

MPC MAJOR RESEARCH PAPER

Swept to the Shores:
An Analysis of Crisis Response Strategies by Canadian Political Leaders in the Aylan
Kurdi Crisis

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Author's Declaration:

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Abstract:

Motivation: This MRP explored Stephen Harper and Chris Alexander's responses to the Aylan Kurdi crisis Canada faced in September 2015. Aylan Kurdi, a three-year-old boy, was found dead and photographed on the Turkish shore, close to where he drowned on September 2, 2015. Tima Kurdi, Aylan Kurdi's aunt, told the media that the family had been trying to come to Canada through a G5 sponsorship agreement but had been denied entry by the Canadian government. Alexander and the Canadian government were criticized – and a crisis resulted. The crisis was particularly important as it came forward during the 2015 Canadian election, when the Conservative government's refugee policies gained increasing attention. Arguably, this impacted professional image and reputation, as well as Canada's national reputation.

Purpose: The purpose of this MRP is to identify the types of image repair strategies Chris Alexander and Stephen Harper used to respond to the crisis in terms of both professional and national reputation.

Methods: Two video responses were selected for examination; they were representative of Harper's and Alexander's initial responses to the Aylan Kurdi Crisis. The videos were chosen based on frequency of words such as: crisis, apologize, tragedy, failure, action, and blame. These words have come up frequently in the literature review conducted for this MRP. A content analysis was conducted for this MRP. Both videos were transcribed and coded to determine the types of crisis response strategies used by these leaders. The strategies examined are categorized into four types: denial, evasion of responsibility, reducing offensiveness, and mortification. Descriptors for each category (or sub-strategies under each category) included shifting the blame, defeasibility, bolstering, and apology. All 15 descriptors were drawn from the works of Coombs and Benoit (based on Image Repair Theory and Situational Crisis Communication Theory). To quantify percentages, the entire numbers of crisis responses were divided the number of times a particular crisis response strategy was used.

Results:

Results indicated that both Harper and Alexander used crisis response strategies of reducing offensiveness, denial, evasion of responsibility, and mortification. Both leaders mainly focused on reducing offensiveness in terms of transcendence, bolstering, corrective action, and performance history. Through an analysis of their responses, it was evident that both leaders addressed Canada's national reputation.

Conclusion:

The findings of this MRP present a key area for further exploration in crisis communication: how nations use image repair strategies to restore a tarnished image.

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Introduction and Background

In today's 24-hour news environment, we are often overwhelmed by stories of crises. We live in a society that is driven by globalization (Lindholm and Olsson, 2011), where images and stories of war, trauma, natural disasters, social and economic conflicts, political crises, and corporate wrongdoings travel almost instantly across the globe. The world is more interconnected than ever and a crisis happening in one part of the world could have an impact in another part (J. Hale, P. Hale & Dulek, 2005). It is within this framework of increased public awareness, as well as interconnectivity, that the field of political crisis communication finds great significance.

This Major Research Paper (MRP) seeks to explore crisis response strategies in the Canadian political arena. The context of the MRP is around Aylan Kurdi, a victim of the Syrian refugee crisis. Aylan was a three-year-old Syrian boy whose dead body was found and photographed lying on Bodrum beach in Turkey, close to where he drowned on September 2, 2015 (Taber & Ha, 2015). Aylan 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. Turkish news agency DHA (Dogan Haber Ajansi), whose journalist Nilufer Demir took the photographs, was first to release an article on the tragedy on September 2, 2015 at 8: 42 a.m. The article led with one of the four pictures of Aylan taken by Demir (Vis, Faulkner, D'Orazio & Proitz, 2015).

This personal tragedy that ascended from the conflict in Syria soon shook the world, making global headlines and becoming one of the most symbolic image-led

news stories of our time. The photograph circulated to 20 million screens in a matter of 12 hours after it was released. Engagement with these photographs on Twitter and other online networks proved to be meaningful in raising discussions around political efficiency and response. By September 3, 2015 at 8 p.m., dialogues on the Syrian refugee crisis as well as Aylan's death had reached a staggering 53 thousand tweets per hour (Vis et al., 2015). Evidently, the story galvanized the global conscience and triggered emotional engagement, causing uproar and a call for closer attention to this particular case as well as the entire Syrian refugee crisis.

In Canada, the story took on a different light as Tima Kurdi, Aylan Kurdi's aunt, told the media that the Kurdi family had been trying to come to Canada through a G5 refugee sponsorship application but was denied entry by the government (Kestler-D'Amours, 2015). In early 2015, NDP leader Fin Donnelly had dropped off the Kurdi file to Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Chris Alexander, who had said he would look into it (Glavin, 2015). The file was eventually returned to the family, as the government required proof of convention refugee status, which was not provided. In a press conference addressing the tragedy, Tima stated that those documents were impossible to obtain, as the Turkish government had not issued the Syrian people those documents. The Kurdi family was in Turkey at the time. In the same press conference, Tima held the Canadian government accountable for the tragedy. The prospective blame for Kurdi's death consequently fell to the Conservative government, in particular the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Chris Alexander, as well as Prime Minister, Stephen Harper, resulting in worldwide criticism and a crisis for the government. This Canadian connection

was also noted by various media outlets around the world such as Italy's La Repubblica, UK's Independent and the Times, Algeria's El Watan, America's Time Magazine, and Fox News (Panetta, 2015), bringing political responses from both Canadian leaders into an important spotlight.

Aylan Kurdi's case and its Canadian connection are significant and worthy of study for three reasons. Primarily, the case raised a debate about the responsibility of the Canadian government for Kurdi's death. This responsibility is rooted in the operations that denied the Kurdi family entry into Canada as accepted refugees. Second, this case acted metonymically, where Kurdi's death became representative of many other refugees in similar situations. The Canadian connection called for attention to Canada's refugee and immigration policies on both a national and global scale, where Canada's reputation as a country that values "compassion and fairness" and has a refugee protection program that helps the "worlds most vulnerable," came into question (Government of Canada, 2016). Third, this case came forward during the 2015 Canadian election where different political leaders spoke publicly about how the case was handled, and how the crisis should be resolved moving forward – each presenting their own platforms. How leaders respond to crisis impacts their legitimacy, image, and reputation (Olsson, 2014). Crisis response strategies in this situation became significantly important for both Harper and Alexander. Their responses were not only necessary in addressing public outcry for Kurdi's death, but also significant in speaking to their credibility and repute as leaders, especially as the crisis was situated during the election.

This Major Research Paper will explore public responses from Chris Alexander and Stephen Harper to determine how both leaders responded to the crisis. Part one of the MRP begins with a literature review that is conducted as an introduction to the theory and literature on crisis response strategies.

Literature review

What is a crisis? What is crisis communication? What is the goal of crisis communication?

A crisis is a situation that is commonly distinguished from regular situations by feelings of urgency and anxiety that the issue will become worse if there is an absence of action (Eid & Fyfe, 2009). There is general consensus in crisis communication literature that crises prompt feelings of danger, anxiety, and anger (Boin, Hart & McConnell, 2009; Coombs, 2015). Stakeholders may believe the organization (or the individual accused) allowed the crisis to happen, producing feelings of anxiety and anger. Stakeholder perceptions that the crisis will cause harm, or fear that the crisis will repeat, results in anxiety. These sentiments impact how stakeholders interact with the organization. Crisis response strategies are significant in reducing these feelings (Coombs, 2015).

Apart from impacting stakeholder's feelings, crises also threaten the fundamental structures of an organization. Crisis communication is imperative in managing details of the crisis situation, and managing the meanings stakeholders attribute to the crisis in order to protect the organization's reputation. Eid and Fyfe (2009) state that a crisis "offers a serious threat to the basic structures or

fundamental values of a social system which under time, pressure and highly uncertain circumstances necessitates critical decision making.” Crisis communication and response is at the heart of this critical decision-making. Coombs (2015) states that there are two approaches for crisis communication: managing information and managing meaning. Yum and Jeong (2014) define crisis communication in terms of the first strategy. Yum and Jeong (2014) state that crisis communication is the “collection, processing, and dissemination of information” that is necessary in speaking to a crisis situation (Yum and Jeong, 2014). Crisis response strategies can include an organization’s responses during a crisis and its post-crisis actions (Yum and Jeong, 2014). The second approach – managing meaning – involves efforts that are taken to influence how stakeholders perceive the crisis, or the individual/organization that is held responsible for the crisis (Coombs, 2015). The bulk of crisis communication literature has been oriented towards managing meaning in terms of image and reputation (Coombs, 2006).

Crisis response strategies have gained in importance over the course of the last 20 years (Koerber, 2014). Part of this growing interest is driven by increased public exposure to crises around the world. Globalization and technology advances have increased our consciousness of crises and their impact (Eid & Fyfe, 2009). This view is evident in how quickly the Kurdi crisis gained virality in both the mainstream media, as well as the online realm. How organizations respond to such crises has significant ramifications for their legitimacy, image, and reputation (Huang, 2006; Lindholm & Olsson, 2011). Additionally, crisis response strategies

become a reflection of an organization's ability to reduce and contain harm (Seeger, 2006).

Crisis response strategies gain further importance when a crisis is of a multi-level nature. A multi-level crisis presents a critical challenge for crisis actors to contain the crisis. Despite the rise of globalization, crisis communication theories have mainly focused on the idea that crises are the result of a single cause, confined to a particular sphere, with an identifiable beginning and end (Lindholm & Olsson, 2011). However, as the Kurdi case proves, crises can quickly transcend borders and have an impact in multiple spheres, raising issues of communication on different levels. Crisis communication is particularly imperative in the public sector as the public turns to the government for assurance and trustworthy information during challenging times.

What causes political crises?

According to neo-institutional theory, organizations are seen to be legitimate when they meet stakeholder expectations and conform to societal norms. This conformity leads to credibility of the organization as an entity that can be trusted (Coombs 2006). Coombs (2015) states that competence and integrity are two critical elements of reputation. Research suggests that individuals are more willing to forgive violations of trust, as opposed to violations of integrity (Coombs, 2015; Theissen & Ingenhoff, 2011). The government, much like any other organization, can become a target for distrust and crises if it acts against the norms and values that its stakeholders believe in (Dean, 2004). Such norms include acting in an

honest, responsible manner, adhering to the law, and exhibiting concern for the community (Dean, 2004). Apart from generally accepted societal norms, Canada is also known for its norm of “external responsibility” (Zyla, 2013) and its “humanitarian tradition,” moving beyond exhibiting concern for the local and national community, to also exhibiting a shared responsibility for those that are prosecuted, displaced, and in need of humanitarian aid (Government of Canada, 2016). The Kurdi crisis is imperative to study in this light as it not only involved a death, but also It was a story that went viral and brought a different twist to the perception of Canada as a reputable nation known for its humanitarian aid and refugee policies. Denying the Kurdi family refuge was viewed as a contradiction of the norms Canada endorses, as well as the policies it implements.

Theme 1: Political crises

Traditionally, crisis communication theories have focused on private organizations in terms of image, reputation, and blame avoidance strategies. However, the public sphere is noteworthy of exploration as it has a considerably large responsibility for communicating and handling large-scale societal crises (Lindholm & Olsson, 2011).

Who responds to political crises?

In political crisis, political leaders are generally involved in delivering frontline information to the public and responding to the crisis situation. Ewart et. al. (2009) suggest that perceptions of trust increase with higher levels of presenter authority. Consequently, an individual in the highest role of an organization should deliver crisis response. The manifestation of a crisis and the speed at which political

leaders respond to a crisis plays a critical role in how blame for the crisis is assigned (Ewart, 2016). Politicians are primary decision makers in the government sector; they are publicly elected to have an impact on effective decision-making and responding to the norms and values of stakeholders. As such, in the event of a crisis blame for ineffectiveness traces back to the Ministers and leaders of government (Eid & Fyfe, 2009). In terms of these ideals, responses from Stephen Harper (leader of the Canadian government) and Chris Alexander (leader of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration) were necessary in addressing issues of trust, legitimacy, and government decision making in the Kurdi case as well as the Syrian refugee crisis overall.

What external challenges does a political crisis bring forward?

1) The issue of partisan politics

Koerber (2014) argues that crisis is a normal facet of politics. Political crises present significant challenges for the crisis respondent. Primarily, Politics by nature is partisan and the political audience is not unified (Benoit, 1997a; Koerber, 2014; Lindholm & Olsson, 2011; Rosenthal & Kouzmin, 1997; Sheldon & Sallot, 2008). Canada is, of course, a democratic nation where citizens elect politicians. Politicians vote on legislature that impacts the lives of their constituents. In cases of crisis politicians must direct crisis responses that meet the needs of these constituents in order to be re-elected for parliament (Sheldon & Sallot, 2008). Koerber (2014) identifies two main audiences for elected leaders: the entire general public that the politician is responsible for governing in a fair manner, and the partisan community

who voted for the politician. This brings forward the challenge of managing communication at different levels.

The politician must balance multiple interests by adjusting their response strategies in relation to the norms and values of each constituency, or decide to pursue one interest at a loss of the other (Lindholm & Olsson, 2011). Politicians, partisan groups, and the media are constantly contesting meaning and framing actions and speeches as discursive breaks that fall outside legitimacy and accepted ways of speaking and acting (Koerber, 2014). Crises create political space for actors both within and outside of government to reformulate the political agenda, striking at opponents in an attempt to foster their own political ideologies and solutions and keep the offensive acts in the public eye as long as possible (Sheldon & Sallot, 2008). This creates what Boin et al. (2009) term a “political exploitation game” where opponents aim to ensure their frame gains majority support in political arenas that are processing the crisis situation (Boin et al., 2009). This political exploitation game brings forward questions of how well leaders are controlling and managing the crisis, and becomes a reflection of their leadership and legitimacy (Ewart, 2016).

This partisanship nature is highly evident in political response to the Aylan Kurdi crisis. This partly owes credit to the timing of the 2015 Canadian election where leaders of the Liberal and NDP party, Justin Trudeau and Tom Mulclair, used the situation to address how Kurdi’s case was handled and introduced their own ideas about how Canada ought to manage the refugee crises (CBC News, 2015). The crisis also gave the opposing parties an opportunity to critique how the Conservative government had handled refugee reform and policies while in power

(CBC News, 2015). Analyzing political crisis responses from the opposing parties is beyond the scope of this Major Research Paper – opposition leaders inherently did not have control of the situation, so their responses are neither important nor pertinent to the analysis of crisis response. However, the ideal of partisanship presents an important backdrop for investigating whether Harper and Alexander addressed multiple audiences and spoke to their legitimacy as leaders, strategies recommended in the crisis communication literature.

2) The problem of perception

Political crisis response also brings forward the challenge of perception. Whether or not a crisis exists is not a ‘fact,’ per se, but it is based on audience perception of whether it’s a crisis (Eid & Fyfe, 2009). The Privy Council Office in the Government of Canada points out that a situation becomes a crisis when it is labeled as such by the government, media, or credible interest groups (Eid & Fyfe, 2009). Perception is more important than whether or not a crisis is real or apparent (Benoit, 1997; Boin et al, 2009; Eid & Fyfe, 2009; Stromback & Nord, 2006). 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.” Perception is also linked to responsibility. Benoit (1997a) 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. These ideals are significant in the Kurdi case. Responsibility for Kurdi’s death was linked to the Canadian government, as the media presented the perception that denial of the Kurdi family’s application led to the Kurdi family searching for an alternate means of refuge. This indirectly implied

that had the Canadian government accepted the application, Aylan may have been alive and in Canada. Despite the actual facts of the sponsorship case, the public perception was oriented towards the Canadian connection and Canada's perceived responsibility for the tragedy.

Coombs (1995) contends that crisis severity plays a significant role public inclination to attribute crisis responsibility. Clayes, Cauberghe and Vyncke (2010) add to this idea by highlighting that the more severe the public judges a crisis to be, the more negatively the organizations reputation is impacted. This tenet is rooted in the belief that individuals hold others to be more personally responsible for negative actions as opposed to positive ones. In addition, research has demonstrated that negative actions are not only more easily captured but also more easily remembered (Payne, 2006). Severity is closely connected to damage, which is often indicated by whether or not there were victims, or if death was a resulting factor in a crisis situation (Coombs, 1995). Severe crises that involve death solicit questions for both victims and non-victims, in addition to requiring some form of reparation from the organization. Both groups want to know that sufficient actions are being executed to address the crisis and ensure that the crisis will not repeat itself. The ideas reflected in this theme suggested that as long as there was public perception that the Government was even partially responsible for Kurdi's death, by association the leaders Harper and Alexander needed to respond to the crisis to prevent threats to their images and reputations. In addition, they needed to address the severity of the crisis and the actions the Canadian government was taking to mitigate the damage caused.

Theme 2: Image and reputation

Image and reputation are two recurrent themes in crisis response literature. Two scholars in particular, William L. Benoit and W. Timothy Coombs, have described and classified strategies that are generally used by crisis responders in a wide variety of situations (Benoit 1997a; Benoit 1997b; Benoit 2015; Brinson & Benoit, 1996; Coombs 1995; Coombs 2006; Coombs & Halladay, 2008; Coombs, 2015). Benoit identifies image as the “perception of a person (or group, or organization) held by the audience, shaped by the words and actions of that person, as well as by the discourse and behavior of other relevant actors” (Benoit 1997a).

Image:

Image becomes particularly important during a crisis situation, as it impacts the relationship the individual or organization has with its stakeholders (Brinson & Benoit, 1996). For an image to be threatened, the individual or organization must be perceived as having responsibility for the act, and the act must be perceived as offensive (Benoit 1997a; Benoit 1997b). Evaluating one’s image is restricted to a certain point in time, for a specific period of time.

In the Kurdi crisis, Tima Kurdi accused the Canadian government of denying Kurdi and his family entry into Canada. This provoked the sentiment that had the Canadian government permitted the Kurdi family refuge, Aylan may have been alive. The perceived offensive act in this situation can be viewed as the denial of refuge by the Canadian government to the Kurdi family, bearing an indirect responsibility on the government for Aylan’s death. According to Benoit (2015), believable messages

that critique, attack, or express suspicion can tarnish image, and as such image repair strategies become greatly important in response.

Benoit argues that a healthy image is closely linked to credibility and trust. Image, credibility, and trust can be impaired as a result of an actual or perceived offensive act. As such, when an individual's image is threatened, the individual often feels obligated to provide defense, justifications, or apologies for the offensive behavior. Benoit (2015) contends that politicians are newsworthy in general and because of the partisan nature of politics, they can expect to be faced with ongoing image attacks from the opposition or other interest groups.

Eid and Fyfe (2009) add to this notion by stating ongoing stakeholder involvement in service delivery and policy-making impacts how management operates in the government sphere. In addition, tools such as the Internet have resulted in an increasingly erudite citizenry. Together, these factors contribute to how quickly an image can become tarnished in the public sphere. This gives image repair strategies in crisis response great importance. Image repair strategies can be used to respond to threats in various ways. These responses are anticipated to reduce the impact of the attack on the organization by protecting its image or by repairing it if it is damaged (Brinson & Benoit, 1996; Coombs, 1995).

Benoit (1997a) outlines five main categories of crisis response strategies that can be used to defend images: denial, evasion of responsibility, reducing offensiveness, corrective action, and mortification. Each defense strategy has a sub-category of specific defense strategies. Denial includes simply denying an offensive act took place or shifting the blame to another individual (Benoit 1997a).

Alternatively, it could involve acknowledging that the act took place but denying that it was damaging (Brinson & Benoit, 1996). In the Kurdi case, simple denial did not occur as both Harper and Alexander acknowledged the existence of a crisis and recognized its impact by speaking to the media.

Of the subcategories related to evading responsibility, defeasibility has received significant attention in the area of political crisis communication (Len-Rios, 2010). Defeasibility is used to reduce perceived responsibility for the offensive act. In this strategy, the accused claims that they lacked information or power over significant elements of the situation or crisis (Benoit, 1997a). This is a common strategy in politics due to the diffused responsibility 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 sparked from the US government claiming that they knew Iraq had weapons of mass destruction but failed to find them when the country went to war. In defense of his decision to send troops to Iraq, Bush contended that his actions were founded on information and evidence that he had at the time. He continued by arguing that the weapons could have been destroyed by 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 (Benoit, 2006). In the Kurdi case, Alexander also aimed 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 to the rules set out by the department. Thereby, demonstrating a

personal lack of control over the decision making process. Benoit (2006) cautions using defeasibility as a political image restoration strategy. He contends that a lack of control can influence the authority and credibility that may be expected of a leader, since leaders are generally expected to be in control of situations.

According to Len-Rios (2010), research on reducing offensiveness has demonstrated that bolstering is a commonly used strategy. In this strategy, an individual or organization attempts to increase legitimacy by referring to previous positive behavior or action (Brinson & Benoit, 1996). Coombs (1995) states that a crisis is negative and can taint the positive aspect of one's image. Bolstering reminds the public of positive behaviors that are associated with an organization. This should counterbalance the negative feelings organizations face during a crisis (Coombs, 1995). Bolstering also offsets the negative feelings stakeholders or the audience may have towards the offensive act (Benoit 1997a). Len-Rios (2010) contends that bolstering is successful when there is a long-term public admiration and support for individual or organization.

Transcendence is another popular strategy in the "reducing offensiveness" category of image repair theory. Transcendence includes placing the act in a larger organizational context. Those facing crisis can point to higher values to justify the act (Huang, 2006). It is significant to understand whether Alexander and Harper used transcendence as a strategy, as the Kurdi crisis was part of the larger issue Canada faced: the Syrian refugee crisis.

Benoit (1997a) states that corrective action or an inclination to repair the damage caused by a crisis can help rebuild the accused's image. Corrective action

may also suppress public discontent that results from a crisis (Sheldon & Sallot, 2008). This strategy may include confessing to a mistake and apologizing, but these features are not a necessary requirement. Len-Rios (2010) argues corrective action obliges the accused to take a specific future course of action in repairing the damage. As such, of all the image repair strategies corrective action is the most forward looking. Corrective action can help establish trust. Trust is the perception that the accused (individual or organization) will do all it can to meet the expectations of stakeholders. In crisis situations, this is mainly linked to reducing the uncertainties victims and stakeholders have (Kim, 2015).

In terms of responsibility and corrective action, Hearit (1995) contends that by using corrective action, the organization assumes some blame for the crisis. In terms of politics and the government, corrective action can present a significant challenge. Unless the crisis involves a tangible action, politicians can only promise that the offensive act will not repeat itself. This tenet is reflected in the Kurdi crisis. The Kurdi crisis gave rise to the conservative government's promises of refugee intake, placing a further burden of crisis response on the government.

The fifth and final category of image repair strategies that Benoit (1997a) outlines is mortification. Mortification involves admitting responsibility and pleading for forgiveness. Ethically, if the accused knows it is at fault, an apology is recommended (Coombs & Halladay, 2008). Benoit (1997a) notes that the audience may forgive the wrongful act if the apology is deemed sincere. Cohen (2008) adds to this notion by stating that apologies must also be voluntary (apologies are occasionally a result of external pressures, as opposed to inner repentance).

Voluntary apologies reflect sincerity as they are based on the premise that the accused feels remorse for the offence. In political crisis situations, this might be linked to circumstances where the public is angered by some aspect of the politician's behavior, requiring the politician to apologize (Koerber, 2014). Koerber suggests that generally mortification strategies are believed to be effective in reducing damage caused by a crisis and moving forward from the response phase. The Kurdi crisis – and the context of the Federal election – are the kinds of situations in which mortification could be useful in ensuring political images remain positive or to repair an image.

However, full apologies are contested in the political sphere. This is based on the premise that apologies can create legal liabilities (Coombs, 2006; Coombs & Halladay, 2008; Coombs, 2015, Len-Rios, 2010). Also, the effectiveness of apologies is challenged in crisis communication literature. On one hand, apologies may be viewed as a sign of inner strength and character (Cohen, 2008). Nonetheless, Benoit (1997a) notes that people do not like to admit they are wrong. However, individuals that have the courage to accept responsibilities for their actions are admired in general. Nonetheless, accepting responsibility and admitting to a mistake could also be viewed as a sign of weakness (Cohen, 2008). This reality raises critical implications for whether politicians should use apologies, particularly if direct responsibility for the crisis is unclear, as in the Kurdi crisis. Additionally, in multi-level crises such as Kurdi's, who should apologize? The Canadian government did not have a direct hand in Kurdi's death on the shores of a European country.

Some scholars point out that the scope of an apology is significant (Cohen, 2008; Coombs). Expressions of sympathy, compassion, regret, or concern can be just as efficient as apologies in influencing perception that the organization is taking responsibility (Coombs, 2006; Coombs & Halladay, 2008). Expressions of sympathy without accepting responsibility may also be effective in cases where responsibility is ambiguous or difficult to establish (Coombs & Halladay, 2008; Patel & Reinsch, 2003). However, expressions of sympathy should not be used as the sole or primary image repair strategy (Len-Rios, 2010).

Reputation:

Image has been closely linked to reputation, another key theme in crisis communication literature. Reputation is the audience's overall evaluation of a person (or group, or organization) established over time (Huang, 2006). Reputation is viewed as a fusion of many images, and many attitudes as opposed to an image that is formed based on individual and subjective characteristics amongst stakeholders. Reputation can be formed through stakeholders' engagement with the organization (or individual), or second hand information received from other sources such as the Internet, media, or other individuals (Coombs, 2008). In relation, Theissen and Ingenhoff (2011) state that reputation can be viewed as the perception of an organization's ability to meet the needs of its stakeholders and is a combination of an organization's past performances and future prospects. As relational capital, reputation helps establish trust. Before the Kurdi case hit, the Conservative leadership had long-standing reputations – one within its Conservative community and one outside – developed over many years in power.

Research has also linked a positive reputation to positive organizational results, including government influence (Coombs, 2006). As such, reputation becomes an intangible asset for any organization and damage should be avoided. Coombs (2008) contends that a crisis provides individuals with motives to think badly of an organization. In relation, crisis as an attack on reputation may serve as a threat or an opportunity depending on how the organization's behavior is perceived by its key stakeholders (Theiseen & Ingenhoff, 2011). Theiseen and Ingenhoff (2011) state that good reputation acts as a reservoir of support for an organization in times of a crisis.

Coombs (1995) adds to the image repair strategies Benoit has outlined by expanding the entire range of crisis response strategies into five main categories: nonexistence, distance, ingratiation, mortification, and suffering. Some of these categories overlap with strategies that Benoit has also suggested.

Nonexistence, distance, and suffering strategies seek to influence the amount of crisis responsibility that is attributed to the accused. Nonexistence strategies attempt to establish that there is no crisis. Distance strategies highlight unintentional action (excuse) or provide justification for the crisis, thereby attempting to decrease the amount of responsibility that is linked to the individual or organization. The suffering strategy (similar to Benoit's strategy of evading responsibility via defeasibility) suggests that the organization is an unjust victim of accusations by an outside entity, and that crisis was external and uncontrollable (Coombs, 1995).

Ingratiation and mortification strategies are impactful in offsetting negative attributions with positive impressions of the accused. Ingratiation strategies are impactful when a public approval of the organization is sought. Similar to performance history, ingratiation strategies remind stakeholders of previous positive actions of the organization. Mortification is helpful if the organization or individual wants to attain forgiveness of the publics and establish acceptance for the crisis. This adds to a positive attitude of the accused in the sense they addressed the crisis, and accepted a degree of responsibility (Coombs, 1995).

Moving beyond organizing crisis response strategies into broader categories, Coombs (1995) also states that the nature of the crisis (or crisis type) should also be considered significant in determining which crisis response strategies to use. Moving away from a case-based approach that Benoit and many image repair theorists focus on, Coombs proposes Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) as an evidence-based framework for increasing reputational protection (Coombs, 2007). Researchers using this theory rely greatly on experimental methods such as constructed scenario experiments to determine how the audience perceives crisis responsibility. The main goal of this theory is to pair crisis response strategies to the level of crisis responsibility and reputational threat attributed by individuals to a crisis (Coombs, 2006). Coombs (1995) indicates that the level of responsibility stakeholders attribute for a crisis impacts how negatively the individual or organization is viewed. The higher the level of perceived crisis responsibility, the greater the amount of reputational damage (Coombs, 2015). SCCT uses a two-step process to evaluate attributions of responsibility. In the first

step, a crisis type is identified. In the second step, intensifying factors such as performance history and relationship history are evaluated. These intensifying factors strengthen how much responsibility is attributed to the accused for the crisis and indicate reputational damage overall (Coombs, 2015). Benoit and Coombs' strategies for image and reputation repair will be used in the analysis of the Kurdi case in the next segment of this MRP. In terms of Coombs' the analysis will particularly explore whether or not Alexander and Harper used mortification and ingratiation (previous positive actions) to address the crisis situation.

Coombs (1995) identifies four different crisis types: faux pas, accidents, terrorism, and transgressions. A faux pas is when an organization takes actions it believes are correct, and as such there is no intent for doing any wrong. However, in this situation, an agent external to the organization contests the appropriateness of the action. Accidents are unintentional events that occur during normal operations. Transgressions are actions that are intentionally taken by an organization knowing that they pose a risk or harm to stakeholders and the public. The final crisis type, terrorism, involves intentional actions taken by external agents designed to directly or indirectly harm an organization, resulting in victims. In terms of Coombs' (1995) classification of the four crisis types, it can be argued that the Aylan Kurdi crisis falls under a "faux pas." The organization (Conservative government) took actions it believed were appropriate (denying the Kurdi family entry into Canada due to insufficient documents). The government considered this as an appropriate action, as such demonstrating that there was no intention to do harm – it could not have foreseen the death of the boy – but due to system protocols, documents were

needed to continue the case. However, Tima Kurdi, the external agent challenged the appropriateness of the Conservative government's decision. As ambiguity is a key feature of the faux pas, the public must decide whether or not the actions of the government were appropriate or not. A severe threat to reputation in a faux pas requires the accused to bolster his or her image by reminding the public of past positive performance history (Sheldon & Sallot, 2008)

Coombs (1995) argues that an organization's performance history is imperative in the event of a crisis as it helps establish legitimacy. Coombs contends that the public is more forgiving when the organization has had a positive performance history. If the public does not know of the organization's performance history, it gives the organization an opportunity to present an image of its performance in a manner that causes the public to believe the organization's claims (that the organization is reputable and trustworthy). If the claims are viewed as credible, the source is legitimized. In addition, Coombs (1995) also suggests that if an organization has a positive performance history, the crisis may seem unstable. In such cases, stakeholders are less likely to place blame on the organization, or view the organization as the cause of a crisis. Sheldon and Sallot (2008) support this supposition. They contend that by reinforcing positive acts, the gravity of the threat on one's political legitimacy is significantly reduced. Arguably, performance history is comparable to Benoit's "bolstering" strategy as bolstering is an attempt to increase legitimacy by referring to previous positive actions (Brinson & Benoit, 1996).

Crisis responses that address reputation are significant in the Kurdi crisis, as the crisis occurred during the 2015 Federal election when immigration and refugee policies were one of key topics referenced by all parties (Black, 2015). This brought forward questions of the Conservative government's performance history in regards to the number of Syrian immigrants the government announced it would accept in relation to the actual number of immigrants it accepted. Additionally, the Aylan Kurdi case shed light on the larger humanitarian refugee crisis in the Middle East, and propelled questions of the Conservative party's future plans for immigrants (Black, 2015).

Consensus on types of strategies used

There is general consensus about certain types of image repair strategies. Apologies should not be used alone (Len-Rios, 2010; Benoit, 1995). Apologies are more effective than strategies such as denial or shifting the blame (Sheldon & Sallot, 2008; Verhoeven et al., 2012). Corrective action cannot be used with denial, as it signifies that the accused holds some responsibility for the crisis (Brinson & Benoit, 1996; Len-Rios, 2010). Denial is ineffective, especially in situations where the truth eventually becomes known (Benoit, 2015). Expressions of sympathy (including disappointment, concern, regret) are just as effective as an apology (Coombs, 2006; Coombs & Halladay, 2008). This is especially the case when fault is ambiguous (Cohen, 1998; Coombs & Halladay, 2008, Patel & Reinsch, 2003). The cases examined in the studies cited include a university's response to a sexual scandal on its Men's lacrosse team, a politician's racist remarks, and a health corporation's long-term responses to the safety of its breast implants. The consensus

demonstrates that there is an apparently widespread applicability of crisis response strategies. Koerber (2014) argues, however, that this perceived widespread applicability might lead to an uncritical application of these strategies. For instance, in a case where apology was determined to be an effective approach, it may indicate that apology should always be used in similar situations. In terms of which strategy to use, the general consensus is that a single strategy alone does not work (Sheldon & Sallot, 2008). Therefore, to ensure effective crisis communication, multiple crisis response strategies should be used to tackle the crisis (Len-Rios, 2010). When responding to the Kurdi crisis, Alexander and Harper used multiple crisis response strategies. The specific types of crisis response strategies will be explored in the following section of this MRP.

Criticisms of image-repair & reputation repair strategies

Image repair and reputation repair strategies have received some criticism in crisis communication literature. Payne (2006) states that reputations are difficult to manage due to their intangible nature. Reputations involve multiple signals – actions, stories, reports, interviews, and meetings. Managing all these signals to achieve the best possible reputation is difficult. Dean (2004) argues good reputations act as a double-edged sword. On one hand, good reputation could result in stakeholders having high expectations of the actor in terms of taking appropriate measures to address the crisis (such as corrective action). At the other end, even a “sterling” reputation may not help an organization especially if tragic incidents are involved.

In addition, some scholars have classified image repair theories as promoting the tendency that image repair can be reduced to a two-step sequence (Burns & Bruner, 2000). In the first step, an offensive act is identified which poses threat to one's image. In the second step, the individual or organization responds to the threat using image restoration strategies. Burns and Bruner (2000) contend that this oversimplification suggests that an individual's image can simply return to its original state after image restoration strategies have been used. Some practitioners have found that apology and performance history may help repair image, but cannot restore the image to its initial state (Sheldon & Sallot, 2008). As such, the actor's image will likely be comprised moving forward. This tenet is significant for exploring the study to come. In order to understand how image repair strategies were used by both practitioners. Although evaluating how image was impacted by the responses is beyond the scope of this MRP, this tenet is significant for assessing whether and how image repair strategies were used by both Alexander and Harper.

What about national image/reputations?

The above findings indicate that an individual's or organization's image and reputation can be greatly impacted by a crisis. Most of the cases examined in these articles refer to straightforward corporate, organizational or individual crises (Benoit, 1997a; Brinson & Benoit, 1996; Dean 2004; Ewart et al. 2016; Koerber, 2014; Len-Rios, 2010; Patel & Reinsch, 2003; Sheldon & Sallot, 2008; Stromback & Nord, 2006; Young, 2008). The Aylan Kurdi crisis brings forward a unique challenge in understanding issues of image and reputation since it required managing crisis on two levels: professional, and national. On the professional level, it involved image

and reputation management at the level of those who had responsibility for oversight of policies (Alexander and Harper). At the national level, it involved how the Canada as a nation was perceived for its immigration policies and response to the Syrian refugee crisis. As such, the issue became not only about managing professional image but also Canada's image and reputation as a nation.

To understand the Kurdi case crisis response strategies better, it is important to look at national images and how they have become damaged in crises. Zhang and Benoit (2004) note that nations have images and relationships between countries are influenced by images. Generally, a nation'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, Ting & Pang, 2009). Several countries' efforts to repair their national reputations have been noted in crisis communication literature. However, most of these efforts are conducted post-crises (L'etang, 2009; Lindholm & Olsson, 2013; Payne, 2009; Peijuan et al., 2009; Zang & Benoit, 2004).

Olsson (2013) states that the ideal of public diplomacy can be used during a crisis to address national reputation. Tuch (1990) defined public diplomacy as "a government's process of communicating with foreign publics in an attempt to bring about an understanding for its nation's ideas and ideals, its institutions and culture, as well as its national goals and current policies." (Tuch 1990, pg. 3). Public diplomacy has traditionally been focused on campaigns directed at foreign publics, through the media or cultural programs (Lindholm & Olsson, 2011; Peijuan et al.). However, the shift towards global transparency and interconnectedness has

emphasized the need for a dialogic approach that establishes understanding with foreign audiences.

Signitzer and Coombs (1992) suggest that the expansion of communication technology has allowed for a greater public participation in international affairs. These technologies have brought forward interconnectedness and established a global marketplace of ideas, and increased world opinion. They contend that world opinion (the opinion of foreign publics) affects the policies and behaviors of governments. Lindholm and Olsson (2011) argue that although globalization and advancing communication technologies can establish increased cultural understanding they can also create friction between social, cultural and national groups. This results in the need for national governments to have an open dialogue that also engages other nations. International affairs are no longer only about governments establishing mutual understanding and relationships; they are also about speaking to another countries citizens and influencing their attitudes (Signitzer and Coombs, 1992). Foreign publics can be classified as another stakeholder in national image repair efforts. It is significant to note that stakeholders are not just passive receivers of information but have the potential to heighten or mitigate the crisis (Lindholm & Olsson, 2011).

Speaking to foreign publics promotes self-portrayal (how foreign publics view a nation, its culture and institutions), information exchange, a reduction of bias (towards the country), establishing sympathy and understanding of a nations model of society, and image building. In politics, public diplomacy has been used for a

variety of purposes including controlling information, framing public issues and dialogue, managing crises, and gaining political advantage (L'etang, 2009).

From a public diplomacy perspective, dealing with issues of national reputation in crisis management has three facets: recognizing stakeholder's values, building relationships with stakeholders, and communicating in a way that resonates with stakeholders. Recognizing key values stakeholders believe in is important in successful massaging. In examining the Danish government's response to the Mohammed Cartoon crisis of 2005, Lindholm and Olsson (2011) state that the government failed to take key stakeholder values into account, which had significant consequences for how national and international publics interacted with Denmark. In this crisis, a Danish newspaper published cartoons of Prophet Muhammad. Muslim organizations reacted to the publications stating that the publications promoted Islamophobia. These groups protested on several occasions. The government ignored the concerns of these stakeholders framing the issue as a domestic issue of constitutionally protecting citizens and media rights to "freedom of speech." The issue eventually escalated to an international level, and international audiences that were offended by Denmark's actions (or lack thereof) began taking actions such as boycotting Danish products (Lindholm & Olsson, 2011). By failing to take into account how much national and international stakeholders were impacted and offended by this crisis, the Danish government caused the crisis to escalate and intensify. Peijuan et al. (2009) contend that a nation's image repair work could be done through the media. Similar to professional and organizational image repair, if a nation is trying to reform its image through the mass media, it should provide

consistent messaging and have a strong media presence. Alternatively, communications campaigns could also promote positive democratic relationships.

The cases in the studies cited above identify the importance of national reputation and how to address it from a public diplomacy and image repair standpoint. However, none of the cases is representative of crises where responsibility is ambiguous. In addition, most cases are based on organizational efforts to enhance national reputation in the post crisis stage and not during a crisis. This poses the question:

- 1) What kinds of image repair strategies are used by politicians of a nation in multi-national level crises where responsibility is ambiguous?

The Kurdi crisis is worthy of study in this regard as it was a multi-national level crisis that arguably brought negative light to Canada's reputation. In addition, Canada's direct responsibility for Kurdi's death was ambiguous.

Theme 3: Guidelines for best practices

When responding to crisis like the Kurdi case, it is imperative to take into account several guidelines for best practices that are found in existing research. Payne (2006) refers to crisis response guidelines as a framework that allows crisis managers to respond effectively to negative public relations exposure by choosing the best crisis response strategy. Seeger (2006) states that best practices may be used as a general set of standards, norms, or references points that inform practice. Guidelines for best practices suggested in literature can be classified into two

categories: establishing credibility and collaboration. Credibility is significant as it establishes trust between the public and crisis managers (Seeger, 2006). To establish credibility the crisis manager must speak in an open, honest and empathetic manner (Ewart et al., 2016; Kim, 2015). This could include demonstrating concern for individuals impacted or harmed (Ewart et al., 2016). The public responds more favorably when a crisis manager expresses human compassion and concern for any harm caused by a crisis (Seeger, 2006).

Openness can be achieved by collaborating with the public. Seeger (2006) states that during a crisis the public has a right to know what is happening and the risks it may face. Openness involves promoting an environment of risk sharing by providing stakeholders with what they need and want to know after a crisis hits. Openness is considered a best practice, especially in cases where responsibility for crisis is known and the public or stakeholders can obtain information from other credible sources. In such cases, one should be open by accepting responsibility (Seeger, 2006). Seeger (2006) suggests that crisis communicators should also be open about uncertainty in situations where it exists. This allows the communicator to refine the message as new information becomes available and helps counter providing false information to the public.

Papagiannidis, Stamati, and Hartmut (2013) contend that crisis can establish a need for direct communication to combat negative feelings such as anxiety. As such, politicians should not only be open to employees, the public, and other stakeholders during a crisis, but also be open online. Online engagement is critical in today's society where users constantly demand information and turn to online

sources (Eid & Fyfe, 2009). Openness is linked to transparency. Transparency involves an inclination to give a meaningful account of one's self. Transparency poses the challenge of balancing informational needs and interests of the public with organizational interests (Kim, 2015). Transparency demonstrates trust and an organizations willingness to meet stakeholder's expectations (mainly in providing information openly and reducing uncertainty). Kim (2015) contends that transparency is significant in stakeholders understanding what actions are being taken by an organization (in times of a crisis) and to understand the rationale behind them.

In relation, ongoing interactions are significant in establishing credibility as they help build positive relationships necessary in successful crisis management. Ongoing interaction can be achieved using two-way communication. This method fosters an understanding amongst the different parties involved in a crisis. Two-way communication involves assessing and responding to stakeholder's fears, needs, and actions (Kim, 2015). A best practice in crisis communication is to communicate with stakeholders or the public in a timely manner. Timely response reduces anxiety and uncertainty (Kim, 2015). Ongoing interactions also help establish positive relationships that are necessary in successful crisis management (Seeger, 2006).

Another best practice cited throughout crisis communication literature is collaboration with the media (Boin et al., 2009; Eid & Fyfe, 2009; Ewart et al., 2016; Erikson et al., 2012; Gurevitch et al., 2009; Hale et al., 2005; Seeger, 2006; Sheldon & Sallot, 2008; Stromback & Nord, 2006). The media plays a significant role in providing information and messages from authorities to the public during a crisis

(Seeger, 2006; Stromback & Nord, 2006). However, the media poses a challenge for those involved in a crisis. Media frames can be highly prominent in terms of how the public feels and the attitudes they hold towards those perceived responsible for the crisis (Ewart et al., 2016). As such, frames tend to promote “problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and or treatment recommendations” (Stromback & Nord, 2006). Hale et al. (2005) propose that a facet of successful crisis communication is to disseminate information as quickly and accurately as possible. In relation, Seeger (2006) suggests providing consistent information, accepting that uncertainty exists, and avoiding overly reassuring messages when speaking through the media to stakeholders. Seeger (2006) points out that crisis communicator should receive media training and remain accessible to the needs of the media, as effective crisis communication requires being accessible to stakeholders needs. As described later in this study, Alexander and Harper engaged with the media to communicate their crisis responses.

Political crisis communication best practices:

Although the bulk of best practices can be applied to different types of crises, some best practices are mentioned in relation to politicians or government managers responding to crises. In terms of political crisis best practices, Fyfe and Eid (2009) suggest three core competencies for effective government communication. Primarily, politicians and bureaucrats must develop the ability to manage information, especially when it comes from multiple sources. Managing information requires prompt decision making (Rosenthal & Kouzmin, 1997). Seeing

as politicians and government officials have specific responsibilities (to the public), it is suggested that they intervene immediately. Rosenthal and Kouzmin (1997) state that for every hour of non-activity, the threat (anger, fear, uncertainty, reputational damage) can be multiplied, having detrimental impacts.

It is also suggested that government agents dealing with crises think horizontally, working with both the organization and external stakeholders. Lastly, it is suggested that they develop the ability to effectively deal with authoritative ambiguity, as accountabilities between bureaucrats and officials are not as clear as they used to be. A key external stakeholder politicians need to collaborate with is the media. In today's society, government and politicians are faced with an unpredictable media environment (Gurevitch et al., 2009). As such, Sheldon and Sallot (2008) advocate that politicians should use the media as a medium for communicating sympathy and remorse. In addition, they should provide consistent messages, as opposing political parties may attempt to keep the crisis in the news if there is inconsistency. Gurevitch et al. (2009) add to this suggestion by stating that politicians should construct "sincere and authentic personas" that can establish trust and generate interaction. Stakeholders critically judge how a politician performs in front of the media. A poorer performance (one that appears insincere, fails to meet the informational needs of the public) could have negative consequences for the politician's image (Erikson et al., 2012), which is of even greater concern during a Canadian Federal election.

The issue with best practices

Although best practices can be used to improve professional or organizational practices in times of crises, they also present certain challenges. Seeger (2006) states that every crisis is different. In relation, professional or organizational contexts are diverse. As such, best practices that work in one industry may not work well in others.

Summary:

The purpose of this literature review is to understand key themes that are present in crisis communication literature, especially in terms of political crisis communication. The literature review begins with outlining the goals of crisis communication. The first theme outlined looks specifically at crisis response strategies within a political context. It seeks to demonstrate the importance of political crisis response and the challenges crisis respondents face when addressing political crises.

The second theme addresses crisis response strategies in terms of protecting and repairing image and reputation. The articles examined in this theme focus mainly on two key theories: Benoit's Image Repair Theory and Coombs' Situational Crisis Communication Theory. These two theories are significant in understanding the strategies used by crisis responders in a wide variety of settings, including political crises. This theme further establishes a general consensus between academics on the strategies used, as well as criticisms (and perhaps limitations) of image-repair and reputation repair strategies. Lastly, this theme addresses the idea of national image and reputation. This is particularly significant to understanding the Kurdi crisis and the importance of addressing the Canadian connection and

Canada's reputation. This section outlines that most cases studied are representative of crises where responsibility (for the crisis) is identifiable to an individual, or organization. In addition, most cases are based on organizational efforts to rebuild national reputation after a crisis, as opposed to during a crisis. None of the cases have examined Canadian national image or reputation. This presents a gap in research that the Kurdi crisis could fill, in terms of addressing whether politicians in multi-national level crises use national image repair strategies in situations where national responsibility is ambiguous and based on perception.

The third theme identified in the literature is guidelines for best practices in crisis communication. It begins by outlining general best practices, followed by political crisis communication best practices. Finally it outlines the issue (or limitation) of best practices.

Research Questions:

Based on the key themes cited in the literature review, the second part of this MRP focuses on answering the following research questions:

- 1) What types of crisis response strategies did Chris Alexander and Stephen Harper use in the Aylan Kurdi crisis?
 - a. Did they deny or accept the crisis?
 - b. Did they attempt to evade responsibility?
 - c. Did they reduce offensiveness for the crisis?
 - d. Did they apologize?
- 2) Did they address national reputation?

Data Collection and Method of Analysis

Data Collection Method:

To address the research questions, a content analysis was conducted based on initial public responses from Alexander and Harper. Alexander did not hold a press conference to address the Kurdi crisis and its Canadian connection. However, on September 3, 2015 – the day the images were released by the media – Alexander made himself available to the media by talking to national television and responded to the crisis via interviews. The interview chosen for content analysis of Alexander's responses was his interview with Don Martin on "Power Play," a Canadian public affairs television show. This interview was one of the first public responses from Alexander on national television, and is 9 minutes long. Harper on the other hand did address the Kurdi crisis via a press conference held on September 3, 2015. This video was captured by Rebel Media, another Canadian news source, and is roughly 6 minutes long. These two videos were chosen based on the frequency of certain words such as: crisis, apologize, tragedy, failure, action, and blame. These words came up frequently in the literature review conducted for this MRP and serve as a preliminary search for individual keywords that led the way for a more in-depth analysis of the types of crisis response strategies used.

Method of analysis:

A content analysis was conducted for this MRP. Both videos were transcribed and coded to determine the types of crisis response strategies used by these leaders. The method analysis was inductive, as it drew on observations to determine if there was a pattern in responses, and to ultimately explain crisis response strategies used within the context of pre-existing theories. The strategies examined are categorized

into four types: denial, evasion of responsibility, reducing offensiveness, and mortification. Descriptors for each category (or sub-strategies under each category) include shifting the blame, defeasibility, bolstering and apology. It is significant to note that the literature review illustrated a close similarity between bolstering and performance history in the reducing offensiveness category. These two categories were separated based on tangible statistics and numbers provided by crisis responders (performance history) as opposed to past good works (good traits and actions). All 15 descriptors were drawn from the works of Coombs and Benoit previously mentioned in this MRP. Examples related to the descriptors are given in the codebook alongside the quantity of times the crisis response was used. To quantify percentage, the entire number of crises responses were divided by the number of times a particular crisis response strategy was used.