

**REFLECTING ABORIGINALITY: INFORMING THE DEVELOPMENT OF A
TERMINOLOGY GUIDE FOR JOURNALISTS**

by

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Abstract

This study draws upon qualitative interviews with journalists working within organizations that are members of the Strategic Alliance of Broadcasters for Aboriginal Reflection (SABAR), including, but not limited to, Aboriginal Peoples Television Network, CBC Television, and OMNI Diversity Television. This study finds that a terminology guide for Aboriginal reporting is a necessary and long overdue journalistic resource. This thesis also finds that an online guide is the most accessible method of delivery for journalists. The study's third key finding provides an indication of what journalists think SABAR's guide should contain in order to improve coverage of Aboriginal communities. *Thus, SABAR's guide is important because it will offer journalists a way to be more accurate in their portrayals of Aboriginal people. SABAR's guide represents a significant—and unprecedented—step toward informing accuracy in Aboriginal reporting.*

Preface

The UBC Behavioural Research Ethics Board approved this research with certificate number H10-02816.

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Dedication

For his unwavering support, unlimited patience, and unconditional love, this thesis is dedicated to my unbelievable husband, Chad.

Chapter 1: Introduction

This study examines what information Canadian broadcast journalists need to report on Aboriginal issues more accurately. Specifically, the study addresses this larger question in the context of informing the development of the first national terminology guide on the coverage of Aboriginal issues by the Strategic Alliance of Broadcasters for Aboriginal Reflection (hereafter referred to as SABAR).

1.1 What is SABAR?

It is important to begin this thesis with a definition of what SABAR is. I will also explain how SABAR came to develop a terminology guide for Aboriginal reporting. SABAR is “a group of Canadian broadcasters and Aboriginal organizations working to increase the contribution and [reflection] of Aboriginal people in all aspects of the Canadian broadcast industry” (SABAR, n.d., About SABAR section, para. 1). Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) and a group of broadcasters and media organizations initiated SABAR in 2003. Since then SABAR has teamed with major broadcasters, educational institutions and Aboriginal groups to facilitate increased participation and more accurate depiction of Aboriginal people in the broadcast industry.

Accurate Aboriginal reflection in broadcast journalism is one of SABAR’s primary concerns, and currently there is a significant gap in the area in the Canadian media. SABAR has identified that a key way to address this gap may be through the development of a terminology guide for Aboriginal reporting. This guide will provide a unique contribution to information source for journalists and will represent an important step toward accurately reflecting Aboriginality. The main journalistic guide in Canada, *The Canadian Press*

Stylebook (Tasko, 2010), deals with issues of Aboriginality very tangentially; although the resource is nearly 500-pages in length, only three pages are dedicated to Aboriginal reporting. In other words, SABAR's guide addresses a critical void in journalistic resources regarding accurate depictions of Aboriginal people.

This study draws from interviews with broadcast journalists that were identified by SABAR, asking them what information they believe they need in order to ensure more accurate reporting of Aboriginal people. Past research concerning media and minority relations has often involved content analyses of newspapers and broadcast programs. In this study, however, I work closely with SABAR and deliberately act as a conduit between the group and journalists in order to most effectively inform the development of SABAR's guide. This methodological approach intends to contribute to the epistemology surrounding the complex relationship between Aboriginal people and journalism.

1.2 Why this Study is Critical

This research is important because portrayals of racialized groups in the media shape the way citizens learn about these communities, yet these groups have historically been underrepresented and misrepresented in media accounts, thereby fostering a Eurocentric cultural hegemony (Mahtani, 2001). Media scholars have repeatedly claimed that this type of mistreatment tarnishes the relationship between Aboriginal people and the media (Fleras & Kunz, 2001; Henry & Tator, 2000, 2002; Jiwani & Young, 2006; Mahtani, 2008).

Valerie Alia studied the representation of Northern Aboriginal people in three newspapers for a two-year period in the early-1990s. She states, "Northern and [I]ndigenous people receive coverage in 'mainstream' media *primarily* in times of crisis" (p. 144),

resulting in a public sphere that comes to associate Northern communities with negative issues. Furthermore, Augie Fleras and Jean Lock Kunz (2001) suggest that the negativity that permeates coverage of Aboriginal affairs “paints a villainous picture of Canada’s [F]irst [P]eoples [*sic*]¹, inasmuch as success stories are rarely reported, and those that do succeed are proof of exceptions to the rule” (p. 146). Depicting Aboriginal people in these ways directly opposes Section 3 of the Canadian Broadcasting Act (1991). The act states that Canada’s broadcasting system should,

through its programming...serve the needs and interests, and reflect the circumstances and aspirations, of Canadian men, women and children, including equal rights, the linguistic duality and multicultural and multiracial nature of Canadian society and the special place of [A]boriginal peoples within that society. (1991, Section 3)

Canadian media scholars have pointed out that marginalized groups, and in particular, racialized groups, have repeatedly been demonized and misrepresented in media accounts. However, while there is a growing body of literature that explores that misrepresentation, there remain even fewer academic analyses that focus on the misrepresentation of Aboriginal people (Francis, 1992; Lambertus, 2000). This is an ongoing problem for ethnic minorities, but an even bigger issue epistemologically for Aboriginal people. The media routinely misrepresent Aboriginal people and the impact of these skewed portrayals can have serious social repercussions for those who have been inaccurately reflected in the news.

Journalism must be recognized as inaccurate not only when facts are reported incorrectly but also when it fails to reflect the diversity of the communities included in its reports. As David Yarnold (n.d.) notes, “[d]iversity in your content is as important as getting

¹ The use of Canada in the possessive form is problematic. More accurate writing would read: “paints a villainous picture of First Peoples in Canada”. In accordance with SABAR’s guide, writers should avoid describing Aboriginal people as “belonging” to Canada.

people's names right. It's a fundamental component of accuracy" (para. 1). Hanson and Wearden (2004) argue that "[t]he promise to deliver accurate information is at the heart of the unspoken contract that journalists have with their readers and viewers" (p. 546). In this thesis I speak about the important relationship that emerges between misrepresentation and accuracy. In my view, accuracy tends to be defined in narrow terms. While it is the basis of important journalistic practices such as verification, accuracy in journalism can be conceptualized in ways that move beyond its traditional frame of thoroughly researching stories and checking for errors. This study aims to contribute to that conversation by exploring how a commitment to accuracy in journalism includes a commitment to diversity. The literature in communications, journalism and media studies provides the theoretical lens through which I will examine this study. I draw upon research on media diversity initiatives and journalism guides to better understand the role of SABAR's own guide. I also refer to work that explores conceptualizing accuracy in the role of guides intended to inform diversity in journalism. I now turn to a review of this relevant research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

My study explores how the format and content of SABAR’s terminology guide can be informed through interviews with broadcast journalists. This project is embedded in a body of research that explores media-minority relations, journalism guides, and accuracy. To this end, the literature review is comprised of three parts. The first section examines media diversity strategies that have been recommended to alter problematic representations and why they are important. The second addresses how guides fit into these strategies. The third section examines how to conceptualize accuracy in a guide that informs diverse journalism.

2.1 Media Diversity Strategies

2.1.1 In Context: Why Diversity Strategies are Important

Scholars have repeatedly pointed out that Aboriginal people are misrepresented and underrepresented in journalistic accounts. Fleras and Kunz study media-minority relations in Canada. They emphasize that mainstream media supposedly provide a range of viewpoints, uphold neutrality and objectivity, and give fair access to everyone; however, in reality, they “appear to do the opposite when minorities are involved” (2001, p. 1). The authors write that the systematic bias in representations of minorities in the media can be accurately described as media racism:

Media racism acknowledges the pervasive influence of both structures and agendas that have an unintended yet negative effect—both systematic and subliminal—of misrepresenting minority women and men...[it is] rooted in those foundational structures and operational principles that systematically define “how things are done around here,” while remaining anchored in a mediacentric mindset that appears beyond challenge, and is secured by subliminal biases that inadvertently deny or exclude. (2001, p. 43-44)

Fleras and Kunz found Canadian media were flawed yet not overtly racist, and the people the media routinely mistreats have demanded more inclusive representations in order to better reflect their realities. Drawing on work by media studies scholar Sue Abel (1997), Fleras and Kunz note initiatives for establishing an inclusive media include the following requirements: “(a) the incorporation of minority perspectives into the media process, (b) multicultural programming, (c) balanced and impartial newscasting, and (d) sensitivity training for journalists and decision makers” (2001, p. 157). These are but a few of the recommendations that media scholars offer in order to challenge problematic representations.

Frances Henry and Carol Tator (2002) provide further justification for the development of media diversity strategies. In their book *Discourses of Domination: Racial Bias in the Canadian English-Language Press*, Henry and Tator apply critical discourse analysis to a series of case studies found in the Canadian print media (specifically, articles were taken from the *Globe and Mail*, *National Post*, *Regina Leader Post*, *Saskatoon Star Phoenix*, *Toronto Star*, and *Toronto Sun*) to study how the media construct racist discourse. They found several discursive themes dominated coverage of the case studies under examination: the discourse of denial; the discourse of political correctness; the discourse of colour evasion or colour blindness; the discourse of equal opportunity; the discourse of blame the victim, or white victimization; the discourses of ‘otherness’; the discourse of national identity; the discourse of moral panic; the discourse of tolerance (p. 228-234). Taken together, they argue that these discourses create an environment of democratic racism (Henry, Tator, Mattis, & Rees, 2000).

Other scholars (Henry & Tator, 2000; Jiwani & Young, 2006; Mahtani, 2002, 2009) mediate on similar but not identical themes. These studies emphasize that racist tropes are

subtly and not so subtly integrated and ingrained into journalism. The literature demonstrates that the media are not objective in their reporting, and instead promote discourses that support an ideology that marginalizes minority groups, including Aboriginal people. For example, in an analysis of 128 *Vancouver Sun* articles about the murdered and missing women in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, Jiwani and Young (2006) note the "persistent signification of Aboriginality" (p. 910). They found that the continual inclusion of Ernie Crey, the brother of one of the murdered women and himself the former United First Nations president, "served the function of fixing Aboriginality as a sign of the missing and murdered women" (p. 910). Here, the media made direct linkages among crime, violence, prostitution and Aboriginality, further marginalizing the women.

While racist discourses marginalize and oppress those outside the mainstream, some groups have responded by resisting them. Henry and Tator (2002) observe that writers of colour and First Nations writers, minority community groups, and the ethnic media have all made moves to provide oppositional discourses, thereby offering alternative voices in the news (p. 237-238). Additionally, the authors underscore the need for media workers to practice greater reflexivity on the job to support diversity,

Journalists and editors need to understand how their own social identities, histories, and frames of reference affect their work; and how whiteness acts as a filter, screening out the contradictions and complexities of issues related to race and racism, culture and ethnicity, and other social phenomena. (2002, p. 239)

Henry and Tator's research demonstrates that there is no single solution to the problems that permeate Canadian news media, and a range of diversity initiatives is required. Specifically, media diversity strategies that target inaccurate representation of minority groups can help remedy the ongoing misrepresentation of those communities by providing journalists with the necessary resources to produce more informed journalism.

One strategy that continually surfaces in the literature is the inclusion of the perspectives of minority journalists to inform the production of news. However, some suggest that accurate reflection does not necessarily follow inclusion. For example, in *Deadlines and Diversity: Journalism Ethics in a Changing World* (1996), Bud White Eye, an Aboriginal reporter, recalls his struggles at the *London Free Press* in Ontario during the early-1990s,

I told them that if I do a story, I want it done the way I do it. I'm a First Nations writer, this is a First Nations perspective, a First Nations writing style. If you change it to your way, there's no sense having me. You might as well go out and do it yourself. After 145 years of existence, I don't think the *Free Press* had ever had a First Nations writer before I got there. To finally have a First Nations writer and say, "We want your style, we want your perspective," then go back to the office and start making changes—how on earth can you edit a First Nations person's style or content if you've never worked with one before? How can you get that different flavour if you start changing things?...Unless you come out of a school of journalism assimilated and write like mainstream white journalists, they don't want you. (p. 96)

Despite the diversity White Eye could offer—the “flavour”, as he calls it—his perspective was not valued. Leslie Joynt notes this issue of invisibility is “discouragingly familiar” (1995, para. 3) in Canadian newsrooms.

The misrepresentation of Aboriginal people in journalistic accounts is a global problem. Australian academic Michael Meadows (1994) suggests that Aboriginal people are “probably the most misrepresented of all because of their place within colonial discourse” (p. 64), and although contemporary coverage in the media may have shifted from portraying Aboriginal peoples as victims to threats, “in essence, [I]ndigenous issues remain stereotyped or, as is more likely to be the case, omitted from the discourse” (p. 64). As a result, Aboriginal communities have culturally appropriated technologies such as satellite television and community radio “essentially as a response to a perceived racist mainstream media representation and a technologist-driven media environment” (p. 64). Meadows refers to the

imposition of satellite broadcasting systems on Australia and Canada to illustrate this appropriation. For instance, the Warlpiri, a group of Indigenous Australians, developed the Tanami Network—an integration of videoconferencing and satellite technologies—to connect four Tanami Desert communities with the rest of the world. As an example, videoconferencing is used to contact family, deliver educational and training courses, and remotely diagnose medical cases. Meadows suggests a telecommunications system of this kind has considerable implications for local broadcasting by Aboriginal communities, and it “demonstrates the possibility for empowerment inherent in such technology” (p. 67). By adopting and appropriating television and radio technologies, Aboriginal communities create a new kind of media that challenges the very same mainstream systems that prompted development of these different forms in the first place. Meadows makes the connection between Indigenous media production and media diversity strategies clear: “Through their inherent notions of potential empowerment, such [I]ndigenous initiatives represent a radical opposition to the cultural hegemony of mass media” (p. 71).

Journalism scholar Mercedes Lynn de Uriarte (2003) examined media reform within the context of media coverage of Latinos in the United States and Mexico. Since the mid-1800s, when newspapers named the first American foreign correspondent to cover the country’s war with Mexico, de Uriarte found that “accuracy has, more often than not, been distorted by a grid of xenophobia, racism, ignorance and social distance” (p. 39). Through mistreatment by the media, Latinos experienced “exclusion, stereotype, a propensity of negative and distorted coverage, low participation in mainstream media and almost no opportunity themselves to provide alternative points of view” (p. 40-41). de Uriarte found these same problems also influence African Americans, Asians Americans and American

Indians (p. 41). To accurately cover Latino communities, journalists require a better understanding of the context of their stories.

[T]he press must overcome an ignorance of history. Although newsroom guidelines and press ethics abound, neither substitute for in-depth knowledge of the people being covered. Recognition of context requires a good grasp of history. Few schools or universities prepare students to perceive a multicultural America, or to understand that minority groups are neither a new phenomenon nor an insignificant one. But because they do not appear in depth in most textbooks and they still have not been acknowledged in society's major institutions, most minority groups remain invisible. Their past is unknown, their present obscured. (p. 53)

de Uriarte notes that while coverage of Latinos is generally better and more abundant than it was in the past, it must continue to improve, and the best strategy for improvement is greater familiarity with Latinos and other minority communities on the part of journalists.

Dori Maynard (2011) suggests the conversation around diversity in journalism needs to be reframed. She points to the “changing demographics and growing gulf between journalists and the communities they cover” (para. 1) as evidence that commitments from news organizations to accurately reflect the country have not been renewed. Maynard argues that if diversity is not a priority then it is time to admit it; conversely, if it really is important then it is time to invest energy in ways to diversify the media.

The above literature provides the context for why media diversity strategies are important. Scholars have exposed the continuing problems involving the coverage of Aboriginal people in journalism, thereby providing the impetus for diversity initiatives. I will now review a number of these strategies in practice.

2.1.2 In Practice: Diversity Strategies at Work

The majority of media diversity strategies discussed in this thesis have been implemented in the United States. The country's oldest professional journalistic organization,

the Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ), is an example. The encouragement of diversity in journalism is listed among the society's missions (SPJ, 1996-2011, Our Mission section). As such, the SPJ developed the *Rainbow Diversity Sourcebook*. The sourcebook is a compilation of names and contact information for experts in areas ranging from agriculture to health and medicine to technology and is intended to encourage better sourcing by journalists. The experts listed in the sourcebook are from groups "historically underrepresented in the media: women, gays and lesbians, ethnic minorities, and people with disabilities" (The Quill, 1999). The sourcebook addresses a critical aspect of media diversity: who is quoted. This is a particularly important question given the prevalence of non-minority voices in the news. In a study of news sources in five British Press newspapers, Teun A. van Dijk (1991) found "that minority group members are quoted less often and less extensively than majority group members, even when the topics directly concern them, and even if there are minority experts available to give an opinion" (p. 174). In addition to the *Rainbow Diversity Sourcebook*, SPJ's website offers a Diversity Toolbox (SPJ, 1996-2011, Diversity Toolbox section). This digital storage space is filled with other strategies for creating an inclusive media environment, like suggestions for language use and tips on smarter reporting.

The Robert C. Maynard Institute for Journalism Education (MIJE) is an organization committed to promoting diversity in journalism. Co-founded in 1977 by Robert C. Maynard, himself an African American journalist, the institute helps news media reflect the country's diversity in content, staffing, and operations (Maynard Institute, 2011, About section, para. 1). Notable among MIJE's initiatives is its Fault Lines training program. Developed by Maynard, the program is a tool for journalists and teachers alike, functioning as "a means through which social debate may be analyzed to strengthen the depth, the thoroughness and

the social representation of our classroom and journalistic content” (Miller & Hsu, 2008, p. 118). Maynard identified five Fault Lines: race (including ethnicity), class, gender (including sexual orientation), generation and geography. These Fault Lines frame the ways in which people better see themselves, and more broadly, the world (Miller & Hsu, 2008, p. 119). The program challenges journalists and students to expand their definition of diversity by moving beyond the stale conceptualization of diversity as an issue of race and gender. It was Maynard’s belief that the Fault Lines framework “would help enable teachers and the media to fully, fairly and accurately represent the entire community with regard to whatever the social or philosophical issue” (Miller & Hsu, 2008, p. 119). Comprehensive training is an important component of diversifying the media.

An additional diversity initiative aimed at educating journalists is *The Authentic Voice: The Best Reporting on Race and Ethnicity* (2006), an instructional guide for both journalism students and industry professionals. Building on award-winning stories featured in the “Let’s Do It Better!” Workshop on Journalism, Race and Ethnicity at Columbia University’s Graduate School of Journalism—a media diversity strategy in itself—*The Authentic Voice* is a three-prong approach to providing accurate race and ethnicity reporting: the resource integrates a textbook, a DVD, and a website. Each story presented is a case of what the authors deem to be examples of best practices in journalism.

The aforementioned “Let’s Do It Better!” Workshop was developed in part by Arlene Morgan, former assistant managing editor at *The Philadelphia Inquirer* and current Associate Dean at the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism. The project was based on improving journalism by critiquing stories that were already in the paper (Morgan, 2008, p. 131). Morgan structured a pilot workshop around a controversial story that appeared in her

former newspaper. Twenty randomly selected editors, reporters, photographers, copy editors, and graphic artists debated the strengths and weaknesses of the story. The conversations were moderated, and Morgan says what evolved was an honest discussion on race reporting, noting the project's success is rooted in its bottom line: making journalism better (2008, p. 133). The Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism adopted Morgan's workshop idea in 1999 and she has been director of the program since 2000.

Another strategy geared towards promoting an inclusive media through education is the Forum on Diversity, a project of the Manship School of Mass Communication at Louisiana State University. The forum "is based on the ideas that representative and diverse coverage can determine the success of the news industry, and better journalism/mass communication education will help achieve this goal" (Forum on Media Diversity, 2011, About section, para. 2). To this end, the forum offers a list of media diversity syllabi submitted by teachers and professors from across the United States to aid in the development of curricula and to help improve teaching. The Forum on Diversity's website provides the rationale for creating such a list: "Teaching is the heart of good journalism/mass communication programs, and diversity is the heart of good teaching. Good ideas contribute to good teaching, and good ideas are better if they're shared" (Forum on Media Diversity, 2011, Media Diversity Syllabi section, para. 1). Additionally, the forum hosts seminars and conferences pertaining to media diversity, and the results of one conference on diversity in communication media and higher education yielded the *Diversity That Works* (2008) report. This work includes personalized reports from conference participants on specific diversity initiatives undertaken by his or her educational or media institute. According to Ralph IZard, editor of the report, The Manship School "hope[s] to provide a source of ideas that may be

locally adapted in a way that helps others achieve greater excellence in the educational opportunities they provide their students” (2008, p. 7).

I have provided context for why media diversity strategies are important, and I have also reviewed various initiatives at work. It is critical to note that not one of the strategies reviewed specifically targets Aboriginal representation. I will now explore how journalism guides fit into these strategies.

2.2 Guides as a Component of Media Diversity Strategies

In journalism there are guides that govern journalists in their work, some of which fit into media diversity strategies like those reviewed above, thereby helping journalists navigate the complex topics of race and ethnicity. A review of these guides underscores the need for a resource dedicated solely to Aboriginal reporting, because even when Aboriginality is addressed in the guides the information is limited.

In Canada, the Radio-Television News Directors Association (RTNDA) produced a comprehensive toolkit titled *Everyone's Story: Reflecting Canada's Diversity* (2007) to help broadcasters across the country reflect diversity. The bilingual guide and accompanying DVD include tips on proper language use, with lists of inclusive terms; diversity checklists for reporters, editors, management, and the newsroom; and sections for covering Aboriginal people and people with disabilities. (The guide dedicates five pages to Aboriginal people and the media.) According to Renato Zane, then Chair of RTNDA's Diversity Committee, it is the hope of the organization that, above all, the guide will be used to “find ways to reflect diversity in everything your newsroom does – from administration to story development to

on-air delivery to community relations” (2007, p. 5). Zane also notes that if diversity is built into daily routines, then news organizations will benefit (2007, p. 5).

As previously mentioned, in the United States the Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ) offers a Rainbow Diversity Sourcebook “to broaden the perspectives represented in the media” (The Quill, 1999). The book contains names and contact information for experts in a wide range of areas. All of the experts are from groups not commonly represented in the media, such as ethnic minorities and people with disabilities. Acting as a searchable database of experts from underrepresented demographic groups, the resource promotes diversity in sourcing, thus resisting the bias that results from a homogenous pool of sources. van Dijk (1991) underscores the need for diverse sources,

Possible biases in the coverage of ethnic affairs not only reside in the selection and prominence of news actors, but also in the ways they are presented as speakers who give their interpretation of, and opinions about news events. (p. 151).

Guides fit into diversity strategies in other ways. Colorlines.com is an American daily news site that covers racial justice issues (Colorlines, n.d., About Us section, para. 1). The site provides an *Immigration Stylebook* that “outlines why Colorlines.com writers don't use the i-word, ‘illegals,’ in any form to describe people” (Colorlines, n.d., Colorline.com’s Immigration Stylebook section, para. 1). The guide is a resource for journalists looking to cover immigration fairly and accurately. Among the reasons Colorlines.com lists for dropping the i-word is the fact that the word is legally inaccurate (Colorlines, n.d., Colorline.com’s Immigration Stylebook section, para. 3). Inaccurate news reports of immigrants can have serious ramifications. Writing from a Canadian perspective, Mahtani (2008) notes,

Racial minorities, and new immigrants to Canada from minority racialized groups in particular, are often presented as threats to the nation-state, and non-White groups are

portrayed consistently as mysterious or inscrutable, or linked invariably to crime and deviant patterns of behaviour. (p. 640)

Colorline.com's *Immigration Stylebook* can aid journalists in avoiding these negative portrayals, thereby providing a more accurate and fair representation of immigrants in the news.

The Center for Integration & Improvement of Journalism's *News Watch Diversity Style Guide* (n.d.) and the Media Diversity Institute's *Reporting Diversity Manual* (2002) are two more guides. The former is a comprehensive list of terms compiled with the help of various ethnic media organizations and industry professionals. The latter is a series of case studies analyzing where U.S. and European newspapers went wrong in reporting diversity, and what journalists can do to fix the mistakes. Both resources act as components of media diversity strategies by providing journalists with guidelines for accurate representation of minorities in the news, of which the positive outcomes are plentiful. According to Milica Pesic, executive director of the Media Diversity Institute,

As journalists, we have a unique opportunity to facilitate the process of reconciliation. We possess the ability to help all members of our communities express their needs and desires. We have the power to help eliminate stereotypes and misrepresentations of ethnic, racial and religious minorities within our societies. And we have the authority to shape the discussion and define the areas of common ground through accurate, unbiased reporting. (Tuller, 2002, p. 14)

2.3 Conceptualizing Accuracy in a Diversity Guide

I opened this study with the assertion that a commitment to accuracy in journalism includes a commitment to diversity. My comment thus warrants an exploration of how to conceptualize accuracy in a guide that informs diversity in journalism.

The debate surrounding journalism accuracy can be framed by interrogating not only what is wrong, but also what is missing; as Nick Russell reminds us, “truth can be distorted by omission as much as by commission” (2006, p. 38). This alternative approach to situating accuracy is particularly significant in the context of reflecting diversity in journalism, where different journalistic practices often work to silence voices outside of the mainstream. To this end, the Associated Press Managing Editors diversity committee produced a report (*The National Time-Out for Diversity and Accuracy*, 1999) based on the following premise,

We want to accurately reflect life in our communities. If our newspapers are not inclusive enough to regularly portray the diversity of those communities, then we are presenting a fundamentally inaccurate report. That lack of accuracy undermines our journalistic credibility. (Associated Press Managing Editors, The Premise section, para. 1)

While not all participants involved in the project agreed with the premise—some felt it went too far, others thought it could be edited—the report expands the industry’s understanding of accuracy by linking diversity and credibility. In fact, of the 150 newsrooms that took part in the project, 85 reported “that they felt reframing the issue of diversity as an issue of accuracy was an idea they wanted to continue to pursue” (Associated Press Managing Editors, Executive Summary section, para. 14).

The above report sheds light onto how to reconceptualize accuracy. Historically, inaccurate journalism has been identified by common errors: botched names and titles, typos, and misreported numbers (Silverman, 2007). While seemingly simple to correct, even slight errors can affect journalistic credibility. In fact, decades of research (Charnley, 1936; Berry, 1967; Lawrence & Grey, 1969; Scanlon, 1972; Tankard Jr. & Ryan, 1974) look at journalism accuracy in newspapers. Mitchell Charnley introduced the first method of measuring newspaper accuracy in 1936 and subsequent scholars have expanded upon his seminal work.

Other studies (Singletary & Lipsky, 1977; Moore & Singletary, 1985; Hanson & Wearden, 2004) address accuracy within a television context. This collection of literature demonstrates that accuracy has escaped the press to some degree since it was first measured nearly eighty years ago, a problematic reality considering two national surveys in the United States found “inaccuracy hurts the news media’s credibility” (Hanson & Wearden, 2005, p. 546).

The importance of factually accurate reports cannot be denied, and journalism that accurately reflects the diversity of communities deserves the same treatment; diversity guides provide a means to this end. For example, the *Rainbow Diversity Sourcebook* (SPJ, 1996-2011) compiled by the Society of Professional Journalists promotes better sourcing to accurately reflect diversity. Colorline.com’s *Immigration Stylebook* (Colorlines, n.d.) urges journalists to refrain from using the term “illegal” to describe immigrants because it is legally inaccurate. The Freedom Forum’s *Best Practices for Newspaper Journalists* (n.d.) notes that newspapers are unfair when they lack diversity, and that, “[t]he newspapers attacking the problem most effectively are following a carefully defined strategy of best practices” (p. 45) including the requirement for reporters to have their own “rainbow Rolodexes” (n.d., p. 46). What these examples demonstrate is that accuracy in a guide that informs diversity is not so much about checking for spelling or factual errors—again, that is how accuracy has been conceptualized historically—but rather, more about capturing the diversities of the communities journalists cover. In the forward to *The Authentic Voice* (2006), David Yarnold reflects on the measures his former employer, a newspaper, took to diversify its staff and content, clearly summarizing how accuracy can be reconceptualized in terms of diversity,

We came to understand why it’s important to have a voice that authentically reflects readers or viewers: It’s a question of accuracy. All journalists want their work to be viewed as accurate...And in order for our news reports to be fundamentally accurate, we must reflect the entire community. Because if, over time, our news pages or

broadcasts represent only narrow segments of the community, how can we consider our work to be an accurate depiction of the places where we live? (p. xi-xii)

Scholars have suggested that Aboriginal communities have been continually misrepresented and underrepresented in journalism, thereby underscoring the need for information sources that can assist in rectifying the ongoing mistreatment; yet a survey of existing journalistic resources reveals a lack of information for accurately covering Aboriginal communities. *Thus, SABAR's guide is important because it will offer journalists a way to be more accurate in their portrayals of Aboriginal people. SABAR's guide represents a significant—and unprecedented—step toward informing accuracy in Aboriginal reporting.*

The above selection of literature provides the theoretical grounding for my own work. What this research explores are the connections among media diversity strategies, journalism guides, and reconceptualizing accuracy in a diversity guide, and how these areas of study can link together in support of accurate reflection of all minority groups, in this case through the effective implementation of SABAR's terminology guide. Before examining these findings, however, I will first outline the methods used in this study.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Research Approach

This study examines what a small sample of broadcast journalists suggest should be included in SABAR's terminology guide for Aboriginal reporting, as well as informing the guide's form and medium. It employs qualitative research methodologies in the form of semi-structured interviews with a select group of journalists identified by SABAR in order to best inform the guide's development. Qualitative interviews are a suitable way to investigate answering this question because they "are conversations in which a researcher gently guides a conversational partner in an extended conversation" so that "each conversation is unique, as researchers match their questions to what each interviewee knows and is willing to share" (Rubin & Rubin, p. 4). Furthermore, qualitative interviews situate the researcher in the real world and are therefore appropriate for studying things "in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 3).

I chose to interview broadcast journalists about their perspectives on SABAR's guide. My method was developed in conjunction with SABAR because I believe in the value of transparent methodological approaches, as proposed by Linda Tuhiwai Smith and other Aboriginal researchers. As such, my approach encompasses Aboriginal perspectives and ways of knowing, thus resisting the Western epistemological standpoint that dominates much of the research involving Aboriginal communities. This approach is intentionally influenced by Aboriginality and is often described as "decolonizing". Decolonizing research methods is a critical step in Aboriginal research. In the opening page of *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (1999), Smith makes explicit the conflicted relationship

between Aboriginal people and research: “The word itself, ‘research’, is probably one of the dirtiest words in the indigenous world’s vocabulary” (p. 1). Within an indigenous context, research is inextricably linked to colonialism because it assumes a Western cultural standpoint. More precisely, Smith writes that Western research,

brings to bear, on any study of indigenous peoples, a cultural orientation, a set of values, a different conceptualization of such things as time, space and subjectivity, different and competing theories of knowledge, highly specialized forms of language, and structures of power. (p. 42)

Recognizing the position from which research has historically been conducted illuminates the ways in which Western researchers have collected knowledge about Aboriginal groups and then presented it to the West, thereby claiming authority over the people. My approach borrows heavily from the work of Aboriginal researchers, who insist that much of the research on Aboriginal people has adopted a colonial mentality (Mihesuah, 1998; Smith, 1999; Restoule, 2005) and Aboriginal communities have often been exploited in the process. I therefore aim to break away from the colonial themes that permeate Western research by respecting the value of an Aboriginal-inspired approach to this project.

3.2 Research Question

My research question is: What do a small sample of broadcast journalists believe would be most valuable to include in SABAR’s terminology guide in order to produce an accessible, accurate resource to inform the depiction of Aboriginal people in journalism?

3.3 Interviews

For this study I interviewed broadcast journalists from some of SABAR’s member organizations. Questions addressed themes that included the value and necessity of an

Aboriginal-specific resource, how SABAR's guide compared to other journalistic guides, the types of information journalists need to accurately report on Aboriginal issues, and how this information could be most effectively presented and then delivered. I asked journalists to draw upon their personal experiences in telling Aboriginal stories, as well as their familiarity with other journalism guides, to elicit suggestions as to how the format of SABAR's guide can be most effectively organized. As such, this study requires a flexible research technique that allows participants to expand upon areas in which they are most knowledgeable.

Qualitative research scholars Herbert J. Rubin and Irene S. Rubin call this approach to interviewing semi-structured (2005, p. 4).

I interviewed eleven broadcast journalists from seven different media organizations across Canada, all SABAR members and chosen by the organization. I did not choose the interviewees myself. SABAR provided me with a list of potential interviewees. The individuals who responded to my call for interviews worked at a variety of media organizations, including Astral Media, APTN, CBC, CTV News, Global News, OMNI, and The Weather Network. The interviews gave participants an opportunity to voice how they think the guide should be organized.

3.3.1 Participant Recruitment

I interviewed participants after SABAR's executive board recommended them to me. I drafted a letter that was distributed at a SABAR meeting in January of 2011 (see Appendix A). The letter included information about the study and asked board members to provide the contact information for two potential participants within their media organizations. I clearly

stated that ideally the individuals should be journalists with some experience and/or interest in Aboriginal reporting.

Once I was provided with the contact information for possible interviewees I sent each journalist a formal email introducing my study and myself. I outlined the procedure and what their involvement in the project would entail. I followed up my initial message with another email or a telephone call to confirm participation. Next, an interview time was arranged with those willing to participate. In preparation for each interview I sent participants SABAR's draft guide, as well as a consent form for their completion, as required by the University of British Columbia's Research Ethics Board. The consent form allowed interviewees to choose between being identified in the study or remaining anonymous. Most chose to be named and those who opted for confidentiality will not be in this project. Interviews were conducted in person or on the telephone depending on the preference and location of each participant. All interviews took place in private settings.

3.3.2 Data Collection and Analysis

The data in this study comes from the open-ended, semi-structured qualitative interviews I conducted with eleven broadcast journalists working for SABAR member organizations across Canada. Most interviews were approximately an hour long. I formulated a set of questions based on the objectives of my research (see Appendix C), and although I drew from the same list of questions for all the interviews, my approach was flexible enough to allow participants to focus on the issues that they found most important and spend less time on others. Each interview was recorded with the participants' permission and then

transcribed for further analysis. Participants received a copy of the transcription for review within one month of the date of the interview.

After the data was collected I analyzed each transcript to identify concepts and themes that appeared throughout the interviews. A concept is “a word or term that represents an idea important to your research problem,” and themes are, “summary statements and explanations of what is going on” (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. 207). My method for examining the material I gathered draws upon Rubin and Rubin’s approach to coding, in which concepts and themes that arise in the interviews are labeled in accordance with a key of codes that include definitions to recognize when important issues are present in the data (2005, p. 207). The main concepts and themes that I identified are discussed in the final analysis.

3.3.3 Research Limitations

No study is without research limitations and it is therefore important to recognize those present in my own. To begin, the sample size is small. While I interviewed precisely the type of person this study required—participant recruitment was not random, after all—the number was limited to eleven. A larger pool of participants would most likely yield a wider array of data. Moreover, the results are not generalizable. The guide in question deals with information related to Aboriginal people, their cultures, and their histories, and although this study examines the value guides have in ameliorating representation of minorities in the media, my findings are specific to SABAR’s guide. However, although the sample size is small, it does yield some important findings that I elaborate upon later in the thesis. My research intends to shed light on initiatives designed to accurately reflect diversity in the news media, thereby functioning as a referent for similar studies. To this end, my work is

modeled according to the research design laid out by Rubin and Rubin: carefully selected interviewees with special attention paid to thoroughness, accuracy and believability (2005, 64-78).

Chapter 4: Findings and Discussion

In this section, I summarize the key findings from interviews conducted with broadcast journalists regarding what they believe would be most valuable to include in order to produce an accessible, accurate guide to inform the depiction of Aboriginal people in journalism. I will suggest that there are three key findings: SABAR's guide is greatly needed, journalists have ideas for what the resource should contain to support accurate Aboriginal reflection, and online access to the guide is the quickest and easiest delivery method.

4.1 SABAR's Proposed Guide is Necessary and Long Overdue

Through the course of the interviews it became evident that SABAR's terminology guide addresses a void in information sources for journalists, suggesting that one of the key findings of this study concerned an industry-wide need for a guide that supports accurate Aboriginal reporting. This section presents reasons why SABAR's guide is a necessary contribution to existing journalistic resources, particularly in the absence of other Aboriginal-specific guides. It concludes with an interpretation of this study's first key finding.

4.1.1 The Guide is Needed and SABAR's Contribution is Exciting

One of the most important findings to emerge from the qualitative interviews involved the unanimous need for a guide of this nature. All the participants said that the guide is important and they were enthusiastic about using it. Curt Petrovich, a national reporter for CBC Radio News in Vancouver, British Columbia, has been reporting on Aboriginal communities for about 25 years. He explained why SABAR's guide would make a valuable reference tool for journalists covering Aboriginal communities,

The truth is, in I don't know how many newsrooms, you often have people who have never been to a First Nation, they've never been on a reserve, they have no sense or concept of any of this, so having [the guide] on hand would be useful for a great number of journalists, particularly junior journalists who just haven't done this kind of coverage before (Petrovich, personal communication, April 15, 2011).

Kelly Noseworthy, a bureau correspondent for The Weather Network in Oakville, Ontario, insisted on the importance of the guide for all journalists, stating that the distribution of the guide should not be limited to SABAR members only; everyone in the industry should have access to the resource, hence emphasizing its value (Noseworthy, personal communication, May 9, 2011).

Journalists interviewed did not know of a comparable current resource in Canada and were excited about SABAR's draft. Even Petrovich and Paul Barnsley, the executive producer for *APTN Investigates* in Winnipeg, Manitoba, said they had never seen a guide of this type (Petrovich, personal communication, April 15, 2011; Barnsley, personal communication, April 11, 2011), a significant finding considering the two journalists have over 43 years of combined experience in Aboriginal reporting. In fact, only one participant remembered encountering a specific guide regarding Aboriginality. Jessica Lyall is a senior news writer for OMNI Television in Toronto, Ontario. She said at some point in her career she had come across *Everyone's Story: Reflecting Canada's Diversity* (2007), a user guide produced by the Radio-Television News Directors Association (Lyall, personal communication, May 4, 2011). The guide only devoted a short section to Aboriginal people and the media.

Journalists need detailed information to produce news reports that are both accurate and culturally sensitive, an especially important objective in Aboriginal reporting.

Noseworthy suggested:

I think the whole point [of the guide] is to make sure that we're all accurate and the information is the same, because if you flip from one channel to the next I'm sure you'll see varying degrees of the same report, and who knows who is accurate and who is not. And the thing is, when you're reporting on something like Aboriginal history or Aboriginal culture or Aboriginal religion, Aboriginal treaties and land claims and whatever, you better be accurate (Noseworthy, personal communication, May 9, 2011).

Noseworthy added that SABAR's guide could replace other resources journalists may consult when covering Aboriginal affairs, such as Internet search engines like Google: "Not everything that's on Google is the truth, and that's where people are getting their information from" (Noseworthy, personal communication, May 9, 2011). The interview material suggests SABAR's guide fills a void in resources for journalists covering Aboriginal affairs because it provides the comprehensive and accurate information they need.

4.1.2 The Guide Will Play a Critical Role in Training Broadcasters

Another important theme that emerged during the interviews was the role SABAR's terminology guide could play in training journalists in all stages of their careers. First, the guide could supplement a lack of training on the part of journalists. Not one of the eleven participants interviewed received any formal training or lessons in covering Aboriginal stories either at journalism school or since entering the industry. Those who were more familiar with Aboriginal people and their histories had taken it upon themselves to learn more in support of accurate journalism. One participant who wished to remain anonymous in this study is a network correspondent for a television station in Eastern Canada. She explained,

I always try to sort of find, okay, what's the right word, what do you use, and try to make it as culturally sensitive as possible and accurate. So a lot of that was just personal, and I think that that's the problem is that you have people who may not be as dedicated to—well, not that they don't care, they're just busy and rushing toward a

deadline and they're trying to sort of just get it done as quickly and easily as possible (anonymous participant, personal communication, May 4, 2011).

Second, SABAR's guide could play an important part in training new journalists.

When questioned about other guides and how they learned about them, participants said that for the most part they were introduced to the guides at school or at work as part of their own training process. However, most interviewed explained to me that they were never introduced to a guide on how to cover Aboriginal communities more accurately. The implications here are tremendous. SABAR's guide could be given to new hires as part of their introduction to a job. As a senior news writer, Lyall said she would encourage new writers to use the guide when necessary: "It's the type of thing that, you know, a new writer gets hired, I'm going to hand them [the guide] and say, 'Listen, if you ever need to, this is what you refer to'" (Lyall, personal communication, May 4, 2011). SABAR's guide has the opportunity to become the authoritative source on Aboriginal reporting by training new journalists ways to accurately cover stories.

Third, journalists discussed the guide serving as a useful reference for providing ways to accurately reflect Aboriginality in their work, especially when they are not regularly assigned to cover Aboriginal news stories. Some of the participants explained they are general assignment reporters and are not presented with a lot of opportunities to report on Aboriginal affairs, and thus need to be reminded about the meanings of terms or the complex history of Aboriginal people in Canada. The interview material suggests that journalists are not adequately trained in the nuances of Aboriginal reporting and SABAR's guide could help rectify these inadequacies, thereby serving as an authoritative resource in the area.

4.1.3 Guide Provides Necessary Context

The information contained in SABAR's guide supports journalists' efforts to properly represent the communities they cover, with the aim that Aboriginality will be accurately reflected in their work. Journalists can tell complex stories by providing the necessary layers of context and background information. And having this type of information can advance stories. As Justine Lewkowicz, a reporter and anchor for NewsTalk 1010 in Toronto, Ontario, described,

Well anytime in news that you're covering something it's important to have a reference point, or sort of, you know, what's happening with Aboriginal issues in Ontario is related somehow to Aboriginal issues in Nunavut, or in BC, or whatnot. To know the background of the story is really important, to know what kinds of questions you should be asking about the issue happening right now (Lewkowicz, personal communication, March 18, 2011).

Having sufficient contextual information can also assist journalists in being respectful. A concern that journalists may cause offense toward Aboriginal people is a concept that often surfaced during the interviews. The study's anonymous participant explained how improper language use could be offensive:

I think people are, journalists in particular, are nervous about making mistakes and offending people and so they tend to use language which is either old and inaccurate or really, really safe and too wide-sweeping because they don't want to upset people and they don't want to be wrong (anonymous participant, personal communication, May 4, 2011).

The anonymous participant also discussed the ramifications of improper language combined with a lack of background information when journalists are in the field talking to Aboriginal people in their own communities. She said journalists have to build trust with their sources and that "you can't build trust if you don't have the proper language and you don't understand what these communities have been through" (anonymous participant, personal communication, May 4, 2011). The interviews suggest SABAR's guide could help journalists

communicate the complexities of the communities they cover in ways that avoid causing offense by providing essential context.

4.1.4 Interpreting the Findings

The interview material demonstrates that participants believed SABAR's guide could assist journalists in reflecting Aboriginality more accurately. These findings are in line with a couple of the requirements that Fleras and Kunz (2001) lay out for strategies that promote a diverse and inclusive media: "balanced and impartial newscasting and...sensitivity training for journalists and decision makers" (p. 157) The literature examining the long history of misrepresentation and underrepresentation in the media of minorities in general, and Aboriginal people in particular, underpins the need for resources like SABAR's. Some of the participants also touched upon this routine mistreatment and they noted that SABAR's guide is not only necessary but also long overdue. In fact, every participant said they would use the guide. Even those well versed in Aboriginal reporting showed appreciation for the resource, although they noted they might not need to use it as often as their less experienced colleagues. Above all, participants emphasized that they would be eager to see a guide like this in newsrooms, and emphatically pointed out that they would use a guide to inform their own storytelling approaches.

4.2 Content: What SABAR's Guide Should Look Like

The content of SABAR's guide is another important theme that emerged during the interviews. While all the journalists interviewed were enthusiastic about the draft document, they still had ideas for how the guide could be improved to further inform accurate

Aboriginal depiction in their work. Participants discussed additions to the guide and explained how the added content could help them. They also talked about the most effective ways of presenting the information so as many of their colleagues as possible would use the guide. This section presents what journalists think SABAR's guide should look like. It ends with an interpretation of the second key finding.

4.2.1 Journalists Want a List of Aboriginal Contacts

An important finding that surfaced during the interviews is that journalists want a list of contacts within Aboriginal communities to inform the development of a story. Many journalists said the list would help them locate the best sources for a story, an important consideration when attempting to accurately capture the diversities of Aboriginal people. As the anonymous participant described,

Journalists tend to have very, very tight deadlines, they often need information quickly, and so they might make a phone call and it could go to an old voicemail that's incorrect, that's the number that's listed, and then no one calls them back by their deadline, and then the information that goes to print or on air isn't as up-to-date or as accurate as it could be (anonymous participant, personal communication, May 4, 2011).

Laurel Clark, a television reporter for Global Edmonton in Alberta, talked about how journalists can provide better coverage of Aboriginal people by tapping into contacts on a local scale,

If we were to have a list of experts and contacts at the community level, that would be great because those people, you know, you might not think of calling them but you call them up and then you get some great story, some success story...and then you're offering more balanced coverage (Clark, personal communication, March 25, 2011).

Carol Charles is a reporter and video journalist for CTV News Toronto in Ontario. She also said would like a list of contacts added to the guide. She said if she needed to speak

to someone to address her questions or concerns, or if she required clarification, a contact list would provide quick and easy access to the applicable sources (Charles, personal communication, March 17, 2011). Including a list of contacts in SABAR's guide would assist journalists in accurate Aboriginal reflection by offering a range of diverse voices. Furthermore, because the list would be compiled by SABAR, those journalists referencing it could be confident that the contacts listed are considered by SABAR to be authorities in their respective areas.

4.2.2 Suggested Additions

All of the journalists interviewed suggested additions to SABAR's guide that would assist them in accurately reflecting Aboriginality in their work, the most common of which included maps and pronunciation guides. While participants usually explained their reasoning for these two additions it should be noted that they were both included in the original question (see Appendix A for the list of questions), and my own suggestion may have influenced the responses. Having acknowledged that, a review of these suggested additions, and others, is necessary.

As mentioned above, maps were a common addition suggested by journalists. Rob Smith is a reporter and video journalist for the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN) in Vancouver, British Columbia. He said he would like to see the addition of several kinds of maps,

Certainly maps would be helpful, not only traditional territory maps but language-grouping maps, political tribal council maps, you know, because you have your First Nations but then you have your tribal councils which comprise up to 14 or 15 First Nations here in B.C., so to see their territory complete would be good. In fact, I want one of those to hang up, I want to be able to see it (Smith, personal communication, April 11, 2011).

Barnsley also said different types of maps would be helpful. He said he knows people working in television have been trying to create a comprehensive map showing all the First Nations and reserves in Canada, but lacking sufficient time and resources, they have not been able to complete one (Barnsley, personal communication, April 11, 2011). Maps like those discussed by Smith and Barnsley are useful tools for situating Aboriginal people in Canada and for educating journalists and their audiences.

Correct pronunciation is critical in broadcast journalism and participants were enthusiastic about adding pronunciation guides to SABAR's guide. Just like improper language use, mispronouncing names, places, and other kinds of terms is inaccurate and can offend people. As Noseworthy explained, making sure journalists have proper pronunciation is a "key element" in accurate Aboriginal reflection (Noseworthy, personal communication, May 9, 2011). Additionally, Lyall said that at OMNI Television she consistently has other broadcast journalists asking her how to pronounce words, and SABAR's guide could help (Lyall, personal communication, May 4, 2011).

Some journalists suggested adding specific terms and websites to the guide. Marie Wadden is a radio producer for the CBC Network in St. John's, Newfoundland. She recommended adding the term "ecocentric" or "ecologically centric" (Wadden, personal communication, March 22, 2011). Both Wadden and Lyall said that "Innu" should be added as a standalone term (Wadden, personal communication, March 22, 2011; Lyall, personal communication, May 4, 2011). The Innu are Naskapi and Montagnais First Nations people who live in Northern Quebec and Labrador. They are often confused with Inuit, but the two groups are distinct. In the draft guide a note appears under Inuvialuit that briefly describes

this confusion, but Innu is not actually listed as a term itself. Wadden and Lyall noticed this and suggested it could be added to the glossary.

Other journalists talked about adding the websites for Aboriginal political and leadership organizations to SABAR's guide. Smith named the websites for the First Nations Summit (www.fns.bc.ca) and the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs (www.ubcic.bc.ca) as important additions (Smith, personal communication, April 11, 2011). Similarly, Wadden said she would like to see websites for the Assembly of First Nations (www.afn.ca), Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (www.itk.ca), Pauktuutit (www.pauktuutit.ca), and the Métis National Council (www.metisnation.ca) listed in the guide (Wadden, personal communication, March 22, 2011). These websites offer even more information pertaining to Aboriginal people than is contained in SABAR's guide, thus providing journalists with further resources that support accurate Aboriginal reflection in the news media. While all participants said they found SABAR's guide to be a valuable resource for Aboriginal reporting, the interviews suggested that additional information could be added to increase the guide's helpfulness.

4.2.3 Presenting the Guide's Content

Journalists must work quickly and effectively to meet their deadlines. Some participants suggested categorizing the information in SABAR's guide according to themes to facilitate usability. (Participants also described these categorizes as sections, chapters, and headings.) Suggestions for categories included religion, politics, culture, and basic terms.

Clark said this would make the guide easier to use,

One thought that I had was maybe instead of putting terms in alphabetical order you could have them under headings. So for example, you could have one for 'Culture,' and under 'Culture' you could have terms like 'Dream Catcher,' 'Eagle Feather,' that kind of thing...because I felt as I was going through [the guide] that I was interested

in and curious about the terms but I wonder if I'm a reporter and I'm writing something and I'm on deadline it might be more helpful if it's organized in a way where it's under headings (Clark, personal communication, March 25, 2011).

The terms could then be listed alphabetically within each category to further support usability. However, not all participants agreed that the guide should be categorized according to themes. The anonymous participant discussed the pitfalls of the idea: "Sometimes you're dealing with situations where some reporters, again, who might be kind of new to this, might now know what theme they're trying to be looking at" (anonymous participant, personal communication, May 4, 2011).

4.2.4 How Content Can Support Accuracy and Authority

Providing up-to-date content is an important component of accuracy in terms of a journalism guide. This is significant within the context of SABAR's guide as government legislation can—and has—changed the terminology used to describe Aboriginal people and their diverse cultures. To this end, participants agreed that SABAR's guide should be updated regularly to make journalists confident that they are accessing the most accurate content—and to ensure journalists continue using the guide. Participants discussed different time intervals for updating a hardcopy guide and a digital version. Most said that the former should be updated annually and the latter whenever there is a significant change to its contents, thereby making the digital version more current than even the latest paper guide.

Additionally, the contents of SABAR's guide sets an industry standard for accurate terminology and usage, thereby creating the opportunity for the guide to become the leading resource for Aboriginal reporting. But Wadden explained that if SABAR's guide is to reach this level of authority then leading media organizations must recognize it.

I would use the guidebook if, for example, I knew that SABAR's guidebook had been approved by all the journalistic leaders, like The [Canadian] Press, then I would use it because I would know that this was standard and accepted practice by all the newspapers, you know, so you need to get a stamp, you need to get consensus I think from The Canadian Press and the media leaders. You know, once they all say, oh yeah right, well that's what we're going to consider our accepted usage too, then journalists are more likely to use the book (Wadden, personal communication, March 22, 2011).

Lyll said that if SABAR's guide could garner the type of recognition like that described by Wadden then it "becomes the source, and you don't really look anywhere else" (Lyll, personal communication, May 4, 2011). She also said that recognition from government bodies and Aboriginal organizations like the Assembly of First Nations would further support the guide's authority.

4.2.5 Interpreting the Findings

This finding is an indication of what journalists think SABAR's guide should look like in order to improve coverage of Aboriginal people. de Uriarte (2003) claims that "[t]he best resource for better coverage is greater familiarity about Latinos and other minorities on the part of the press" (p. 58). The journalists I interviewed echoed this claim within an Aboriginal context, and they provided suggestions for what the guide could contain to promote familiarity with Aboriginal people.

4.3 Delivery: Accessing SABAR's Guide

Access to the guide was important to many of the journalists interviewed, suggesting that one of the key findings involved ease of use and online availability. In fact, every participant said they would access the guide online and most said they would prefer a digital version to a hardcopy. Interviews still demonstrated support for a printed version, but as

traditional forms of journalism (newspapers, TV news, and radio programs) have moved online, it seems that is where journalistic resources should be heading as well. This section presents reasons why journalists advocated for a digital guide, while also providing rationale for the production of a hardcopy. It closes with an interpretation of this study's final key finding.

4.3.1 Online Resources are Quick, Easy and Accessible

A common theme throughout the interviews was that journalists have to find information quickly and easily in response to a perpetual cycle of deadlines. While a hardcopy guide may contain the required information, searching through a book can waste valuable time.

Petrovich suggested building an online guide around a search function to make locating information as quick as possible,

We have to be able to have an answer after hitting one enter key on a computer or on a smartphone. So that would be my thing, if there was a way to make it more instant rather than, say, flipping or scrolling through something (Petrovich, personal communication, April 15, 2011).

Other journalists touched upon the connection between an online resource and ease of use. Angie Seth is the lead news anchor for *OMNI News: South Asian Edition* in Toronto, Ontario. She had this to say:

We are at our computers, we are at the mercy of technology every single day, and sadly gone are the days where we grab something from our bookshelf and go through it. But if we had something that was online that was a quick reference it would be easier for us to lookup (Seth, personal communication, May 6, 2011).

The interview material suggests that an online guide would be quicker and easier to use than a hardcopy, hence the overwhelming support for a digital format.

An online version of the guide doesn't just make searching and finding information quick and easy, it also makes that information readily accessible by allowing journalists to consult the guide anywhere they have access to the Internet. Lewkowicz provided the following explanation for her preference for an online guide,

When I'm working sometimes I'm in the newsroom, sometimes I'm working off my laptop, sometimes I'm working off my BlackBerry, so if I'm not on the right computer that has the file, or if I can't get access to my email, I can easily just go to a URL, here's where the guidebook is, so definitely online (Lewkowicz, personal communication, March 18, 2011).

In fact, like Lewkowicz, most study participants said they use some sort of smartphone (BlackBerry, iPhone) for work, so a digital version of the guide would literally put the information at their fingertips. Moreover, many of the journalists saw benefit in an online website that would be compatible with their mobile devices. This is particularly valuable for reporters who often work on the road. Charles says she spends up to 70 per cent of her time outside the newsroom, so having portable and easy access to the information in the guide is "key" (Charles, personal communication, March 17, 2011). Barnsley said "smartphones are the way to go" (Barnsley, personal communication, April 11, 2011). When questioned about the usefulness of a smartphone-compatible version of the guide he said, "It would certainly work for our company and I have a feeling it would work for other media organizations as well" (Barnsley, personal communication, April 11, 2011). The interview material suggests that journalists prefer the format that allows them to access information the quickest and with the most ease, and it seems a digital version would best support these requirements.

Despite the preference of most journalists for an online version of SABAR's guide, many participants suggested that a hardcopy version would still be crucial. Also, SABAR's

guide is intended to assist journalists in Aboriginal reporting, and given the remote locations of many Aboriginal communities, readily available Internet access must not be taken for granted. A paper version of the guide is accessible anywhere, and may prove especially beneficial depending on where exactly journalists go in their jobs. This suggests that access to the guide should not depend upon access to the Internet.

4.3.2 Interpreting the Findings

This research finding provides a better understanding of how journalists would like to access SABAR's guide in their jobs. The interview material suggests that resources that are the quickest and easiest to use are the ones preferred by most journalists, and in today's technology-driven media environment it seems those resources are usually digital. As evidence of this claim, in 2008 The Canadian Press launched online versions of its bestselling guides, *The Canadian Press Stylebook* and *Caps and Spelling*, thereby mirroring the general transition of journalism from its traditional forms to its digital counterparts. While SABAR's guide should also be available online, the value of a hardcopy must not be overlooked. Journalists need access to information that supports accurate Aboriginal depiction and that access should not be limited by the guide's method of delivery.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

The results of this study provide insight into the value of a journalism guide designed to more accurately reflect Aboriginal people and their communities. The most important finding in this study is that there is a significant need for this resource. SABAR's terminology guide can serve accurate Aboriginal reflection by functioning as a unique and authoritative reference document for journalists. Participants indicated that they would use the guide themselves and that they also considered it a beneficial resource to keep in their newsrooms and/or distribute as part of training for new journalists. Journalists suggested that the guide would fill a void in the selection of journalism guides currently available. Moreover, it supplements a significant lack of training on the part of journalists. It is paramount to note that not one of the eleven study participants received any formal training or lessons in Aboriginal reporting at journalism school or since entering the industry. Participants saw the guide as a necessary and long overdue journalistic resource. Questions of how to ensure as many people as possible will use the guide inevitably led to discussions of ways to access the guide quickest and easiest. Participants provided suggestions for reformatting the resource but what became evident throughout the course of the interviews is that the best solution seems to be an online guide.

The theoretical framework presented at the outset of this study helps make sense of the findings. Reflections of Aboriginality in the news have a long history of inaccuracies, the results of which often cast Aboriginal people in a negative light (Alia, 1999; Fleras & Kunz, 2001; Henry & Tator, 2000 & 2002; Jiwani & Young, 2006; Mahtani, 2001; Meadows, 1994). This is, of course, problematic. Journalism that does not accurately reflect the

diversities of Aboriginal people disavows the core values of journalistic integrity (Morgan, Pifer, & Woods, 2006).

This study examines what information Canadian broadcast journalists need to report on Aboriginal issues more accurately, but some questions remain unanswered. The biggest one, perhaps, is whether a guide for Aboriginal reporting is sufficient in rectifying the ongoing misrepresentation of Aboriginality in the news. While SABAR's terminology guide is a valuable and necessary resource, there is an obvious need for more information in journalism schools as well as the industry on the history of Aboriginal people in Canada. This was clearly demonstrated by the lack of training participants received on Aboriginal reporting in school or since entering the industry. Future research projects should explore the educational opportunities for journalists in the area of Aboriginal reporting in particular, and racialized groups in general.

Another unanswered question involves determining what form the guide will eventually take. Participants demonstrated unanimous support for an online guide but many still indicated they would like to see a hardcopy version as well. Most of the media diversity strategies reviewed in this project are online resources, and this is likely an indication of where journalists routinely go for their information. Indeed, much of the industry has migrated online, so the fact that journalism resources are following is not surprising. Future studies of media diversity strategies should pay particular attention to how initiatives are accessed.

An additional important area of study is determining how guides like SABAR's get recognized as valuable reference documents. Participants said if SABAR's guide is to serve as the industry standard for Aboriginal reporting then industry leaders like The Canadian

Press, government bodies, and Aboriginal organizations like the Assembly of First Nations must accept it as an authoritative source. Unfortunately, participants did not provide ways in which the guide could be recognized. Future studies should explore how media diversity strategies can gain this recognition, as the interview material suggests that acceptance by key organization (be it media, government or Aboriginal) is a critical component of producing an authoritative resource.

Academic analyses in the field of media and minority relations have often relied on content analysis, focusing on the ongoing misrepresentation and underrepresentation of racialized groups through quantitative analyses of journalistic products like newspaper articles or broadcast news items. As a result, academics have not fully engaged with the producers themselves necessarily, nor have they asked how their research projects can ultimately lead to progressive social change within media institutions. This project attempted to bridge that gap, by asking what kind of research project could be designed and implemented that would best inform the development of a useful guide for journalists. The epistemological implications of this study shed light on the relationship between Aboriginal people and the media specifically, and on critical journalism more broadly.

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Appendices

Appendix A Letter Presented at SABAR Meeting in January of 2011

January 27, 2011

Re: **Participants for Research Study: SABAR Key Terminology**

Dear SABAR Member,

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself. My name is Jessica Michielin and I am a Masters student in my final year at the University of British Columbia's Graduate School of Journalism. I am assisting SABAR with its key terminologies guidebook project. My participation in this research study is also the basis of my thesis.

I am interested in asking journalists about the most effective way of communicating the information in SABAR's key terminologies guidebook to those likely to use it. To this end, can you please provide me with the contact information for two potential participants within your organization? Ideally these individuals will be journalists with some experience and/or interest in covering Aboriginal stories as this research aims to explore how SABAR's guidebook can best assist in accurately reflecting Aboriginality in the news.

I will be conducting 1-2 hour interviews. Depending on what is most convenient for each participant, interviews can be done in person or over the phone. Participants will also need to familiarize themselves with the most current draft of the guidebook beforehand.

While participating broadcasters will be gratefully acknowledged, the names of individual participants will be kept completely confidential if interviewees wish to remain anonymous.

I thank you in advance for your consideration and I look forward to hearing from you.

Regards,
Jessica Michielin

Appendix B List of Interview Questions

Semi-Structured Interview Question List

Objective: To determine how to best put SABAR's guidebook to use

What were your first impressions of the guidebook?

When would you use it?

-What would make it easier for you to use?

What changes to the current layout would make the guidebook most useful?

Besides key terminologies, what else could the guidebook include that would assist you in accurately reflecting Aboriginality in your work (ex. maps, list of First Nations, pronunciation guides, treaties and treaty information)?

What additional terms and/or websites would you recommend adding to the guidebook?

Would you consult the guidebook if it were available online?

-Which format would you prefer: hardcopy or digital?

How often should the guide be updated so you are confident that you are getting the most accurate information?

Is there anything else I haven't asked you about the guidebook that you'd like to bring to my attention?

Objective: To gauge participants' prior experience with guidebooks like SABAR's

Have you encountered any journalism guidebooks in your career?

-How did you discover them?

-How do they compare to SABAR's?

-How often did you use them?

-How effective were they?

-Were they specific to Aboriginal peoples (vs. a multicultural scope)?

How valuable have similar guidebooks been to your work?

Can you share an example of when a similar guidebook assisted you in telling an Aboriginal story?

-Why was the guide helpful?

In the absence of a similar guidebook, what other resources have you consulted when telling Aboriginal stories?

Objective: To gauge range of participants' experiences in covering Aboriginal stories

What is your experience with covering Aboriginal stories?

-Have you encountered any challenges?

-What were the challenges?

-How did you respond?

-Have you used any resources to assist you in telling Aboriginal stories?

-What were the resources?

-Do you consult Aboriginal sources?

-What medium(s) of journalism has/have been most effective in telling these stories?

-What mediums has/have been least effective?

-Have your past experiences taught you anything specific that you have since used when covering Aboriginal stories?

-What did you learn?

What do you do now in your current job?

How long have you been working as a journalist?

When you were trained as a journalist, did you ever receive any formal training or lessons in covering Aboriginal stories?