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## Emic and Etic Perspectives on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women: Analysis of Media Coverage

### Abstract

The charts compiled here look into the anthropological concepts of 'etic' and 'emic' perspectives in Non-Indigenous Media (NIM) and Indigenous Media (IM) pertaining to the issue of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (MMIW). NIM presents this as being a problem of the other, 'etic', and by contrast IM has presented this issue as being a part of everyday life, 'emic' (Morris, et al., 1999). Data were collected from a sample of Indigenous and Non-Indigenous media sources from broadcast and on-line sources.

The charts presented here use keywords found and cover Areas being Reported On, Remedies and Obstacles.

Results indicate significant differences between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous media coverage of MMIW. It was found that NIM reported MMIW being on the reservation 66%, while IM reported that 91% were in urban areas. The Remedies found the keyword mentioned the most in NIM was Women Leaders 27%, while IM cited Honoring Women at 24%. The Obstacles found the keyword mentioned the most in NIM was the Lack of Response from Law Enforcement Officers 20%, and IM cited the lack of a law enforcement database and jurisdiction both at 19%.

Overall, the differences between NIM and IM reflect socio-cultural differences between media professionals and could be contributing to the ways that Americans perceive this issue and public will for solutions. An opportunity exists for NIM and IM to perform a public service role by mentioning new protocols and toolkits for communities when an Indigenous Person is missing, as well as new policies and protocols for law enforcement officers.

### Comments

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BOISE STATE UNIVERSITY

# Emic and Etic Perspectives on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women: Analysis of Media Coverage

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## I. Introduction and Research Question

### Introduction

The charts compiled here look into the anthropological concepts of 'etic' and 'emic' perspectives in Non-Indigenous Media (NIM) and Indigenous Media (IM) pertaining to the issue of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (MMIW).

NIM presents MMIW as being a problem of the other, 'etic'. In NIM Indigenous people have been largely misrepresented or left out completely (Eason et al., 2018) (Leavitt et al., 2015), in mainstream media such as in ABC or NBC news.

By contrast IM is the 'emic' perspective (Morris et al., 1999), in IM such as Native American Calling and Indian Country Today where Indigenous People have a larger media platform.

### Research Question

Given the historical trauma that Indigenous Women (Bubar et al., 2004) have faced and from an anthropological framework of emic and etic perspectives (Morris et al., 1999), it could be expected that MMIW in NIM is viewed as being a problem of the other (etic). While MMIW in IM will be portrayed as being a societal issue (emic).

## II. Methods and Analysis

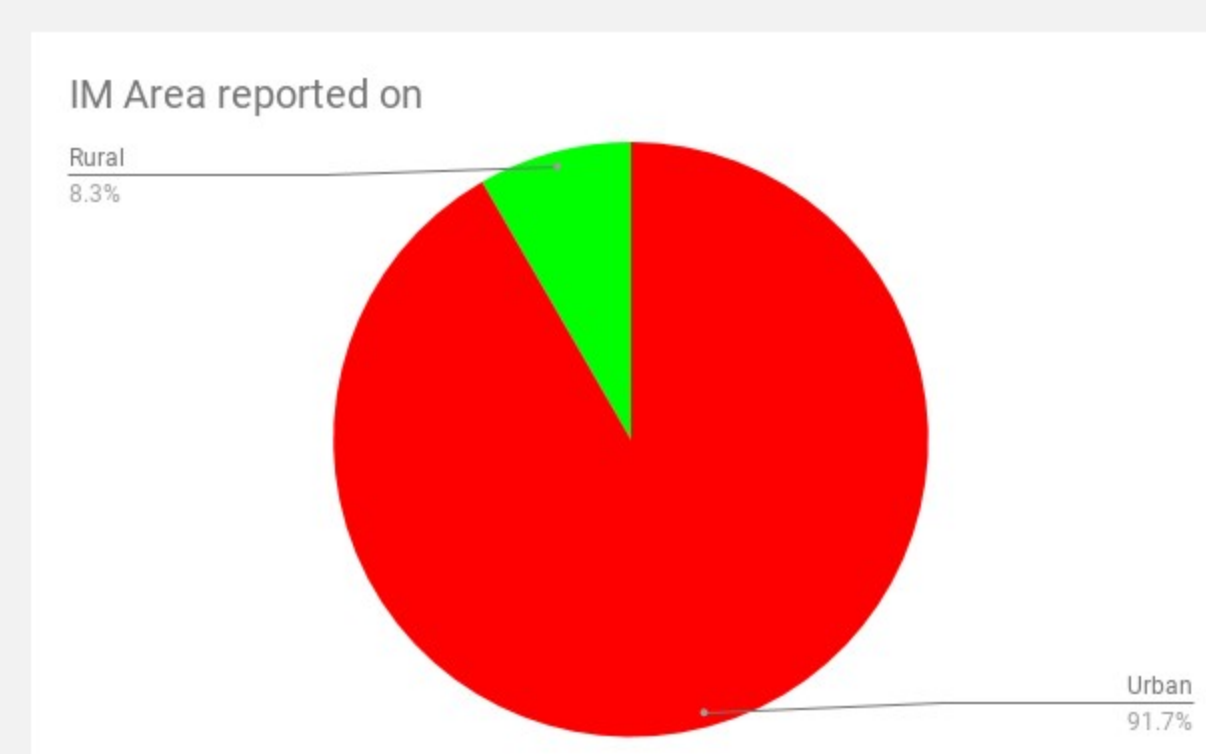
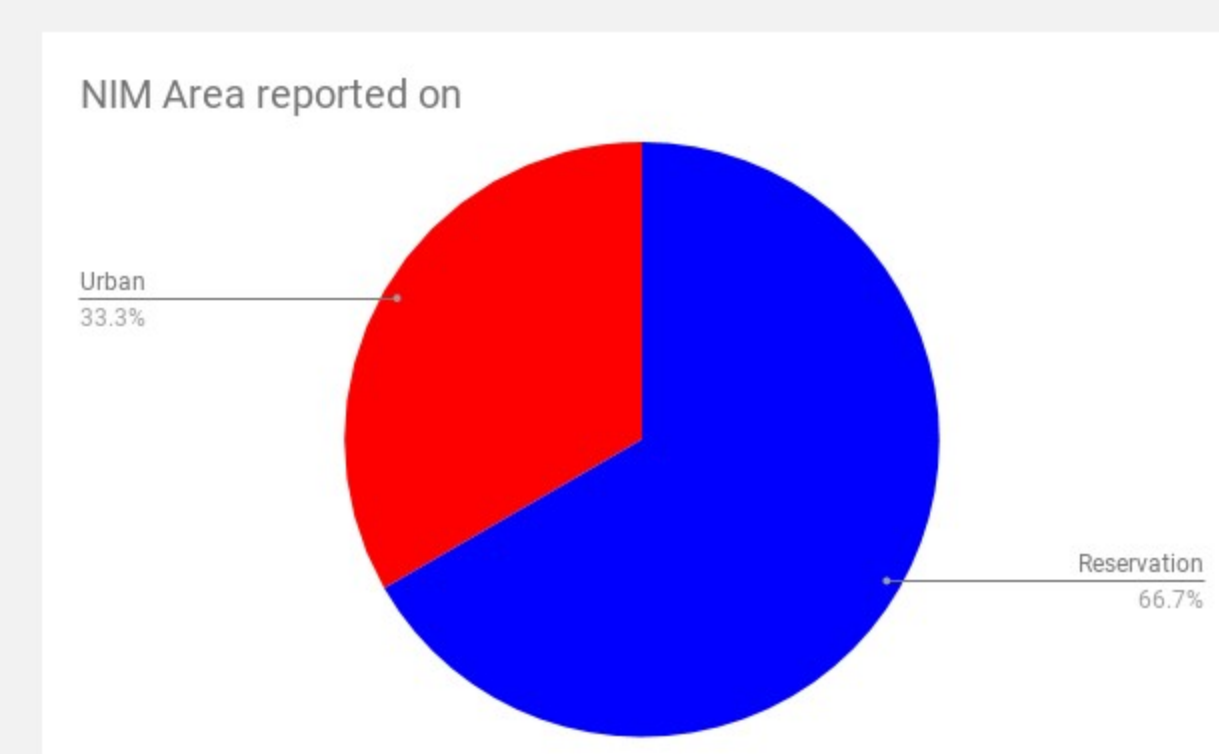
### Methods

12 NIM sources were analyzed, 6 written articles and 6 radio.

12 IM sources were analyzed, 6 written articles and 6 radio. 24 sources in total were analyzed for keywords or key phrases in their context that were found in academic literature pertaining to MMIW. These charts use keywords found in both NIM & IM, and cover Areas being Reported On, Remedies and Obstacles. (see handout for references)

### Analysis

#### Area Reported On



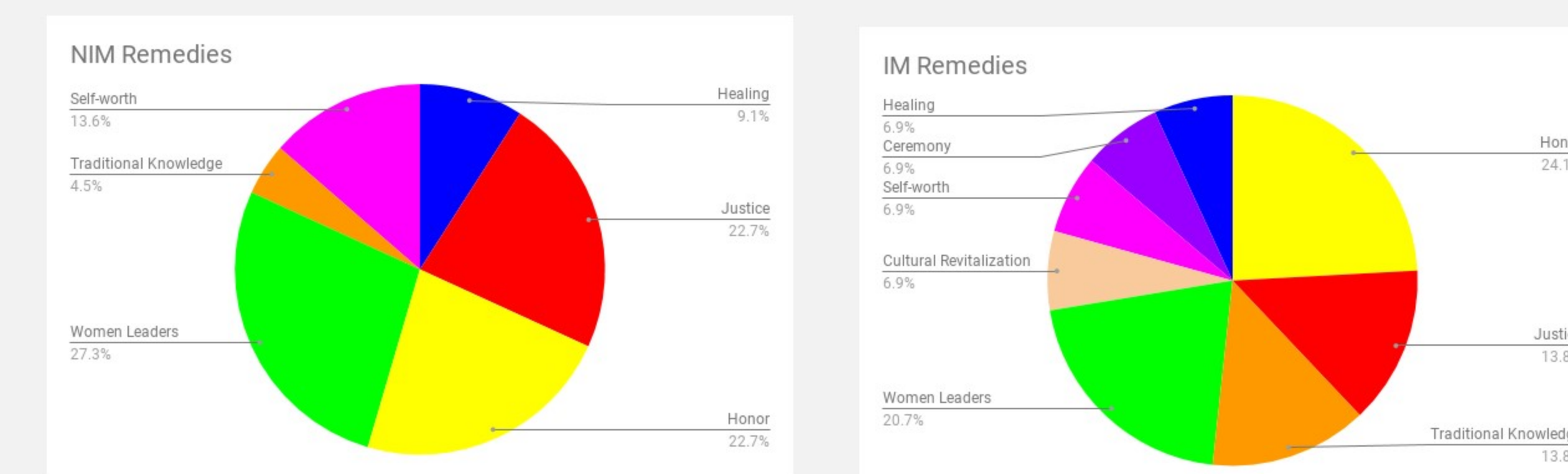
These charts focus on three keywords: Urban, Rural, and Reservation.

Non-Indigenous Media reports 66.7% of MMIW cases happen on reservations and 33.3% were reported to happen in urban areas.

Indigenous Media reports 91.7% cases happen in urban areas and 8.3% reported on rural areas.

## II. Methods and Analysis

### Remedies

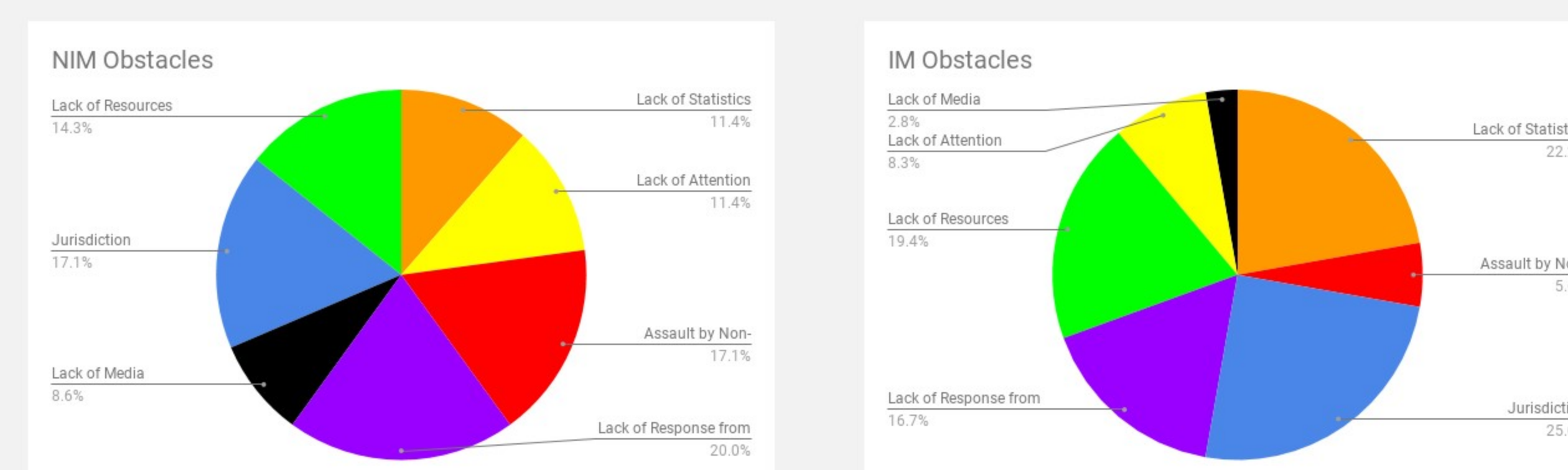


Keywords found from academic literature: Traditional Knowledge, Cultural Revitalization, Healing, Honor, Women Leaders, Self-worth, and Justice.

Non-Indigenous Media site three main Remedies, 22.7% Honor, 22.7% Justice, 27.3% site Women Leaders as the largest Remedy.

Indigenous Media site four main Remedies, 13.8% Traditional Knowledge, 13.8% Justice, 20.7% Women Leaders and 24.1% Honor as the largest Remedy.

### Obstacles



Keywords found in academic literature: Lack of Statistics, Lack of Response from Law Enforcement, Lack of Media Coverage, Lack of Attention, Lack of Resources, Assault by Non-Indigenous (persons), Mistrust and Jurisdiction.

Non-Indigenous Media sites three large obstacles, both Assault by Non-Indigenous and Jurisdiction at 17.1%. Lack of Response from LEO at 20% is the largest obstacle.

Indigenous Media sites the three largest obstacles as 19.4% Lack of Resources, 22.2% Lack of Statistics, and 25% Jurisdiction.

## III. Results

**Area reported on** shows the largest difference. A few IM stories reported MMIW occurring sometime after leaving the reservation. This emic perspective shows that contemporary Indigenous women live in urban areas but that NIM and Non-Indigenous reporters fail to acknowledge their presence which given this research question is expected.

**Keywords for Remedies**, NIM did not use the keywords Ceremony or Cultural Revitalization. Although IM had more Remedy keywords that did leave the percentage for the remaining keywords at smaller percentages than NIM keywords. A surprising result was that NIM cited Women Leaders as being possibly the number one Remedy, while IM cited that Honoring Women was the largest remedy. Both sources speak to the need for increased visibility of Indigenous Women as a Remedy in the MMIW issue. It was surprising to see the two media sources take different approaches in Remedies but their conclusions are somewhat similar.

**Keywords for Obstacles**, Assault by Non-Indigenous Persons and Jurisdiction are the largest obstacles to MMIW in NIM. Crimes on reservations or crimes involving Non-Indigenous Persons are harder to prosecute due to Jurisdiction and ineffective policies when it comes to protecting Indigenous Women's rights and lives. Which given the research questions is expected. NIM view MMIW as an issue happening only on reservations.

Lack of Statistics and Jurisdiction are the largest obstacles for MMIW in IM. IM explained that for policy and protocols to be put in place a database is needed to show just how much of an impact MMIW is making.

Both sources again speak to visibility of Indigenous Women and more importantly visibility for Indigenous Women when it comes to policy, protection and information for LEO, surprisingly both agree that Jurisdiction is the greatest obstacle.

## IV. Conclusions

- Given the research question and results it can be concluded that NIM isolates the issue of MMIW to it being a problem faced by the 'other' which is problematic when research shows that MMIW are disappearing everywhere.
- NIM needs to acknowledge Indigenous People in urban spaces by honoring them and recognizing them as people who deserve attention and, in those efforts, reduce the cases of MMIW in the United States.
- In IM it is very clear that Indigenous Women Leaders can create positive change not only by bringing awareness to the issue of MMIW but the visibility of Indigenous Women as leaders and community advocates.
- A database is needed to present the full picture of just how many MMIW there could possibly be, not only for IM & NIM but for new policies and procedures.
- It would also be useful for NIM and IM to perform a public service role by mentioning new protocols and toolkits for communities when an Indigenous Person is missing, as well as new policies and protocols for LEOs.