

Ethnic Femicide: The Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Epidemic

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the missing and murdered indigenous women and girls epidemic in Washington State and how the state has failed to address the issue, underlining its complicity and impunity. It takes into account that this epidemic is part of a global crisis of femicide, drawing specifically on the Latin American term, *femicidios*, or femicide, the gender-based murders of women and the state's impunity in these cases. This paper then names another form of femicide, ethnic femicide, arguing that the missing and murdered indigenous women and girls epidemic falls under this crisis because of the underlying systemic racism and sexism in state institutions. This paper uses the indigenous methodologies of reframing and intervention, as described by Linda Tuhiwai Smith, to explore this epidemic, reframing it into a transnational feminist issue, not just an indigenous issue, and asking how Washington state, and America as a whole, can intervene, with indigenous leaders taking charge.

Introduction

On January 20, 2018, I attended my first Women's March. I was extremely excited about being there, in the middle of history-in-the-making. I made a sign and gathered with other marchers at Cal Anderson Park in Seattle, Washington, waiting for the march to begin. There were assigned speakers at the event to get us started, including Deborah Parker of the Tulalip tribes, letting us know what the goals of this March were, such as immigration, health care, and voter registration (2018). The last set of speakers were indigenous activists who spoke to the crowd about the missing and murdered indigenous women and girls (MMIWG) epidemic. In the middle of their speech, the microphones were turned off, silencing their voices. What I didn't realize then was that the person or people who turned off the microphones were mimicking the silence that has surrounded the MMIWG epidemic, until recently.^[i] While the topic of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls is not a new topic for the indigenous community, the March awakened me to the subject and, while I am still a new observer, one of my goals of this paper is to awaken others to it as well, ending the silence.

The silencing of indigenous voices, in what is now the U.S., can be traced back to the 17th century during the expansion of imperialism through colonialism. White colonizers, such as John Cook and Christopher Columbus, along with other missionaries, researchers, and businessmen erased indigenous cultures, land, history, and people. This was largely done for the expansion of slavery and trade industries. Linda Tuhiwai Smith, in her book, *Decolonizing Methodologies*,^[ii] explains how imperialism as an economic system expanded through colonialism, "by ensuring that there was European control, which necessarily meant securing and subjugating the indigenous population" (Tuhiwai Smith, 2012). She goes on to explain that indigenous peoples required "legislated identities which regulated who was an Indian and who was not, who was a *metis*, who had lost all status as an indigenous person, who had the correct fraction of blood quantum, were all worked out arbitrarily (but systematically), to serve the interests of the colonizing society" (Tuhiwai Smith, 2012). Through deciding who was Indian and who was not, colonizers erased human beings either by making them assimilate or by killing them. The MMIWG epidemic, or the widespread occurrence of missing

and murdered indigenous women and girls, is an extension of this erasure and colonization and an act of genocide. Abigail Echo-Hawk, the director of the Urban Indian Health Institute, wrote in a study, “This continuous and pervasive assault on our matriarchs has existed since colonizers set foot on this land” (Echo-Hawk et al., 2019). The effects of colonialism are still felt within indigenous communities today, especially with the erasure of so many indigenous women.

The MMIWG epidemic falls under the definition of “femicide”, or the killing of women because they are women (Grzyb et al., n.d.) along with the definition of “feminicide”, or the gender-based killing of women because they are women that are committed because of the state’s ultimate failure to prevent and prosecute such crimes (Toledo, 2019).^[iii] I explore femicide and feminicide through the MMIWG lens while defining a new type of feminicide, ethnic feminicide, which can also apply to many other racial and ethnic groups. The disappearing and killing of indigenous women is a form of ethnic feminicide, which is part of a larger history of anti-Indian violence that started during colonialism. While there are different types of femicide which also encompass the crimes of the MMIWG epidemic, they do not include the impunity these cases face from law enforcement and legislative officials. In the case of the MMIWG epidemic, law enforcement continues to silence the victims by misidentifying Native women, hiding data, or making families wait before letting them file a missing person’s report. This erasure of women on different levels because of their indigenous identity is specific to ethnic feminicide.

The data on the MMIWG epidemic provided by the interviews of activists and scholars, articles, and books are key to understanding ethnic feminicide. While the voices of the missing and murdered are not heard through the media, they are also excluded from feminist scholarly work, beyond indigenous works. It is through the indigenous methodologies of reframing and intervening that I base my research on, so that these voices are heard.

The Indigenous Methodologies

As previously stated, my research is grounded in the indigenous projects of reframing and intervening, which are defined by Tuhiwai Smith. I specifically use feminist indigenous methodologies for my research because, while I am not indigenous, these methodologies are key to understanding how feminist theory and critical race theory need to look at this issue and work towards collaborating with indigenous activists to force the state’s hand. To do this forcing, we must use indigenous methodologies, such as reframing and intervening.

In *Decolonizing Methodologies*, Tuhiwai Smith writes about twenty-five indigenous projects that have themes such as, “cultural survival, self-determination, healing, restoration and social justice” (Tuhiwai Smith, 2012). In the case of the methodology of reframing, social justice and restoration are key themes. Tuhiwai Smith writes, “Reframing is about taking much greater control over the ways in which indigenous issues and social problems are discussed and handled” (Tuhiwai Smith, 2012). She continues, “The framing of an issue is about making decisions about its parameters, about what is in the foreground, what is in the background, and what shadings and complexities exist within the frame” (Tuhiwai Smith, 2012). The process of reframing is important in the MMIWG epidemic. While it is an indigenous issue, it must become a transnational feminist issue as well. Luana Ross, author of “From the ‘F’ Word to Indigenous/Feminism”, quotes Denzi Dandiyoti, stating that “transnational feminism is the ‘activism of various groups of women, whom mainstream Western feminist theory and practices traditionally marginalized, which directed feminist attention toward power difference rooted in the structures of race, culture, class, histories of colonization and migration, sexuality, and so on.’” (Ross, 2009). Ross argues that transnational feminism must take into account the role of colonialism in indigenous women’s lives, which is exactly what indigenous activists have done and what feminists must continue to do when fighting for changes in legislation regarding the MMIWG epidemic.

The process of fighting for changes, which many indigenous women have already started, is part of the process of intervening. Tuhiwai Smith writes, “Intervening takes action research to mean literally the process of being proactive and of becoming involved as an interested worker for change. Intervention-based projects are usually designed around making structural and cultural changes” (Tuhiwai Smith, 2012). Often, white researchers take this to mean that they should be the ones that intervene in ways that are supposed to help but end up harming the community

they are researching. This ultimately fails when, as I will show, white activists and researchers have little education on the subject of MMIWG and end up creating laws that don't address the issues of communication between jurisdictions or creating data. Intervention should take place only when we have the indigenous communities in place to take control of the legislation and institutions that they are working to change for the purpose of bettering their lives, not just the lives of white people.

As I will show, the MMIWG movement not only takes on both of these indigenous methodologies, reframing and intervention, but my research into the movement and epidemic works within these methodologies as well. The next sections of this paper take a deep dive into the MMIWG epidemic and ethnic feminicide from the lenses of these methodologies to understand how indigenous women have used the reframing project to fight for the victims and how law enforcement have chosen not to intervene to save lives.

Femicide, Feminicide, and their Definitions

To understand ethnic feminicide, we must first uncover the definitions of femicide, the different types, and feminicide. The most basic definition of femicide is the killing of women because of their gender but this definition is highly contested as new definitions are created to understand the term. In 1976, Diana Russell, organizer of the March 1976 First International Tribunal on Crimes against Women, coined the term femicide. "The ostensible goal of this new word was to raise awareness that the violent death of women was a crime per se, not to be confused with the gender-neutral term 'homicide'" (Corradi et al., 2016). According to the article "Theories of femicide and their significance for social research", femicide "occurs in patriarchal societies characterized by male dominance and female subordination..."(Corradi et al., 2016) The United Nations describes femicide and feminicide as "the gender-related killing of women that can take many forms (intimate partner femicide, killings of women due to accusations of sorcery/witchcraft, so-called honor (sic) killings, killings of aboriginal and indigenous women, killings as a result of sexual orientation or gender identity and so on), and recognize its scarce reporting and prosecuting by official authorities" (Grzyb et al., n.d.). The Vienna Declaration on Femicide agreed with the basic definition but added that femicide takes its form in many ways including: intimate partner femicide, honor-killings, the killings of women and girls during armed conflicts, dowry – related killings, the gender-related killings of indigenous and aboriginal women and girls, and female infanticide just to name a few (Grzyb et al., n.d.). As these definitions show, the types of femicide are numerous and focus mostly on gender and less on race.

While femicide is ultimately what many feminists focus on to describe the misogynist killing of women, the Latin American creation of feminicide or *feminicidios* is a useful way to conceptualize femicide in the U.S. Ciudad Juarez, Mexico is the target of many feminist articles on femicide. However, activists in Ciudad Juarez were the first to reference and criticize "the Mexican state's institutional and cultural bias" and came up with the term *feminicidios* (Corradi et al., 2016). According to Corradi et al., "*Feminicidio*...tends to be employed in Spanish as the one notion that best expresses the violent death of women and girls, because it incorporates the semantic field of connivance of state and public institutions as relevant factors in femicide" (Corradi et al., 2016). These crimes "were not only characterized by exceptional brutality and sexual violence, but also by public authorities failing to investigate or punish them" (Toledo, 2019). As we have seen in the cases of MMIWG, law enforcement has failed in the same way to punish perpetrators for their actions against indigenous women as well as failing to investigate the crimes.

In this sense, I have purposely used these definitions to create a new type of feminicide. Ethnic feminicide is defined as the gender-based killing of women because of the intersection of both gender and race and/or ethnicity as well as the state's failure to prosecute and investigate such crimes and law enforcement's ignorance of these crimes. While this ignorance continues, law enforcement agencies and legislative officials have worked to overcome this failure. But has it worked?

The Missing and Murdered

In 2018, 31-year-old Rosenda Strong was in Toppenish, Washington with two friends, when she disappeared from a casino. For nine months, her family and friends got no answers from law enforcement on their search for her until her body was found in an unplugged freezer by a homeless man (Frohne & Hansen, 2019).^[iv] As of 2019, her murderer(s) has (have) still not been caught and her family has no information on how the investigation is going. On April 9, 2009, at 9:15pm, Kent, Washington police received a 911 call from Alyssa McLemore asking for help. Since that call, no one has heard from her and the police never talked to her family beyond telling her grandmother about the call (Green, 2019). These types of stories are all too familiar for indigenous families. According to a study done by the Urban Indian Health Institute, 5712 cases of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls were reported in 2016. Of those, only 116 were logged by the Department of Justice (DOJ) (Lucchesi & Echo-Hawk, 2018).^[v] In a report done by the Center of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), murder is the third leading cause of death for American Indian/Alaska Native women (Lucchesi & Echo-Hawk, 2018). In their study, Lucchesi and Echo-Hawk were, “highlighting the results of a deeply flawed institutional system rooted in colonial relationships that marginalize and disenfranchise people of color and remains complicit in violence targeting American Indian and Alaska Native women and girls” (Lucchesi & Echo-Hawk, 2018). This institutional system involves government agencies such as law enforcement, city council, state representatives, and the judicial system. How they interact with the indigenous community is important in understanding the MMIWG epidemic.

In 2018, Lucchesi and Echo-Hawk found 71 cases of MMIWG in Washington state. Of those, 45 were in Seattle, 25 in Tacoma, and at least 1 in Spokane (Lucchesi & Echo-Hawk, 2018). The rate of missing indigenous women, based on 2018 data, was 4.2 times higher than that of white women in Washington (Echo-Hawk et al., 2019).^[vi] However, these statistics may very well be an undercount for various reasons, which again goes back to the colonization of data.

Data has been used to count indigenous peoples and replace data systems that were created by them. Ian Pool, author of *Indigenous Data Sovereignty*, writes, “To colonists, by definition, any datasets that they themselves had not introduced and imposed were inferior, and thus no utility for public policy analysis, dialogue and implementation” (Pool, n.d.). Pool adds “Contact and colonialism exposed precursor peoples to new data systems, ranging from counts that had almost no manifest, immediate impact – although downstream usage may have had major effects – through to imposed collections that involved disruptions and even coercion, with negative implications” (Pool, n.d.). Data was used to further colonialism’s claims that the settlers were superior and the Other primitive. It was, as we saw in the Trail of Tears, an excuse to exterminate and move survivors onto reserves. Since the colonizers haven’t left, this use, or misuse, of data has moved into the MMIWG epidemic.

According to the research, “reasons for lack of quality data include underreporting, racial misclassification, poor relationships between law enforcement and American Indian and Alaska Native communities, poor record-keeping protocols, institutional racism in the media, and a lack of substantive relationships between journalists and American Indian and Alaska Native communities” (Lucchesi & Echo-Hawk, 2018). In Seattle, before the late 1980s, the Police Department used the label “N” to identify both Native Americans and African Americans, causing the Seattle Police Department to racially misclassify people of different races when asked for case files from that period. They also put them down as white if the tribe, like the Duwamish, was not federally recognized (Lucchesi & Echo-Hawk, 2018).

Law enforcement, often, don’t record when an indigenous woman is reported missing. In a Crosscut article, Jenny Mora was quoted saying, “I have been looking at lists, but do not see my sister, Roberta Raines, whom I reported missing to Yakama Nation Police, Toppenish Police, and the Sheriff’s Office in 2002. Nobody would take the report” (Washines, 2019). In the article “MMIWG: We Demand More”, the authors noted that some people were told to wait 48-72 hours after their loved one had gone missing to report them and even if they waited that long, they were often turned away. Indigenous people’s reports also weren’t taken because the victims might have had a reputation for drug or alcohol abuse, a background in criminal activity, and/or a history of mental illness (Echo-Hawk et al., 2019). The

authors of this article wrote, “This narrative of widespread substance misuse, criminal history, and mental health conditions is part of the institutional and structural racism that permeates this country. It was created and continues to be perpetuated to justify the continued mistreatment of Indigenous peoples...” (Echo-Hawk et al., 2019).^[viii] What is also disturbing is that indigenous women and their families don’t get justice for the crimes done to them. Lucchesi and Echo-Hawk pointed out that “nearly a third of perpetrators were never held accountable...” (Lucchesi & Echo-Hawk, 2018). In my conversation with Lauren van Schilfgaarde of UCLA, she noted that in studies done by Amnesty International and the National Institute of Justice, most crimes committed against indigenous women are perpetrated by non-indigenous people, and this exacerbates jurisdictional problems for tribes and federal institutions (L. van Schilfgaarde, personal communication, February 23, 2021). Tribes are unable to prosecute certain crimes committed by non-Native people, and if they are, they have restrictions on sentencing and what types of crimes they can prosecute them for.

Key pieces of legislation that correlate to the missing and murdered indigenous women and girls epidemic are part of the colonial construct of power over the “other” and if they are allowed to be given justice or not. First, the 1885 Major Crimes Act established the federal government had jurisdiction over crimes such as homicide, making it almost impossible for tribes to prosecute MMIWG cases (Burnette, 2015). The 1968 Indian Civil Rights Act “further restricts the penalty that tribal courts can impose for crimes...” creating “...a danger zone for indigenous women where perpetrators can get away with crimes with relative impunity” (Burnette, 2015). In 2010, The Tribal Law and Order Act was introduced to “offset” these issue “by giving tribes more authority and the ability to impose higher sanctions...” which includes “sanctions of up to three years imprisonment and \$15,000 for crimes committed on tribal lands” (Burnette, 2015). Lastly, there is the Violence Against Women Act, reauthorized in 2013 and 2021, which “extends tribal jurisdiction to prosecute violent crimes committed by non-indigenous persons that occur on tribal land” but even then, there are still limits to what punishment the non-indigenous person faces and arguments over jurisdiction, leaving many perpetrators going free (Burnette, 2015).

Intervention and Its Failures and Triumphs

In 2018, Washington state was the first to pass legislation to study the MMIWG epidemic. Washington State Legislature passed Substitute House Bill 2951 which directed Washington State Patrol to “work with the governor’s office of Indian affairs to convene meetings with tribal law enforcement partners to determine the scope of the problem, identify barriers, find ways to create partnerships to increase reporting and investigation, and compile and analyze available data of missing Native American women” (Substitute House Bill 2951, 2018). According to Echo-Hawk, “Bill 2951 mandated the analysis of quantitative data related to the number of missing American Indian/Alaska Native women and girls in Washington State...” (Echo-Hawk et al., 2019). Unsurprisingly, the Washington State Patrol had little to no data in their report. What data the report contained, came from an unidentified source and led readers and legislative officials to believe that the MMIWG epidemic “impacts White women 10 times more than American Indian/Alaska Native women” (Echo-Hawk et al., 2019). Washington State Patrol failed to recognize in their report that the indigenous population makes up 1.5% of Washington state’s female population but 7% of the missing women of the state (Echo-Hawk et al., 2019). While Substitute House Bill 2951 was a big step in the right direction, the Washington State Patrol missed the mark in their report.

The federal government also made steps to rectify the MMIWG epidemic. In 2017, the Federal Bureau of Investigation reported that over 5,600 indigenous women were reported missing, one of whom was Savanna LaFontaine-Greywind of Fargo, North Dakota (Baker & Fleischer, 2020). On October 4, 2020, President Trump signed into law two bills that address the MMIWG epidemic: The Not Invisible Act and Savanna’s Act, named after LaFontaine-Greywind. These laws were the result of two indigenous women in the United States House of Representatives: Rep. Deb Haaland of the Laguna Pueblo and Rep. Sharice Davids of the Ho-Chunk Nation, both the first American Indian women to hold office in Congress (Baker & Fleischer, 2020). While there is no data yet on how these laws are shaping the epidemic, the fact that the federal government has started to take notice is another step in

the right direction. However, in 2019, President Trump signed an executive order to start Operation Lady Justice, which is a task force focused on looking into the MMIWG crisis and on setting up cold case operations across the country (Kelley, 2020). On November 25, 2020, Operation Lady Justice released its first report. The report stated that, “One of the biggest challenges related to MMIP cases is the delay in reporting someone missing” (*Presidential Task Force on Missing and Murdered American Indians and Alaska Natives: Operation Lady Justice*, 2020 C.E.). What they missed was that the failure in reporting does not lie with the victim’s families but with the law enforcement officials who tell the families to wait to report or don’t even take the report at all, as was noted in Echo-Hawk’s report. The other factors that were not taken into consideration about reporting was the institutional and systemic racism that indigenous families face when reporting their loved ones, such as the assumption that the victim was a drug user or had too much alcohol. While the cold case operations are needed, the report missed a major point in naming institutional racism for the lack of reporting and instead blamed the victims’ families.

Local governments, like the City of Seattle, have also tried to intervene. On September 9, 2019, the Seattle City Council voted to adopt a resolution that acknowledged the violence that many indigenous women face and vowed to “address the crisis by hiring a special liaison, investing in human services, consulting with tribal governments, improving data collection and training police” (Beekman, 2019). Councilmember Debora Juarez, an enrolled member of the Blackfeet Nation, was the resolution’s sponsor and believed that “the detailed measure would soon lead to positive changes” (Beekman, 2019). In the local arena, indigenous women are leading the charge for change, which is exactly what the methodology of intervention calls for. Intervention is taking shape in other forms as well.

Rosalie Fish, an enrolled member of the Cowlitz tribe in Washington state has been using her track races to represent the missing and murdered, including her own aunt who disappeared when Rosalie was three years old and was found dead a year later (Saunooke, 2020). Van Schilfgaarde, of the Cochiti Pueblo, and Heather Torres, of the San Ildefonso Pueblo, helped write Resolution 10A for the American Bar Association’s House of Delegates (Robert, 2020). The resolution “urges federal, state, local, territorial, and tribal governments to ‘acknowledge and prioritize responding to the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (MMIW) crisis.’ It also calls on Congress to make accurate national data collection on the MMIW crisis a priority and give tribal access to those databases; develop inter-jurisdictional protocols for tracking and responding to the crisis; and providing training for law enforcement and funding for tribal justice systems” (Robert, 2020). In my interview with van Schilfgaarde, we discussed her work more. As the director of the Tribal Legal Development Clinic at UCLA, she works with tribes and tribal organizations with, “the aim towards building and enhancing tribal legal development...Most notably, we’ve worked with a couple of tribes in researching and drafting ordinances for implementing VAWA’s special domestic violence criminal jurisdiction, which, authorized under the 2013 VAWA Reauthorization Act, authorizes tribes to exercise criminal jurisprudence over non-Indians for domestic violence, dating violence, and the violation of protection orders” (L. van Schilfgaarde, personal communication, February 23, 2021).

Other activists, such as Paige Pettibon of the Salish tribe, use art and social media to share the stories of the missing and murdered. Pettibon told me that her activism is less overt than that of others. She says that her art “focuses on women in a non-sexualized way...Indigenous women are portrayed in stereotypes and, thinking of like Land O’ Lakes, it’s sexualized imagery, so my work focuses more on celebrating indigenous brown bodies in a way that isn’t sexualized and that is more empowering...” (P. Pettibon, personal communication, March 1, 2021).^[viii] She also includes mixed race indigenous images in her work because indigenous peoples are not monolith, repeating what van Schilfgaarde told me, and she wants her work to represent this. She also says that she’s revitalizing language. “I am part of the Lushootseed speaking community and by [revitalizing language] I am reclaiming something that has been suppressed and tried to be colonized” (P. Pettibon, personal communication, March 1, 2021). She said, to her, these are ways that build community and activism which is needed to overcome the MMIWG epidemic. While there is much work to be done, it is important that we use the knowledge of indigenous communities to make the right choices for ending this epidemic.

Conclusion

Ethnic feminicide not only affects indigenous communities but those of other racial and ethnic backgrounds. We can look at it from the view of the missing and murdered black women or from the lens of Asian Americans. What is most important to realize is that ethnic feminicide takes root in colonization and the “othering” of those who are not White. The MMIWG epidemic is just one case of ethnic feminicide that shows the institutional and systemic racism surrounding the issue. Data of the missing and murdered is often lost or misrepresented as Lucchesi and Echo-Hawk pointed out in their study of 71 urban cities that had cases of missing and murdered indigenous women, along with the Washington State Patrol who showed that White women are more affected by the MMIWG crisis. Institutions like the federal government blame victims’ families for the lack of reporting without realizing it is really their own institution that won’t take the report. The impunity that state institutions show in cases of minority women is why ethnic feminicide still exists. Yet it is worth remembering, as van Schilfgaarde reminded me, that there are more pieces at play in the MMIWG epidemic that ethnic feminicide encompasses. She told me that there are failures on many different levels but that in addressing the issue, it is a huge pivot in the right direction but “doesn’t relieve any other efforts” (L. van Schilfgaarde, personal communication, February 23, 2021). Can the definition of ethnic feminicide, then, be drafted to encompass the other failures that are at work with the issue of the missing and murdered indigenous women? While this paper only looked at the state as the main perpetrator, it could very well eventually include the missteps of tribal justice systems and how corporations play a part in the epidemic. There is more work to be done in this area but for the MMIWG epidemic, work is exactly what many are doing.

Indigenous leaders have been working within the government (federal, state, and local) as well as other institutions to make the voices of the missing and murdered heard. The media is also discussing the issue more and scholarly works, like this one, are being published. But it isn’t just up to indigenous leaders to do the work. They are the victims of colonization, the victims of this genocide. It is now time for that majority to take up the fight alongside their indigenous counterparts. How do we do this, though? Van Schilfgaarde noted that there needs to be more awareness that indigenous communities are not monolithic in the sense that the federal government would like us to believe. If we can recognize this, then we can work towards alleviating many antiquated federal policies that are legal barriers to indigenous communities (L. van Schilfgaarde, personal communication, February 23, 2021). Supporting legislation like Savanna’s Act and The Not Invisible Act were first steps in this direction. The next steps are calling for law enforcement agencies, like the Washington State Patrol, to redo their reports that have quantitative and qualitative data that can be used by tribal governments. We should make it easier for tribal justice systems to prosecute non-Native offenders and call for local law enforcement to start taking reports of missing indigenous women more seriously instead of turning the families away. Law enforcement needs to have training and education, along with having more of a sense of urgency, and there needs to be clear declaration rates on how many cases are reported and entered. There also needs to be inter-sovereign cooperation and tribes should be notified when a community member has been found dead (L. van Schilfgaarde, personal communication, February 23, 2021). These are only a few suggestions, but many more are out there.

This paper is just one part of an even bigger project when it comes to answering the end of ethnic feminicide. It happens all over the globe, not just in the United States. Indigenous methodologies, like reframing and intervention, can still be used when looking at the violence Palestinian women face during armed conflicts with Israel, or what Muslim women in India experience at the hands of the Indian government. Ethnic feminicide, as a new concept, still has questions that aren’t answered but progress will continue as long as there are people fighting for justice.

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Notes

^[i] This paper is dedicated to the families of the missing and murdered indigenous women and girls who are still seeking closure and justice

^[ii] Linda Tuhiwai Smith's book discusses the ways in which academic research has been harmful to indigenous peoples since being colonized. I used this book as a guide to help with the research process and the decolonization of knowledge.

^[iii] This definition of femicide is referenced in *Contesting Femicide* from the Mexican feminist anthropologist and politician Marcela Lagarde.

^[iv] While this information came from the Seattle Times docuseries, "Not Invisible", Roxanne White, an indigenous activist, also posted about Rosenda Strong on her Instagram page.

^[v] The DOJ database where these cases were logged is referred to as NamUs

^[vi] This data was calculated based off a report done in 2019 by Washington State Patrol

^[vii] They noted, "In an analysis of data from the National Survey of Drug Use and Health it was found that urban Indians had statistically significantly lower self-reported alcohol use than non-Hispanic Whites (44.2% vs. 59.5%)" (Echo-Hawk et al., 2019).

^[viii] You can find Paige on Instagram: @paige_pettibon and @plain_to_sea

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