”, “previous recommendations not a priority”, “criticized Canada’s human rights record”, “issue has caused strained relationship between aboriginals & government”, “government has failed to act”

#### Frame 2: Federal Government’s Current Response is Unacceptable

##### Codes:

“government response/ inaction creates conflict”, “government creates distrust”, “policies not working”, “not aggressive enough”, government hypocrisy”, “inaction feels like a slap in the face”, “prime minister’s response is outrageous”, “refusal is disrespectful”, “prime minister is wrong”, “prime minister is avoiding accountability”, “abandoning responsibility”, “government gives excuses”, “government action is insufficient/unacceptable”, “ignoring demand is unconscionable”, “PM not interested in creating change”, “no substitutes to an inquiry-the only answer”, “alternatives not good enough”, “funding is not the answer”, “alternatives unacceptable”, “aboriginal involvement is crucial”, “need government unification”, “federal involvement is needed”, “women must lead”