

The Anatomy of a National Crisis: The Canadian Federal Government's Response to the 2015 Kurdi Refugee Case

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ABSTRACT

Background *A photograph of Alan Kurdi, a Syrian boy found dead on a Turkish beach, sparked a major Canadian political crisis. During a federal election campaign, Prime Minister Stephen Harper and Minister of Citizenship and Immigration Chris Alexander responded quickly to the incorrect implication that the government's immigration policies caused the boy's death.*

Analysis *This article analyzes the appropriateness of Harper's and Alexander's response strategies during the hours right after the crisis broke.*

Conclusion and implications *This article argues that the politicians faced an unusual challenge because, although the government's policies had not actually caused the crisis, government leaders had to respond as if they had. Harper and Alexander mostly followed best practices but shifted the blame to the greater refugee crisis, which came across as disingenuous.*

Keywords *Crisis communication; Political communication; Public relations*

RÉSUMÉ

Contexte *Une photo d'Alan Kurdi, le garçon syrien retrouvé mort sur une plage turque, a provoqué une crise politique au Canada. En pleine campagne électorale, le premier ministre Stephen Harper et le ministre de la Citoyenneté et de l'Immigration Chris Alexander ont vite répondu à la rumeur fautive voulant que les politiques d'immigration du gouvernement aient causé la mort de l'enfant.*

Analyse *Cet article analyse la pertinence des stratégies de communication de Harper et d'Alexander dans les heures suivant le début de la crise.*

Conclusion et implications *Cet article soutient que les deux politiciens avaient un défi singulier à relever, car même si les politiques gouvernementales n'avaient aucunement*

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causé la crise, les leaders ont dû agir comme si elles l'avaient réellement causée. En gros, Harper et Alexander ont suivi les meilleures pratiques possibles, mais quand ils ont attribué la mort du petit garçon à la crise des réfugiés en général, ils ont paru insincères.

Mots clés *Communication de crise; Communication politique; Relations publiques*

Introduction

Alan Kurdi was a three-year-old Syrian boy who was found dead on a beach near Bordum in Turkey, close to where he drowned on September 2, 2015. Kurdi was among 11 other Syrian refugees, including his mother and brother, who died while crossing the Mediterranean in an attempt to reach the Greek island of Kos for refuge. The boy's plight came to the attention of the world when the Turkish news agency DHA (Dogan Haber Ajansi) released a photograph taken by Nilüfer Demir of Kurdi's body on the beach on September 2, 2015, at 8:42 a.m. (Vis, Faulkner, & Prøitz, 2015). This personal tragedy that developed from the conflict in Syria soon made global headlines and became a compelling, image-based news story. The photograph circulated to 20 million screens in a matter of 12 hours. By September 3, 2015, at 8 p.m., discussion about the Syrian refugee crisis as well as Kurdi's death had reached a staggering 53 thousand tweets per hour (Vis et al., 2015), prompting a worldwide uproar and a call for closer attention to both this particular case and the greater Syrian refugee crisis.

In Canada, the story became a crisis for the ruling Conservative government, playing a role in a national election and threatening Canada's international reputation. In the immediate aftermath of the Kurdi photograph, incorrect information circulated that the Kurdi family had once applied to come to Canada as refugees but were denied by immigration officials. As a result of this news, members of the public and commentators initially concluded that if the Kurdi family refugee application had been successful, the boy would have been alive and well in Canada. This conclusion, while not based in fact, reflected badly on the Conservative government and its immigration policy, particularly during the federal election campaign that was going on at the time (Wright, 2018).

In light of these developments, prominent Conservative Party of Canada politicians stopped campaigning and went into crisis mode (Kestler-D'Amours, 2015; Taber & Ha, 2015; Wright, 2018) to respond to what was a symbolic challenge to the Conservative Party's election prospects as well as the country's reputation. International media outlets such as Italy's *La Repubblica*, the U.K.'s *Independent* and the *Times*, Algeria's *El Watan*, and America's *Time* magazine and Fox News (Panetta, 2015), noted the Canadian connection to the Kurdi case, bringing responses from Canadian political leaders into a worldwide spotlight. A Reuters journalist even suggested that the crisis was "rattling Prime Minister Stephen Harper's re-election bid" (Gordon, 2015, para. 1).

The Kurdi crisis was a significant one in the Canadian public sphere: an Angus Reid poll shortly after the crisis began found that 90 percent of Canadians had some awareness of it (Csanady, 2015), a number not often seen on political issues. Some political observers also felt that the case directly influenced public opinion during the election period. University of British Columbia professor and refugee law specialist Catherine Dauvergne said the case "probably pushed the refugee issue up into the pub-

lic prominence and linked it to the election in a more direct way than had previously been happening” (The Canadian Press, 2016, para. 8). A Nanos Research poll conducted from September 4 to September 6 showed that the Conservative Party had dropped to third in the race after the story broke (Vieira, 2015), although the party would go on to take second in the popular vote on election day, losing to the Liberal Party of Canada. Furthermore, 44 percent of Canadians did not “believe the Government acted appropriately” (Mainstreet Research, 2015, para. 9) in the case, a strong negative perception of the government’s crisis response.

In this context, and given the fact that political crises tend to be spurred on by “institutionalized oppositionists” (Koerber, 2017, p. 118)—opposition politicians in democratic systems whose main role is to oppose those in power—the Conservatives could not ignore the crisis. The leaders of the Liberal and NDP parties, Justin Trudeau and Tom Mulcair, used the situation to address how Kurdi’s case was handled; Trudeau argued that “You don’t get to suddenly discover compassion in the middle of an election campaign” (CBC News, 2015, para. 18). They also introduced their own ideas about how Canada should manage the refugee crisis. This situation gave the opposing parties an opportunity to critique how the Conservative government had handled refugee reform and policies while in power and to critique their plans for the future. Green Party of Canada leader Elizabeth May criticized what she considered a too-late Conservative plan to bring in more refugees, saying, “Shame on them” (Kestler-D’Amours, 2015, para. 10).

Recognizing the challenge this crisis created for the Conservative government, this article examines the Kurdi case through the lens of Situational Crisis Communication Theory to understand the initial crisis response messages employed by Prime Minister Stephen Harper and Minister of Citizenship and Immigration Chris Alexander. This case study seeks to understand whether they followed crisis communication response best practices, and it considers how diffuse blame for faraway events can complicate crisis communication response. Their responses show that in the heat of the moment they followed many crisis response messaging best practices, but failed to respond appropriately in key ways, likely due to a hesitancy to take blame for a problem that was not directly under their control.

Theoretical framework

Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT), founded and developed by Timothy Coombs (1995, 2015), classifies crises into three main categories or clusters based primarily on the locus of responsibility for the crisis: victim, accidental, preventable. For example, when an organization is itself the victim of a crisis, it is obviously not responsible for it, and thus the organization should respond differently than if the crisis had been preventable; a preventable crisis attributes responsibility directly to the actions of the organization. SCCT is founded upon the psychological theory of attribution, recognizing that humans try to attribute causes to effects in their lives: in the case of public crises, humans look to blame someone or something. Coombs (2015) argues that if an organization is directly responsible for the crisis, it faces a higher reputational threat—a threat that can end up compromising organizational operations or leaders’ jobs—and it needs to ramp up its communication, selecting effective response strategies for the situation at hand.

A dilemma that, to the authors' knowledge, has not been studied in the selection of response strategies within the SCCT framework is the problem of perception versus reality regarding the locus of responsibility (blame) for a crisis. In clear-cut cases of organizational responsibility, such as cell phone batteries blowing up or gas lines leaking on cars, the responsibility is clearly with the organization that produced the faulty items. In such cases, response strategies from the preventable cluster (apology and corrective action, for example) should be employed to satisfy the affected audiences both symbolically and materially. But what about crises where the locus of responsibility is more ambiguous? Coombs (2015) does reference a kind of crisis he calls the challenge crisis, which he says is "marked by ambiguity" (p. 153). However, challenge crises do not involve questions of who was responsible for the crisis. They involve questions of whether the act that caused the crisis was moral or not, or whether there was a breakdown in the quality of a product or service. This article is interested in situations where controllability—defined as "whether the actor can affect the cause or if the cause is beyond the actor's control" (Coombs, 1995, p. 449)—is low, but the public perception of controllability is high. It argues that the Kurdi case is useful to help us understand how politicians react in a situation where responsibility is ambiguous.

Additionally, what is unique in the Alan Kurdi case is the national angle. In crisis communication research, crises involving the response of nations have been understudied. Instead, most crisis response research focuses on corporate organizations (see, for example, Coombs, 2015; Frandsen & Johansen, 2017; Seeger, Sellnow, & Ulmer, 2003). This examination of the Kurdi crisis adds to the nascent literature on national crisis communication response (Bowen & Heath, 2007; Frosh & Wolfsfeld, 2007; L'etang, 2009; Lindholm & Olsson, 2011; Peijuan, Ting, & Pang, 2009; Rasmussen & Merckelsen, 2014; Zhang & Benoit, 2004) by examining how Canada's governmental leaders responded to a national reputational crisis that was not of their own making. Generally, a national leader's choice to engage in national image repair may be motivated by long-term repercussions on national reputation and promoting diplomatic relationships between nations (Peijuan et al., 2009). A few national governments' efforts to repair their reputations have been noted in crisis communication literature; however, most of these efforts are conducted after the crisis (L'etang, 2009; Lindholm & Olsson, 2011; Peijuan et al., 2009; Zhang & Benoit, 2004), not at the very beginning of the response stage, as in the Kurdi case.

Methodology

To understand how Canadian Conservative government officials addressed the crisis right after it began, an analysis was conducted of the first two public responses from Alexander and Harper. On the day the Kurdi photograph was released by the media, Alexander made himself available by doing interviews on national television; his first interview, with veteran political journalist Don Martin on the Canadian public affairs show *Power Play*, is examined (CTV News, 2015). Second, Harper's first press conference addressing the Kurdi case is analyzed (Rebel News, 2015).

Videos of the two events were transcribed, and the statements by both politicians were assessed and assigned to crisis response categories (see Appendix 1a and 1b for

definitions) to determine which messaging strategies were used and how often they were used. The strategies examined were categorized into four broader types: denial, evasion of responsibility, reducing offensiveness, and mortification (Koerber, 2017). Descriptors for each category (or sub-strategies) include shifting the blame, defeasibility, bolstering, and apology (Koerber, 2017). To quantify in a percentage number how many of each type of response was used, the number of times a particular crisis response strategy was employed was divided by the total number of crisis response statements made by the two politicians.

This kind of case study methodology focuses on a single phenomenon, is non-experimental, and presents a “rich description of the object of study” (Barone, 2011, pp. 8–9). Qualitative case studies have a long history in crisis communication research, providing the foundation for much of the early research in the field (Koerber, 2017). Rather than attempting to determine universal principles, the analysis of the Kurdi case is intended to problematize the locus of control in SCCT by presenting a case that does not easily fit the framework of responsibility. This makes it possible, as Stake (1995) describes, to “[seek] patterns of unanticipated” relationships and make “subjective claims as to the meaning of the data” (pp. 41–42).

The origins of blame

While the photograph of Alan Kurdi on the beach sparked this public crisis, its seeds were planted many months before. First, Canadian military forces were involved in the Syrian war, which displaced many people to countries across Europe and the Middle East. Additionally, in early to mid-2015, Canadian federal officials suggested exempting Syrians from requiring UN refugee status, which would have allowed those without that status to come to Canada through sponsorship programs (Levitz, 2016), but this policy was not put into action.

More directly, the origin of the crisis was also rooted in a kind of everyday bureaucratic immigration decision. Tima Kurdi, Alan Kurdi’s aunt, told the media in a press conference that she had tried to bring a family member to Canada through a G5 refugee sponsorship application but had been denied entry by immigration officials (Glavin, 2015). In early 2015, NDP Member of Parliament Fin Donnelly had also dropped off the Kurdi file to Alexander, who had said he would look into it (Glavin, 2015). Alexander then said that his position as a minister meant he could not get personally involved in specific cases such as this one (Gordon, 2015). The file was then returned to the family without the decision they wanted, as the government still required proof of the family’s convention refugee status. Tima Kurdi stated that this requirement was impossible to meet as the government of Turkey—where the Kurdi family had relocated at one point—had not issued the documents to Syrian people (Glavin, 2015).

A barrier to recognizing an event as a possible crisis for an organization is the occasionally tenuous connection between cause and effect. Everyday immigration decisions such as the one described above do not seem to hold the seeds of crisis. However, as Tony Jacques (2009) notes, a lack of recognition of or a disregard for the possible consequences of an action can lead to “increasing seriousness and greater risk, with matters of contention typically depicted moving progressively along a sequence from

concern to problem to issue to crisis” (p. 40). In the same press conference mentioned earlier, Tima Kurdi held the Canadian government partly accountable for the tragedy (Gordon, 2015). She and many observers did what people typically do, particularly for crises that could have been prevented: attributed blame in an attempt to find a cause (Coombs, 2002).

Despite the blame placed by Tima Kurdi and others on the Conservative government—and the need for immediate response messages to this reputational threat, which will be presented and classified later in this article—the responsibility for Kurdi’s death was actually quite ambiguous. Indeed, there was no clear and specific action by Canadian government officials that directly caused the death of Alan Kurdi and his family members. Later reports revealed that Alan Kurdi’s family had actually never applied to come to Canada; only Alan Kurdi’s uncle had applied, and he was denied due to the refugee status issue described above (Vieira, 2015). At one point Tima Kurdi admitted *she* felt some responsibility for having given the family money to emigrate from Syria in the first place. She also eventually qualified her statements regarding the government’s role by saying she did not “just blame the Canadian government. I’m blaming the whole world for this” (Gordon, 2015). Additionally, the Canadian military did not cause Alan Kurdi’s death with, for example, a bombing during the Syrian war. Finally, the immigration ministry’s decision to turn back the file of Alan Kurdi’s uncle had no direct effect; the uncle, Alan Kurdi, and the rest of the family were still alive and well in Syria after that denial.

The notion of “responsibility” is problematic in these types of cases, where a long chain of events has led to a crisis. While William Benoit (1997) notes that “we tend to hold people responsible only for factors under their control” (p. 253), the Kurdi case suggests this blame is not always accurately attributed. Looking at the locus of responsibility, practically speaking, Alan Kurdi’s parents were ultimately responsible for the decision to travel by boat to another country, which led to their deaths. Travelling by boat with human smugglers is a risky proposition at the best of times. The family’s crisis was, indeed, self-inflicted.

In this case and others, however, the matter of who was *directly* responsible for the negative outcome does not always matter. Think of an organizational crisis where a product kills its users, such as tainted meat in the 2008 Maple Leaf Foods case (Beauchamp & Littlefield, 2012; Greenberg & Elliott, 2009). In that case, the public did not place responsibility on the workers who monitored the meat in the factory or the machines that cut the meat. The responsibility lay at the top of the organizational chain with CEO Michael McCain, who had to accept blame publicly.

The Privy Council Office in the Government of Canada points out that a situation becomes a crisis when the government, media, or credible interest groups label it as such (Eid & Fyfe, 2009). Perception is more important than whether or not a crisis is real or apparent (Benoit, 1997; Boin, ’t Hart, & McConnell, 2009; Eid & Fyfe, 2009). Benoit and Pang (2008) maintain that “threats to image that are not based in reality can be just as damaging as threats arising from the accused’s harmful actions” (p. 247).

Perception is linked to responsibility. Benoit (1997) contends that in a crisis situation, it is unreasonable to develop a negative perception of an organization, unless

that organization is believed to be responsible. Responsibility for Kurdi's death in Turkey was linked all the way across the world to the Canadian government, as people made a connection between vague news of a Kurdi family member's immigration request denial and the family of Alan Kurdi searching for an alternate means of refuge.

As long as there was public perception that the government was even partly responsible for Kurdi's death, the politicians leading the ruling party, Harper and Alexander, needed to respond to the crisis quickly and effectively to prevent threats to party and national reputation by relaying the actions the Canadian government was taking to mitigate the damage. In this case, it did not matter that the Conservative government was not directly involved and that the government could even be seen as a victim of the situation (considering the false reports). The actual facts of the case relating to blame did not register with many people or matter to them. The general implication was that had the Canadian government accepted a refugee application from the family, Alan Kurdi may have been alive and well in Canada today.

The federal government's response

In the context of a crisis known around the world with serious implications for national image, the responses of Conservative government leaders Stephen Harper and Chris Alexander are particularly important to understanding how they viewed their government's role in the crisis. Since the government had no direct control over the situation that led to the death of Alan Kurdi, its representatives could have simply denied responsibility and moved on to other issues in the federal election campaign going on at the time. However, Harper and Alexander took to the airwaves immediately, implying that this event was important to them and their personal and party reputations.

When surprised by a crisis, a key best practice is to respond quickly to bring down the heat of the moment and satisfy affected audiences before the situation spirals out of control and other parties dominate the discursive landscape (Koerber, 2017). Matthew Seeger, Timothy Sellnow, and Robert R. Ulmer (2001) note that "anything less might be seen as stonewalling" (p. 160). In particular, audiences in the social media age—Kurdi's photo was circulated widely on social media—require responses right away. Both Alexander and Harper responded very quickly and seemed to follow best practices. The next two sections examine the nature of the responses from Alexander and Harper.

Chris Alexander's immediate response

The findings of this response analysis indicate that Alexander (CTV News, 2015) mostly used strategies within the category of reducing offensiveness (69.8%), which can be subdivided into the strategies of bolstering (22%) and transcendence (22%), followed by corrective action (14.8%) and performance history (11%). Beyond that category, Alexander also used strategies within the categories of mortification (14.8%), evasion of responsibility (11.1%), and denial of responsibility (3.7%). (See Appendix 1a for the text of Alexander's crisis response messages.) The next section examines the categories of messages Alexander used.

Bolstering

According to María Len-Ríos (2010), research on reducing offensiveness has demon-

strated that bolstering is commonly used. In this strategy, an individual or organization attempts to increase legitimacy by referring to a previous positive behaviour or action (Brinson & Benoit, 1996). Coombs (1995) states that a crisis is negative and can taint the positive aspects of an image. Bolstering works to remind the public of past positive behaviours associated with an organization, which should counterbalance the negative feelings an organization faces during a crisis. Bolstering offsets the negative feelings stakeholders or the audience may have toward the offensive act (Benoit, 1997). Len-Ríos (2010) contends that bolstering is successful when there is long-term public admiration and support for an individual or organization.

On multiple occasions in his interview, Alexander referred to the Canadian government's previous efforts toward helping those troubled by the crisis in the Middle East. He referred to Canada as a "generous donor" that contributed to humanitarian efforts via financial assistance. In addition, he referred to Canada's ongoing efforts to resettle refugees and stated that attempts to accelerate this process were being taken. Further, he insisted that the government played a larger role in fighting the root cause of the conflict—the terrorist group ISIS—by participating in the international military coalition.

Alexander not only referred to his own and the government's past good works but also to ongoing efforts by specific government members to reform how Canada was helping refugees. He stated that the prime minister (Stephen Harper), the minister of national defence (Jason Kenney), and the minister of foreign affairs (Rob Nicholson) all helped make Canada one of the "strongest" and "most effective donors" for Iraq and Syria, as well as an important member of the military coalition. Alexander also referred to personal (and familial) past good works by referencing the time he and his wife had dedicated to helping Afghanistan, and the visits his wife had made to Syria when it was peaceful. This approach was likely intended to distance the Conservatives from assertions that past policies affected the Kurdi family negatively.

Transcendence

Responses employing transcendence place the offensive act in a larger context. Those facing a crisis can point to higher values to justify the act (Huang, 2006). It is important to understand whether Alexander and Harper used transcendence as a strategy, as the personal Kurdi crisis was a part of a larger issue Canada faced: the Syrian refugee crisis. Through this strategy, Alexander attempted to place the Kurdi crisis in the framework of the larger refugee crisis, arguably framing the worldwide refugee crisis as a more important consideration than this specific case. Although he addressed the significance of the specific tragedy that Kurdi and his family faced, Alexander stated that "the story of the little boy and his family illustrates what is happening to people dying as migrants, to people being slaughtered by extremists ... this is a crisis on a scale we haven't seen in the 21st century" (CTV News, 2015). Additionally, he provided statistics of the number of individuals affected by the larger refugee crisis.

Corrective action

Although Alexander did not state which actions were being taken to solve the Kurdi family's problem (for example, he could have said the government would bring other surviving Kurdi family members to Canada), he did refer to the Conservative govern-

ment's plans to help resolve the global refugee situation. In doing so, he referred to the number of refugees the government was planning to bring in and the number of applications under consideration.

In terms of preventing similar crises, Alexander stated that the government planned on bringing in "thousands" of refugees who fled to neighbouring countries such as Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey. This point is significant in relation to Kurdi, as his family had fled from Syria to Turkey, where they were not granted accepted refugee status. Arguably, this promise demonstrated the government's willingness to prevent similar crises in the future. In terms of responsibility and corrective action, Keith Hearit (1995) contends that by using corrective action, the organization assumes some blame for the crisis, which Alexander may have unwittingly been implying here.

Performance history

Alexander used performance history to reduce the offensiveness of the situation. He referred to the scale of the refugee crisis and the numbers of refugees the government had planned to accept. From the numbers the government had promised, he stated that "over half" had already arrived in Canada. Alexander also referred to Canada's contributions to the refugee crisis on a global scale, stating that Canada accepts one in ten refugees for resettlement around the world.

Within the category of evasion of responsibility, Alexander mainly framed the crisis as an accident (7.4%) and used defeasibility (3.7%). Alexander said that the event took place by chance without intentional cause by the Canadian government. Alexander stated that his position did not equip him with the ability to make decisions on specific cases, thereby demonstrating a lack of control over the Kurdi family's refugee application.

Accident

Framing the crisis as an accident implied that Kurdi's death occurred by chance, without the apparent intention of the Canadian government. On multiple instances, Alexander referred to the crisis as a "tragedy" experienced by the Kurdi family.

Defeasibility

Defeasibility has received attention in the area of political crisis communication (Len-Ríos, 2010). Defeasibility messages are used to reduce perceived responsibility for an offensive act. In this strategy, the accused claims they lacked information or power over significant elements of the situation or crisis (Benoit, 1997). This is a common strategy in politics due to the diffused responsibility inherent in complex political organizations.

Benoit (2006) demonstrated that former American President George W. Bush used defeasibility as an image repair strategy when he was accused of a groundless invasion of Iraq. The criticism was sparked by the U.S. government claiming it knew Iraq had weapons of mass destruction but failing to find them when the country went to war. In defence of his decision to send troops to Iraq, Bush contended that his actions were founded on information and evidence he had at the time. He continued by arguing that the weapons of mass destruction may have been destroyed in the war, moved to another nation, or hidden by the Iraqi government. In stating so, Bush demonstrated that he lacked control of the situation at that particular time.

In the Kurdi case, Alexander also demonstrated a personal lack of control over the decision-making process to reduce perceived responsibility. He stated that he was not directly involved in deciding cases and that this responsibility was delegated to immigration officers who decided the case in accordance with the rules set out by the department. Benoit (2006) cautions practitioners on the use of defeasibility as a political image restoration strategy in this way. A lack of control can negatively influence the perception of a leader's authority and credibility, since leaders are generally expected to be in complete control (or are, by default, responsible for anything that goes on beneath them).

Shifting the blame

In terms of the denial of responsibility category, Alexander did not deny the crisis occurred by questioning the veracity of the photograph or some other fact of the case, but he did shift the blame. Alexander shifted the blame for Kurdi's death to the terrorist group ISIS: "This is a case where ISIS, terrorists, other groups, slaughtering innocent men, women, and children are doing great evil. We need to respond to that" (CTV News, 2015). Although he did not state that ISIS was directly responsible for Kurdi's death, he did state ISIS was responsible for the entire refugee crisis (which Kurdi was a part of).

Expressions of concern or regret for the victims

Finally, Alexander used one strategy in the category of mortification: expressions of concern or regret. Ethically speaking, if the accused knows he or she is at fault, an apology is recommended (Coombs & Holladay, 2008). Benoit (1997) notes that an audience may forgive a wrongful act if the apology is deemed sincere. While Alexander offered no apology, he did express concern and regret. One such response was: "It's a tragedy for the Kurdi family and our hearts absolutely go out to them; they are in our thoughts, they are in our prayers." He also related the tragedy to his own life, saying, "I, as a parent of a six-year-old and a three-year-old, know how devastating this would be" (CTV News, 2015). In these comments, Alexander was riding a fine line between taking responsibility and simply commenting sympathetically on the crisis.

Stephen Harper's immediate response

Findings from the response analysis of the transcription of Harper's first press conference (Rebel News, 2015) indicated that Harper mainly used strategies in the category of reducing offensiveness (66.68%), which can be subdivided into transcendence (27.77%), followed by bolstering (22.22%), corrective action (11.11%), and performance history (5.55%). Beyond that broader category, Harper also used strategies within the categories of denial of responsibility (16.66%), evasion of responsibility (11.11%), and mortification (5.55%). (See Appendix 1b for all of the crisis response messages.) The next section examines the categories of messages Harper used, beginning with strategies to reduce offensiveness.

Transcendence

By stating that the situation was "far, far worse" than what the public saw in terms of Kurdi's death and that "there are millions in exactly the same situation" (Rebel News, 2015), Harper framed Kurdi's death as representative of the larger refugee crisis and not under his control. In addition, he spoke to the reality of the Syrian refugee crisis

situation and what refugees are going through regularly. He referred to refugee resettlement as not being the best solution, saying the crisis had to be solved at the root by fighting ISIS.

Bolstering

Harper focused on reinforcing what he called the good work of the Canadian government in humanitarian refugee efforts, and he demonstrated past positive actions on both a personal and an organizational level. On a personal level, Harper referred to his visits to refugee camps to witness the crisis first-hand: "As prime minister, I have been to refugee camps in Jordan and in Iraq, and I can tell you that I have seen tens of thousands of people in these desperate circumstances" (Rebel News, 2015). In addition, he said he had met many leaders of the communities represented and stated their positive outlook on Canada's aid. He further stated that people in the parts of the world Canada was helping were appreciative of Canada's support. Harper also spoke to ongoing Canadian efforts in the humanitarian crisis, stating that the Conservative government would continue to take actions helpful in mitigating the crisis.

Corrective action

Harper did not identify any specific plans to help the Kurdi family. However, Harper, like Alexander, made reference to the number of refugees the government was planning to accept and the intention to accept more in the future.

Performance history

In speaking to Canada's performance, Harper stated that Canada accepted more people per capita than any other nation: "During the lifetime of this government we've had two and a half million new arrivals in Canada" (Rebel News, 2015).

Shifting the blame

Within the category of denial of responsibility, Harper, like Alexander, did not deny the very existence of the crisis. But he did shift the blame. Harper stated that the root cause of the crisis was "ISIS, terrorists, [and] other groups" (Rebel News, 2015), and that ISIS was leading a violent campaign against the people of the Middle East. Similar to Alexander, Harper did not refer to ISIS having a direct link with Kurdi's death but stated that ISIS was the basis of the broader crisis of which Kurdi was a part.

Accident

Unlike Alexander, Harper only used one strategy in the category of evasion of responsibility, framing it as an accident. Harper referred to the crisis as a "terrible tragedy" (Rebel News, 2015) on two separate occasions.

Expressions of concern or regret for the victims

Finally, Harper did not provide a full apology. Instead, he used expressions of concern and regret. At the beginning of the press conference, Harper made reference to how he was impacted by Kurdi's death on a personal level. Further, he said it brings "tears to your eyes. ... That is the reaction of every parent" (Rebel News, 2015).

References to national reputation

Beyond the specific responses classified above, this study also examined the responses

that reflected the leaders' concern for national reputation. Although there was no direct national Canadian responsibility for Alan Kurdi's death, both politicians addressed the Canadian connection. In doing so, they arguably also attempted to frame the public dialogue and diplomacy around Canada's responsibility for Alan Kurdi's death. Hans Tuch (1990) defines public diplomacy in terms of a government's manner of communicating with foreign publics to facilitate an understanding for the nation's "ideas and ideals, its institutions and culture, as well as national goals and current policies" (p. 3). In keeping with this definition, both leaders attempted to promote Canadian public diplomacy.

Their responses show that they attempted to bring about an understanding of Canada's ideas and ideals in relation to foreign publics, particularly refugees impacted by the war in the Middle East. They referred to Canada in terms of being a "generous country" in accepting refugees, a "generous donor" in paying for humanitarian efforts, and a strong player in the Middle East's fight against ISIS. In doing so, both leaders outlined the good deeds Canada has done toward helping refugees in multiple countries in the Middle East (directing conversation not just to Syrian refugees but also to Iraqi refugees).

In speaking to Canada's ideas about accepting refugees, Alexander stated that Canada had "the most ambitious objective for resettlement of refugees" (CTV News, 2015). Similarly, Harper stated, "our country has the most generous immigration and refugee system in the world. We admit per capita more than any other" (Rebel News, 2015). In doing so, both leaders attempted to distinguish Canada as a leader providing support to and mitigating the impacts of the refugee crisis on refugees. Another ideal expressed by both politicians was Canada's willingness to form alliances with other nations to reduce the impact of the war on refugees. This was depicted through both leaders addressing Canada's involvement in the international military coalition.

Demonstrating an understanding of Canada's institutions was key in the Kurdi case. As the Canadian government denied one Kurdi brother entry to the country based on insufficient documentation, the Canadian refugee system and its process were brought into question. In speaking to the refugee officers' handling of the Kurdi case, Alexander stated, "the department ... decided according to the rules that would govern any consideration of any application" (CTV News, 2015). This language played on the commonly accepted value that the immigration and refugee department should view all applications fairly.

In addressing these ideas, both Harper and Alexander endeavoured to boost Canada's national reputation. They promoted the portrayal of Canada's core human values, positive actions, past performances, and future goals. Ultimately, both Harper and Alexander responded in a manner that attempted to establish an understanding of and sympathy for Canada's model of society. In doing so, it can be argued that they attempted to reduce the negative association developing in national and international mediated publics due to Canada's perceived responsibility in Alan Kurdi's death.

Overall assessment of the response

There is a consensus in the crisis communication literature on the types of strategies

that should be used when responding to a crisis. Most scholars state that a single strategy does not work (Benoit, 1995; Len-Ríos, 2010; Sheldon & Sallot, 2008). In keeping with this advice, both Harper and Alexander used multiple strategies in their responses.

A dominant strategy (and best practice) is the use of sympathy, concern, regret, and statements of disappointment, especially in cases where direct responsibility is ambiguous (Cohen, 1998; Coombs, 2006; Coombs & Holladay, 2008; Patel & Reinsch, 2003; Seeger, 2006). Both Alexander and Harper used expressions of concern and regret, as opposed to an apology or a partial apology. This may be in line with the point made by Coombs (2006) that politicians do not employ apology in a crisis where the root cause is ambiguous, as it may bring forward legal liabilities.

Coombs (1995) has stated that a severe threat to reputation requires the accused to bolster his or her image by reminding the public of past positive behaviour. Both Harper and Alexander used this as one of their key tactics. In addition to bolstering, both leaders outlined Canada's specific involvement in the refugee crisis. Harper referred to the total number of individuals the government has accepted while in power. In a way, both politicians tried to demonstrate that the Conservative government had positive actions in its long-term performance history. This is in line with Catherine Sheldon and Lynne Sallot's (2008) supposition that by reinforcing positive acts, the threat to one's political legitimacy may be reduced.

Mahmoud Eid and Toby Fyfe (2009) encourage speaking to an audience in an open, empathetic manner when responding to crisis. This includes collaborating with the public and addressing its needs directly. In addition, this promotes managing information from multiple sources. Collaborating with the media and disseminating information as quickly as possible is also identified as a best practice (Boin et al., 2009; Eid & Fyfe, 2009; Ewart, McLean, & Ames, 2016; Gurevitch, Coleman, & Blumler, 2009; Hale, Dulek, & Hale, 2005; Seeger, 2006; Sheldon & Sallot, 2008).

On September 3, 2015, the day after the photograph of Alan Kurdi was released and the Canadian connection was noted, both Harper and Alexander addressed the public directly and intervened immediately, as described in the above analysis. Both leaders spoke in an open, sympathetic manner about the crisis. Alexander specifically addressed details of Canada's involvement (how the case was handled), responding to the public's perception of Canada's responsibility in Alan Kurdi's death. Stephen Harper spoke in a press conference where the media was present, and Alexander spoke to the media directly in the interview format. It is also imperative to note that both Harper and Alexander provided uniform crisis responses. They both addressed Kurdi's tragedy, placed blame on ISIS, and referred to Canada's performance history and past good works in terms of the global refugee problem. This is in keeping with Seeger's (2006) suggestion that, as a best practice, crisis communicators should provide consistent messages.

Was the response ultimately successful?

Ethical crisis communication demands that communicative goals align with the needs of the affected audience and do not simply serve the strategic goals of the communicator (Koerber, 2017). This means that judging the success of crisis communication response in this case requires one to determine how those strategies helped address the associated audiences.

While both Harper and Alexander followed key strategies and best practices suggested in the crisis communication literature, their communication was arguably ultimately unsuccessful. The Kurdi crisis shifted the public agenda of the 2015 election considerably, as it raised questions of the Canadian government's responsibility for the tragedy. This problem was significant on both an internal level, as it impacted party policy and campaigning during the election, and globally, as the worldwide mass media noted the Canadian connection. Although it is impossible to determine how the Kurdi crisis affected the election—many factors determine election results—it is significant to note that the case did hurt the conservative government's standing, according to public opinion polls (Vieira, 2015).

Despite responding quickly and following the response strategies described above, why was the Conservative government's communication effort ultimately ineffective? Arguably, this communication effort failed on two grounds. Primarily, Alexander and Harper both used strategies to reduce offensiveness as their dominant approach and shifted the focus of the crisis from the Kurdi family to the broader refugee crisis. This approach moved the focus away from a bureaucratic element, which was seen by many to be at the heart of the tragedy the Kurdi family faced (even though the facts showed that the whole family actually did not apply to come to Canada). Although Alexander touched on how these operations should be improved in the future (if the Conservative government were re-elected), his dominant focus was not on improving an immigration procedure that could push migrants to human smuggling.

In addition, both leaders failed to adequately address corrective action. Harper and Alexander did not discuss providing any form of assistance to the Kurdi family. Instead, their approach to corrective action was oriented toward the number of refugees the government would be accepting in the future (if re-elected). However, corrective action cannot be effective as a strategy if it is conditional on some development beyond the person's control. Indeed, the Conservatives lost the election and could not follow through on their promises.

In addition, responsibility for the crisis was placed on ISIS and other terrorist groups. These groups were depicted as responsible for the refugee crisis involving thousands of individuals in the Middle East—including the Kurdi family. Both Harper and Alexander focused on corrective action in terms of providing military aid and support to nations that were dealing with such terrorist groups to fight the issue at the "root cause." These root causes, however, were more abstract and diffuse than the bare fact of a photo of a boy dead on a beach; as a result, they likely did not resonate with the public.

By placing the Kurdi family's tragedy in the framework of the larger refugee crisis, Alexander and Harper moved the spotlight from the Kurdi family and the Canadian connection. They oriented their crisis communication toward expressions of sympathy and concern, past good works, and the future plans of the Conservative government. But in doing so, they failed to focus on the most important element of the crisis: the Kurdi family. The Kurdi family was merely used as an example to demonstrate the importance of fighting the problem on a broader, abstract scale and the significance of refugee intake. This approach may have been the result of the Conservative government's inherent belief, rightfully so, that it did nothing to cause the death of Alan

Kurdi. Given that media focused so much on the boy—the photograph playing a major part in this focus—it can be argued that crisis strategies should have been mostly focused on the boy and helping his extended family, rather than on more abstract issues and future plans.

Conclusion

Crisis response is not necessarily employed solely in rational situations where responsibility and controllability are clear. Rather, facts on the ground may indicate no direct responsibility or controllability at all for the political leaders facing a crisis. Nonetheless, the political leaders—in this case, members of a national government—must respond, and respond quickly and effectively. They are so compelled because the audience is not necessarily concerned about objective facts but rather impressions and assumptions about whom to blame (which may be influenced by partisanship and media agenda-setting). The image of the boy on the beach was so powerful that it likely transcended any objective facts that came out later about who was ultimately to blame for his death.

This analysis of the Kurdi crisis helps to understand that beyond the professional image of a politician, political crises can also challenge the image of a nation. Furthermore, the analysis demonstrated that crisis response strategies that address national reputation are used in the post-crisis phase, as shown in other research studies (Bowen & Heath, 2007; Lindholm & Olsson, 2011; Peijuan, Ting, & Pang, 2009; Zhang & Benoit, 2004), and they are also used immediately in the hours after a crisis begins.

Future research is needed to demonstrate the applicability of these response suggestions on a larger scale. This includes analyzing crisis response strategies used by politicians in multiple phases of a crisis. This would move beyond an analysis of initial crisis response strategies used by politicians (the period chosen in this study), to further examine other responses during a crisis and responses in a post-crisis phase. How long, for example, must leaders respond? In addition, although this study suggested addressing both national and foreign publics, further research needs to be done on how national/image reputation strategies are implemented for specific audiences beyond a nation's own people. Studies of cases where governments fully apologized and provided compensation—whether they were at fault or not—should be examined to see if those responses make a difference.

This article suggests that the locus of control in complex crises may not matter when it comes to the question of which strategies to employ under SCCT. Whatever the crisis, national politicians should use crisis response strategies immediately by having an open dialogue with the public and foreign publics. This involves using strategies that are in line with stakeholder's values (addressing the norms and values of the community/nation), using messages that resonate with stakeholders (expressions of sympathy and concern, references to past performance history and further action), and building relationships with key stakeholders (the media, the public, and the foreign public). The theory of the attribution of responsibility in crisis communication has mainly focused on crisis response strategies that address the image and reputation of an organization during a crisis or in the post-crisis phase, when responsibility for the crisis is generally accepted or clear. The analysis of this case pushes theory further to propose that crisis communication (in particular the image/reputation repair strate-

gies) should be used even in situations where responsibility is ambiguous, with a particular focus on those directly affected by the crisis event.

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Appendix 1a: Chris Alexander crisis responses

Type of crisis response strategy	Key characteristic	Example	Quantity	%
Denial				
Simple denial	Crisis does not exist	N/A	0	0
Shifting the blame	Act was performed by another person or organization	"This is a case where ISIS, terrorists, other groups, slaughtering innocent men, women, and children are doing great evil. We need to respond to that."	1	3.7
Evasion of responsibility				
Provocation	Responded to the act of another	0	0	0
Defeasibility	Lack of control/information	"I did act immediately. And any letter that has come to me, communication that has come to me in relation to Syria, Iraq, or any other situation gets immediate attention from our department . . . It's a burden that I, as minister, not be involved in deciding cases. That is delegated authority to immigration officers. This case was passed on to the department and decided according to the rules that would govern any consideration of any application."	1	3.7
Accident	An event that occurred by chance, without apparent or intentional cause, generally resulting in damage (e.g., death, loss)	"It's a tragedy." "They [the Kurdi family] have experienced this tragedy."	2	7.4
Good intentions	Meant well by the act	0	0	
Attacking the accuser	Reduce the credibility of the accuser	0	0	
Reducing offensiveness				
Bolstering	Reinforce good traits of the organization/demonstrate good actions the organization has taken	"We need to continue acting. Acting not just as a generous country welcoming refugees, not just as a generous donor paying for humanitarian efforts along with others to meet the needs of millions. But also standing up to ISIS, taking the fight to the group that is at the root of this humanitarian crisis and represents a security crisis for all of us." "My wife had visited Syria when it was a peaceful place, when it was a relatively prosperous place." "Canada has done a lot, we need others to follow us and yes we need to continue accelerating our refugee resettlement, being generous as donors, and taking the fight to ISIS."	6	22

Appendix 1a (continued)

Type of crisis response strategy	Key characteristic	Example	Quantity	%
Reducing Offensiveness				
		<p>"If you talk to our partners in this, sponsorship agreement holders, 100 of them across the country, we have brought the processing time down. It's not easy, it's a complex process, but no country does it better than Canada and nobody does it on a larger scale than us."</p> <p>"Well I think it's wrong to say that the kind of attention the prime minister gives to these issues, Jason Kenney gives on the military side, our colleagues in foreign affairs and with our development budget give, Rob Nicholson, doesn't make a difference. It has helped to make Canada one of the strongest and most effective donors for both Iraq and Syria. Definitely, the country with the most ambitious objective for resettlement of refugees directly from camps to Canada, and one of the important contributors to the military coalition."</p> <p>"This is the reason why some of us went into politics. To try and use the weight, influence, and institutional tools, the generosity as well, of Canada to do good in the world."</p>		
Performance history	Reinforce past positive performance history	<p>"ISIS, terrorism is affecting TWO countries. We have agreed to take 50,000 from Iraq and from Syria. Over half of those numbers are here. Mostly from Iraq, but the Syrian numbers are scaling up."</p> <p>"There are about 2,500 [refugees the government accepted as a result of the conflict in the Middle East] in the country right now. That in itself represents an acceleration in recent months."</p> <p>"I think Canada's reputation as the leading country for resettlement of refugees, we take one in ten around the world and within that the Iraqi numbers have grown in recent years, the Syrian numbers are growing this year is an example to others. We need other countries to join us. Both as donors and as military allies, but also in agreeing to resettle refugees directly from the neighbouring countries to which they fled, so they don't to make these perilous journeys further afield."</p>	3	11
Minimization	The act was not serious	N/A	0	0

Appendix 1a (continued)

Type of crisis response strategy	Key characteristic	Example	Quantity	%
Reducing Offensiveness				
Transcendence	Place the act in a larger context/more important considerations	<p>"But we are under no illusions about how many tragic stories are playing out in the Mediterranean as people struggle to cross borders to pay human smugglers to get them to where they think they need to go. And, above all, by those displaced by the conflict in Syria and Iraq who are looking down the barrel of terrorist guns."</p> <p>"Now we have a situation where four million Syrians have left their country. Seven million have been displaced inside their country and don't have any security and sometimes not even basic essentials of life inside their country. 300,000 are dead. It's a crisis on a scale we haven't seen in the 21st century and one of the worst since the Second World War."</p> <p>"The story of this little boy and this family illustrates what is happening to people dying as migrants, to people being slaughtered by extremists."</p> <p>"A much larger move of humanity is ... is ... is ... on foot or on vehicles trying to get away from Syria than we ever saw in the case of Afghanistan."</p> <p>"This is a crisis on a scale that we haven't seen in the 21st century, one of the largest since the Second World War in humanitarian terms."</p> <p>"There is a huge migrant crisis into many countries. Now, a higher profile in Europe than ever before."</p>	6	22
Corrective action	Plan to solve or prevent the problem in the future	<p>"We announced a target of 10,000 more [refugees] at the beginning of this year. During this campaign the PM has announced 10,000 more, that means we are scaling up and accelerating our processing of Syrian refugees." "We have 1,000s [of refugee applications] under consideration." "Ten thousand in January, 10,000 more announced by the prime minister during the campaign, we are intent on accelerating our process and getting it done." "It will be many thousands more. And I don't think any country will have done more to resettle refugees. Not asylum seekers, the type that are going into Europe today. But, to resettle refugees from Lebanon, from Jordan, from Turkey, and from other countries to which they have fled. It's the least we can do given the scale of the conflict, but we need to do it alongside the military and humanitarian efforts to meet the needs of millions more."</p>	4	14.8
Compensation	Reimburse the victim or the victims family	N/A	0	0

Appendix 1a (continued)

Type of crisis response strategy	Key characteristic	Example	Quantity	%
Reducing Offensiveness				
Corrective action	Plan to solve or prevent the problem in the future	<p>"We announced a target of 10,000 more [refugees] at the beginning of this year. During this campaign the PM has announced 10,000 more, that means we are scaling up and accelerating our processing of Syrian refugees."</p> <p>"We have 1,000s [of refugee applications] under consideration."</p> <p>"Ten thousand in January, 10,000 more announced by the prime minister during the campaign, we are intent on accelerating our process and getting it done."</p> <p>"It will be many thousands more. And I don't think any country will have done more to resettle refugees. Not asylum seekers, the type that are going into Europe today. But, to resettle refugees from Lebanon, from Jordan, from Turkey, and from other countries to which they have fled. It's the least we can do given the scale of the conflict, but we need to do it alongside the military and humanitarian efforts to meet the needs of millions more."</p>	4	14.8
Compensation	Reimburse the victim or the victims family	N/A	0	0
Mortification				
Full apology	Full responsibility taken by crisis manager, asks for forgiveness	N/A	0	0
Expressions of concern or regret for the victims	<p>Expressions of concern for the victims</p> <p>Crisis manager indicates that the organization feels bad about the crisis</p>	<p>"It's a tragedy for the Kurdi family and our hearts absolutely go out to them, they are in our thoughts, they are in our prayers."</p> <p>"They [Kurdi family members] have experienced this tragedy in a way that none of the rest of us will."</p> <p>"I, as a parent of a six-year-old and a three-year-old, know how devastating this would be."</p> <p>"When my wife and I saw this picture we were speechless, we weren't together when we first saw it but when we saw each other for the first time, we broke down in tears because we've seen this."</p>	4	14.8
Total			27	

Appendix 1b: Stephen Harper crisis responses

Type of crisis response strategy	Key characteristic	Example	Quantity	%
Denial				
Simple denial	Crisis does not exist	N/A	0	0
Shifting the blame	Act was performed by another person or organization	<p>"That is the reality of the situation that we are dealing with and it is getting worse, it is getting worse in many parts of the world. We see what's happening in Iraq and Syria, but this kind of violence, that kind of violent jihadist movement we see there is happening in more and more places."</p> <p>"We are also doing what we have to do to try and fight the root cause of this problem and that is the violent campaign being led against people, against millions of people, by ISIS. That is why we are part of the international military coalition."</p> <p>"[They said] we need to be in a situation where people are not trying to kill us."</p>	3	16.66
Evasion of responsibility				
Provocation	Responded to the act of another	0	0	0
Defeasibility	Lack of control/information			
Accident	An event that occurred by chance, without apparent or intentional cause generally resulting in damage (e.g., death, loss)	"It's a terrible tragedy." "I don't need to tell you what we saw yesterday was a tragedy."	2	11.11
Good intentions	Meant well by the act	0	0	
Attacking the accuser	Reduce credibility of the accuser	0	0	
Reducing offensiveness				
Bolstering	Reinforce good traits of the organization/demonstrate good actions that the organization has taken	<p>"As prime minister, I have been to refugee camps in Jordan and in Iraq, and I can tell you that I have seen tens of thousands of people in these desperate circumstances."</p> <p>"A large part of the people who come are people who are coming for reasons of family unification, for humanitarian and compassionate grounds, and of course refugee situations as well."</p>	4	22.22

Appendix 1b (continued)

Type of crisis response strategy	Key characteristic	Example	Quantity	%
Reducing offensiveness				
		<p>"A few days ago I met with the patriarch of the Syriac Orthodox Church, an example of just one of a number of communities I have met. Leaders of those communities who are represented in that part of the region and have, and have, some of their community here in Canada ... what they all tell you is this, friends ... we're honoured, we are delighted, we are relieved when we see some of our people coming to this country and we appreciate you doing that... We also appreciate the humanitarian aid you deliver to us, obviously we need it. Our people are desperate."</p> <p>"They want us to help them. That is why we provide refugee placements ... friends ... that is why we provide humanitarian aid to these millions of people and that is why we are part of the international military coalition taking on the so-called Islamic state. We can do all of these things, we should do all of these things."</p>		
Performance history	Reinforce past performance history	"Our country has the most generous immigration and refugee system in the world. We admit per capita more people than any other. During the lifetime of this government, we've had two and a half million new arrivals in Canada."	1	5.55
Minimization	The act was not serious	N/A	0	0
Transcendence	Place the act in a larger context/ more important considerations	<p>"What I want to say though is this ... friends. I don't need to tell you what we saw yesterday was a tragedy, what I need to tell you is that it is far, far worse than that, far worse [referring to crisis in Middle East]."</p> <p>"There are millions more in exactly the same situation [referring to the Kurd's situation]."</p> <p>"There are in fact tens of millions of people, not in the refugee camps, but tens of millions of people whose lives have been affected by what is going on in that part of the world, in a way that is catastrophic, that has put their very survival on a day-to-day basis in jeopardy. That is the reality of the situation that we are dealing with and it is getting worse, it is getting worse in many parts of the world."</p>	5	27.77

Appendix 1b (continued)

Type of crisis response strategy	Key characteristic	Example	Quantity	%
Reducing offensiveness				
		<p>"But, friends, refugee policy alone is not remotely a solution to this problem. It is of a scale far, far beyond that."</p> <p>"[It] is not a solution, we do not want to pick up our entire communities, hundreds of thousands, of millions of our people and move them out of a region where they have lived for as long as history has been written. They do not want that, they want us to help them. [Referring to what Syrians want in terms of finding a solution to the root cause of individuals fleeing from Syria]."</p>	5	27.77
Corrective action	Plan to solve or prevent the problem in the future	<p>"Earlier in this campaign I announced that this government, we have already accepted tens of thousands of refugees from this part of the world, from the Middle East, and I announced earlier in the campaign that we will accept more."</p> <p>"Canada will and is doing all of these things [humanitarian aid, accepting refugees, etc..]"</p>	2	11.11
Compensation	Reimburse the victim or the victims family	N/A	0	0
Mortification				
Full apology	Full responsibility taken by crisis manager, asks for forgiveness	N/A	0	0
Expressions of concern or regret for the victims	Expressions of concern for the victims Crisis manager indicates that the organization feels bad about the crisis	<p>"Look, I think our reaction to that, you know the first thing that crossed our mind was ... you know ... remembering our own son Ben at that age, running around like that, and I think ... you know I think that is ... brings tears to your eyes, I think that is the reaction of every parent. If anyone has ever had a two-year-old, or been near a two-year-old, had a parent, been a parent in Canada or anywhere around the world. It truly is a heartbreaking situation, it's a terrible tragedy, and I know all of our hearts go out to those who are touched personally by this tragedy."</p>	1	5.55
Total			18	