

Extending the Conversation: Murdered and Missing Indigenous Men and Boys

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Although there is much popular and media attention given to the epidemic of missing and murdered Indigenous women, and justly so, the documented murder rate of Indigenous men in Canada is actually higher than that of Indigenous women.

Both the Toronto Star and APTN have had stories reporting on Statistics Canada's figures of Indigenous murder victims between 1980-2012. StatsCan documented 745 Indigenous female homicide victims and 1,750 Indigenous male homicide victims. That's 14 and 17 per cent of all female and male homicide victims, respectively, despite the fact that, as of 2011, only 4.3 per cent of Canada's population self-identified as Indigenous.

The female figure of 745 Indigenous female homicide victims differs from the 2014 RCMP report of 1,017 murdered and 164 missing Indigenous women since 1980 (The RCMP has yet to provide such a figure for murdered and missing Indigenous men.) Regardless, these figures still show a disparity between Indigenous and settler Canadians' experiences of violence.

Such violence scars communities all across Canada. Lydia Daniels, whose son Colten Pratt has been missing since November 2014, told APTN that "we also wanted to make a statement that we also have murdered and missing men in our communities." Sandra Banman, whose son Carl was murdered in 2011, stated "In balance and unity with our people, we also need to think about our men. We don't love our daughters more than we love our sons, so when our sons go missing or are murdered, it hurts the families just as much."

Geography = Canada

Sex	Aboriginal identity ^{4, 8}	Homicides	2014	2015	2016
Males	Aboriginal identity ⁵	Number of homicide victims	90	107	113
		Percent of homicide victims	24.26	24.77	24.57
	Non-Aboriginal identity ⁶	Number of homicide victims	276	321	341
		Percent of homicide victims	74.39	74.31	74.13
Females	Aboriginal identity ⁵	Number of homicide victims	30	41	29
		Percent of homicide victims	19.87	23.16	19.21
	Non-Aboriginal identity ⁶	Number of homicide victims	120	134	119
		Percent of homicide victims	79.47	75.71	78.81

Footnotes:

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1. Source: Statistics Canada, Homicide Survey, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics.

In Fall 2015, annual homicide data was published by StatsCan that for the first time differentiated between Indigenous and non-Indigenous victims. There are now three years of data (2014-2016) and they show Indigenous men murdered disproportionately at a per-capita rate approximately seven times higher than non-Indigenous men and three times that of Indigenous women (Indigenous women are six times more likely to be murdered than non-Indigenous women). **StatsCan does not provide statistics specifically for Trans or Two-Spirit People.*

In January 2016, Jennifer Mt. Pleasant published her Master's research work at Wilfrid Laurier University on "Violence Against Indigenous Males in Canada with a Focus on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Men." She also built a database of victims, that had over 700 names at the time. A university profile quotes her as saying, "There is nothing really out there that advocates for Indigenous men. This leads people to believe that Indigenous men aren't worthy of inquiry." The profile describes how "her research has been met with mixed emotions from within the Indigenous community" and that she's been denied funding opportunities.

University of Saskatchewan professor Robert Innes was quoted in the National Post in 2015 as saying, "It is a difficult issue to raise because you don't want to say one is more important than the other and it can come across like that. When you raise it, you want to make it clear it's an issue facing men and women." In an Aboriginal Policy Studies journal article cited by the Post, he wrote regarding the fact that Indigenous men also commit and are charged with murder at disproportionate rates: "Placing the emphasis on the violence of which Indigenous men are capable while at the same time ignoring their victimization is caused by a specific kind of race and gender bias many white people have towards Indigenous men." Video of his recent talk in Toronto "The Moose In The Room: Time To Talk About Indigenous Male Violence" is on Facebook; he along with Mt. Pleasant's academic supervisor Kim Anderson lead the Biidwewidam Indigenous Masculinities project.

There was a push to include men and boys as part of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. A coalition that formed to advocate for this, Expand the Inquiry, led by Musqueam chief Ernie Crey, received more grassroots push-back than support, largely due to the problematic involvement of non-Indigenous Mens Rights Activists like Canadian Association For Equality.