NEWS MEDIA, MENTAL ILLNESS AND HOMELESSNESS IN CANADA: HAS DEPICTION OF MENTAL ILLNESS AND HOMELESSNESS CHANGED IN CANADIAN NATIONAL NEWSPAPERS SINCE THE RELEASE OF ‘OUT OF THE SHADOWS AT LAST’?

by

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ABSTRACT

On May 9, 2006, a Senate Committee report entitled "Out of the Shadows at Last" was published, highlighting the crisis in the mental health system in Canada. It stressed the critical need to develop the mental health system and to change public attitudes towards mental illness. Using agenda setting and framing theories, the current study explores whether the depiction of mental illness and homelessness changed in Canadian National newspaper coverage since the release of this report. Relevant articles from a 2003-2009 were coded using a categorical codesheet. The results show a significant and lasting increase in the agenda setting potential of Canadian National newspaper coverage regarding mental illness and homelessness since the release of the report. The evidence suggests that the report appears to have played a catalytic role in increasing the overall frequency of reporting on a number of prominent themes concerning mental illness and homelessness.

Keywords: news media; agenda setting; framing; mental illness; homelessness; Senate Report
to my parents,

who never let me forget the importance of education

and always encouraged me in its pursuit
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1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Context

Mass media serves as an important source of health information for the general public (Martinson & Hindman, 2005) and more specifically, is the most common source of information regarding mental illness (Wahl, Wood & Richards, 2002). As such, researchers have raised concerns over the content and accuracy of information presented in the media, and news media in particular. News coverage of mental illness has been found to reinforce negative and stigmatizing views (Wahl et al., 2002). These negative depictions can have significant effects on the public’s perception and treatment of those with mental illness (Francis, Pirkis, Dunt & Blood, 2001; Wahl, 1992). This, in turn, holds wider implications for policy decisions regarding individuals living with mental illness as communities press for decisions to be centered on public safety concerns (Paterson, 2006; Takahashi & Dear, 1997).

The Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology chaired by the Honourable Michael J.L. Kirby conducted a two-year study across Canada into the state of mental health, mental illness and addictions services in Canada. They released their final report on May 9, 2006, which highlighted the crisis in the mental health system, and the need to address it (The Senate, 2006). The report was aptly named ‘Out of the Shadows at Last’, as it was the first national document to be released concerning mental health and mental illness in Canada.
Among other goals, the report aimed to initiate and advance changes in deep-rooted public attitudes towards people living with mental illness. It put a human face on mental illness through recounting stories and it expressed a hope that the report would affect its readers. The report stressed priority areas in transforming the landscape of mental illness, including the need to address the crisis of homelessness, stating, “It would be hard to overestimate the importance of adequate housing for people living with mental illness” (The Senate, 2006; p118). While this report held obvious implications for policy development in the area of mental health, little research has been done on its effect on the perception of the general public and the channels that inform them, including the media.

1.2 Study Purpose

This thesis will explore the variation in media coverage of mental illness and homelessness in Canada in relation to the Senate report ‘Out of the Shadows at Last’. The primary research question is ‘Has the depiction of mental illness and homelessness changed in Canadian National newspaper coverage since the release of ‘Out of the Shadows at Last’? This thesis aims to determine whether the goal of the Senate Report to create a change in public attitudes towards mental illness and to increase awareness of the primary principles outlined within it have been advanced in relation to homelessness in national news media. The null hypothesis is that there is no change in the potential for these effects in the national news coverage of mental illness and homelessness. In addressing the research question and testing this hypothesis, this thesis will specifically examine 1) the quantity of
articles presented about mental illness and homelessness and 2) the variation in how these articles have been presented. This will approach the articles considering both agenda setting and framing theories, and aim to explore the following central questions:

1) How frequent is coverage regarding the homeless mentally ill over time?
2) Has the prominence of reporting on this issue changed over time?
3) Are themes identified as priorities in ‘Out of the Shadows at Last’ represented in the news, and does their coverage change over time?
4) What approach do the articles take (i.e. episodic or thematic)?
5) Are solutions clearly identified in the articles, and how are they framed?
6) Whose voices are quoted?

Research findings may suggest whether or not the importance of addressing the homeless living with mental illness, as stressed in ‘Out of the Shadows at Last’, is reflected in newspaper coverage surrounding this population. Findings may also indicate whether there were changes in the way in which homelessness and mental illness were framed in national newspaper coverage and the implications these changes may hold.
2: BACKGROUND

2.1 Understanding the Population

2.1.1 Prevalence of Mental Illness Among the Homeless

The transient nature of this population makes data collection a challenge, and estimates of the prevalence of mental illness among the homeless vary by location and study. In Canada, the exact number of individuals considered homeless is unknown (Echenberg & Jensen, 2008) and research to assess the prevalence of mental illness and addiction among the homeless is not conducted on an ongoing basis (The Senate, 2006). Canada’s National Secretariat on Homelessness has estimated the number of homeless in Canada to be around 150,000 people (Echenberg & Jensen, 2008) but other reports vary from 10,000 homeless individuals on any given night (CIHI, 2007) to 300,000 (Laird, 2007). It’s estimated that approximately 60% of individuals who are homeless have a lifetime diagnosis of mental illness, which is two to three times the rate found in the general population (Riordan, 2004). Further research in Canada estimates that between 30% and 40% of homeless individuals are living with a mental illness (The Senate, 2006). Other estimates suggest that this is closer to 80% (Howlett, 2008).

Estimates from other parts of the world present a similar picture, but as with much of the Canadian data, vary from study to study. Scott (1993) reports that in Great Britain between 30% and 50% of homeless individuals have a mental illness.
Studies in the United States of America estimate prevalence rates for mental illness among the homeless population to be between 10% and 45% depending on the methodology used (Susser et al., 1993). Examples of this show a range from a one-quarter (Smith et al., 1992), to one-third (Bachrach, 1992; Minkoff & Drake, 1992), to one-half (Adams, Pantelis, Duke & Barnes, 1996). While there is a lack of precise data regarding proportion of individuals with mental illness among the homeless, evidence supports that this proportion is a significant one (Levine & Rog, 1990).

2.1.2 Challenges in Establishing Prevalence

Underlying the uncertainty surrounding the question of the prevalence of mental illness among the homeless are a number of methodological challenges. One is the lack of a standard definition of homelessness (Bachrach, 1992; Patterson, Somers, McIntosh, Sheill & Frankish, 2008; Echenberg & Jensen, 2008). Studies range in scope from including only the homeless living on the streets, to defining homelessness as any form of residential dislocation (Susser et al., 1993). In Canada, not only do definitions of homelessness vary across provinces, but between jurisdictions as well (OAGBC, 2009).

Accurate diagnosis of mental illness in homeless populations also poses a challenge (Bachrach, 1992; Mojtabai, 2005; Susser, Conover & Struening, 1989). Individuals often do not want to be approached or questioned (Bachrach, 1992). As a result, some studies resort to self-reports or rely on staff, often unqualified, to make assessments based on surveys conducted in shelters (Susser et al., 1989). It is further asserted that it is near impossible to establish mental illness in an individual
suffering physical deprivation as the deprivation confounds any resulting diagnosis (Bachrach, 1992).

Homeless individuals and groups are often invisible to researchers for a number of reasons (Mosher-Ashley, Henrikson & French, 2000; Ropers, 1988). Being a very mobile group (Bachrach, 1992), there is a significant challenge to locating this population. Research is often conducted in shelters, but many homeless people do not use the shelter system or its associated services (Ropers, 1988). Shelters themselves often have admission criteria that exclude particular groups, such as men or those with addictions (Jacobs, Little & Almeida, 1993). Further complicating this, the mentally ill homeless population overlaps with other subgroups of mentally ill people, making it difficult to distinguish them as a separate group (Bachrach, 1992). This is particularly true of involvement with the criminal justice system, as both homelessness and mental illness are strong predictors of interaction with this system (Riordan, 2004).

Going beyond the challenges of locating this population are the methodological issues surrounding homeless counts. Most information regarding the extent of homelessness in Canada comes from homeless counts conducted by municipalities and/or volunteer organizations (OAGBC, 2009). As not all municipalities participate many go unrepresented, especially rural communities (OAGBC, 2009). The data that is collected is generally not acquired with the same methodology across the country making it difficult to form comparisons (OAGBC, 2009). Additionally, there is little consistency in the sampling methods and the timing of the counts (CIHI, 2007).
2.1.3 *Interaction Between Mental Illness and Homelessness*

The debate over whether homelessness influences the development of mental illness, or if mental illness is a pathway to homelessness is a complex one (Riordan, 2004). There is research to support that homelessness is a plausible cause of mental illness (Susser et al., 1993). It is suggested that the potential emotional trauma of becoming homeless, the physical deprivation and hardship of living on the streets, and entry into a subculture where victimization and addictions are common, have the potential to trigger mental illness or worsen pre-existing disorders (Susser et al., 1993; Patterson et al., 2008). Conversely, numerous studies support that mental illness is a potential cause of homelessness (Folsom & Jests, 2002; OAGBC, 2009, Susser et al., 1993). Two waves of research on psychiatric and substance use disorders among the homeless in the 1980's identified schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, depression, alcohol and drug abuse as risk factors for homelessness (Susser et al., 1993). Symptoms of mental illness, such as anxiety, paranoia and depression, may lead to homelessness by impeding individuals’ ability to maintain employment, pay debts and sustain social relationships (CMHS, 2003). A review of research methodology acknowledges the difficulty in determining an exact time for the onset of mental illness and establishing its relation to the onset of homelessness (Susser et al., 1993). While no definitive conclusions can be made about the directionality in which mental illness and homelessness relate to one another, it is apparent that the relationship is a complex one that likely has reciprocal effects (Patterson et al., 2008).
The additional effects of mental illness and homelessness on each other increase the vulnerability of this population compared to homeless people without mental illness. Individuals with mental illness remain homeless for longer periods of time (CIHI, 2007; Sullivan, Burnam, Koegal & Hollenburg, 2000) and show decreased ability to cope with adverse circumstances (Patterson et al., 2008). There are significantly higher rates of mental illness among the chronically homeless compared to the rest of the sheltered homeless population (Metraux, Marcus & Culhane, 2003). The homeless living with mental illness are more likely to have repeated episodes of homelessness compared to other homeless individuals (Sullivan et al., 2000), and have greater difficulty exiting homelessness completely (CMHS, 2003).

This increase in vulnerability paired with a reduction in social assistance and social housing programs, has made it more difficult for homeless people to acquire housing and access mental health services (Riordan, 2004). This is a particular challenge for those with severe mental illness and addictions (Patterson et al., 2008). Those with concurrent disorders are also disadvantaged due to the limited availability of housing with integrated mental health and substance use treatment (CMHS, 2003). The complexity of the application process for social assistance and a reduced capacity to navigate it mean that many homeless people with mental illness do not receive benefits they may be eligible for (CMHS, 2003). In addition, service providers have greater difficulty engaging mentally ill people who live on the streets (Tsemberis & Eisenberg, 2000). With fewer social supports, decreased access to benefits and low involvement with supportive services, it is unsurprising that
homeless individuals living with mental illness are at an increased risk of being arrested, incarcerated or otherwise involved with the criminal justice system (CMHS, 2003; Riordan, 2004).

2.1.4 Health Challenges

Homelessness and housing instability have long been acknowledged as public health concerns (Krieger & Higgins, 2002; Wolitski, Kidder & Fenton, 2007). This is largely due to the increased risk of major health problems associated with unstable housing and homelessness (Krieger & Higgins, 2002). Morbidity and mortality rates among the homeless are highly elevated compared to the general population, with the homeless population being at much greater risk of premature death (Hwang, 2001; Golden, Currie, Greaves & Latimer, 1999). Depending on the type of study and group characteristics (such as gender and type of homelessness), mortality rates were found to be three to 31 times higher than average (Hwang, 2001). This is related to the high rate of unintentional injuries amongst this population, primarily a result of falls and pedestrian injuries from car accidents (Hwang, 2001). However, deaths resulting from drug and/or alcohol overdose are also common (Hwang, 2001).

Substance abuse rates are particularly high amongst the homeless population and coexistence of mental illness and addictions seem to be the norm (Homan, Flick, Heaton & Mayer, 1993; North, Smith, Pollio & Spitznagel, 1996; Patterson et al., 2008; Riordan, 2004; Smith, North & Spitznagel, 1992). Prevalence rates of severe mental illness are also reportedly higher among the homeless (CIHI, 2007) with
schizophrenia and bipolar disorder being associated with a high risk for homelessness (Susser, Moore & Link, 1993). Studies among shelter users indicate higher rates of depression, anti-social personality disorder and substance abuse compared to the general population (CIHI, 2007).

High rates of infectious diseases have also been a cause for concern (Hwang, 2001; Golden et al., 1999; Wolitzki et al., 2007). Additionally, research indicates that homeless populations have higher rates of chronic pulmonary diseases, respiratory tract infections, musculoskeletal conditions, skin and foot problems, seizures and unintentional injury (Hwang, 2001; CIHI, 2007; Krieger & Higgins, 2002). While these health concerns are not specific to homeless individuals living with mental illness, the social determinants that lead to increased exposure and risk (Krieger & Higgins, 2002) encompass the entire homeless population.

Health challenges faced by the homeless population are of even greater concern in relation to those with mental illness as the interaction of mental illness and homelessness leads to poorer health practices and outcomes (Mosher-Ashley et al., 2000; Patterson et al., 2008; Sullivan et al., 2000). While research in this area is sparse, it indicates that homeless individuals living with mental illness have higher prevalence of both acute and chronic conditions compared to the general homeless population (Sullivan et al., 2000). This is further exacerbated by a greater degree of stigmatization (Mosher-Ashley et al., 2000) and an increased difficulty in accessing healthcare (Sullivan et al., 2000). They are at an increased risk of victimization, exposure to communicable diseases, suicide, and lower overall subjective quality of life (Drake, Bebout & Becker, 1999; Sullivan et al., 2000). They have lower levels of
subsistence needs met (Drake et al., 1999) and as such are more likely to engage in negative health behaviours. For example, homeless individuals living with mental illness have been found to be more likely to get their food from a dumpster (Gelberg & Linn, 1988). It has also been reported that when subsistence needs are not met, those with mental illness require devoting their full attention to meeting them at the expense of addressing other needs such as mental health services (Sullivan et al., 2000).

2.1.5 The Role of Housing

Adequate housing plays a critical role in the recovery of mental illness and in preventing homelessness. Research indicates that those in supportive housing show significant reductions in shelter use, hospitalizations, length of hospital stays and time incarcerated (Culhane, Metraux & Hadley, 2002; Metraux et al., 2003). Supportive housing for those living with mental illness among the homeless show high retention rates (Culhane et al., 2002) and is found to increase the number of days housed substantially compared to intensive case management alone (Rosenheck, Kasprow, Frisman & Liu-Mares, 2003). Emphasizing the provision and maintenance of supportive housing has been cited as the most successful strategy in improving the quality of life and general wellbeing of this population (Sullivan et al., 2000; Davis & O’Neill, 2005).

Despite the importance of supportive housing, service delivery plans often face strong community opposition that leads to changes in zoning by-laws that discriminate against supportive housing (Dear & Gleeson, 1991; Takahashi & Dear,
This community opposition is commonly referred to as the NIMBY (Not in My Back Yard) syndrome and is cited as one of society's defining issues (Takahashi & Dear, 1997). Research of the NIMBY process identified specific groups that communities consider most objectionable, and the mentally disabled and homeless were often the least acceptable group (Takahashi & Dear, 1997). Studies identify that groups perceived to be the least productive and most potentially dangerous are least likely to be considered acceptable (Takahashi & Dear, 1997), suggesting that the portrayal of individuals who are homeless and living with mental illness can strongly influence community acceptance, and consequently, community opposition to supportive housing.

2.2 ‘Out of the Shadows At Last’

In February 2003, The Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology (hereafter referred to as the Committee) began a study of mental health, mental illness and addiction in Canada, under the leadership of Senator Michael Kirby (MHCC, n.d.). Research was conducted over a two and a half year period in which the Committee received stories through their website and travelled to every province and territory in Canada to conduct public hearings (MHCC, n.d., The Senate, 2006). The results of this study were formally published on May 9, 2006 in the final report of the Committee entitled “Out of the Shadows at Last – Transforming Mental Health, Mental Illness and Addiction Services in Canada” (hereafter referred to as the Senate Report). This study is particularly significant as it was the first study (and to-date, only published study) concerning mental health
to be conducted on a national level (MHCC, n.d.). As such, although there have been over 300 national reports on the physical health system, the Senate Report was the first national report on mental health (Kirby, 2008).

2.2.1 Mental Illness and Homelessness in the Senate Report

The Senate Report addresses numerous concerns related to policies, programs, and the lived experience of those living with mental illness in Canada, and contains 118 recommendations for addressing these issues (The Senate, 2006). While the scope of topics addressed in the Senate Report relating to mental illness is vast, six themes that address issues related to homelessness and were most relevant to the population being discussed in this thesis (those who are homeless and living with mental illness) were identified and are summarized below.

Housing as Recovery

The Committee emphasizes throughout their report that “It would be hard to overestimate the importance of adequate housing for people living with mental illness” (p118). The need for housing as a form of recovery to those living with mental illness is identified as an essential need, and is suggested to be a form of protection from mental illness. The Senate Report specifically stresses the strength of supportive housing as a successful aspect of recovery in its promotion of independence, safety, and community integration.
Inequity

While housing is identified as a fundamental aspect of wellbeing, the Senate Report draws attention to increased disadvantage that those living with mental illness have in finding safe and adequate housing. In addition of the difficulties faced by those who are homeless, those living with mental illness may face unique challenges. As conveyed by an individual quoted in the Senate Report:

“We must remember that people also have to face the task of recovering from the effects of external and internalized stigma, learned helplessness, institutionalization, poverty, homelessness and the wounds of a broken spirit” (p43).

Individuals with mental illness may require additional supportive services to enable them to live in the community, increasing the difficulty of finding appropriate housing. In addition to this, the administrative system in place to apply for benefits, assistance and services is challenging to navigate with the added difficulties of living with a mental illness or addiction, creating confusion about the support services available and how to access them.

Affordability of Housing

The Senate Report sheds light on the large number of people often living in very small homes in neighbourhoods with high crime and drug rates, particularly those on social assistance, and strongly stresses the need for an increase in affordable housing. The Committee cites findings of the Canadian Mental Health Organization that show that the number of affordable housing units created by the Government of Canada dropped from 24,000 to 940 between 1980 and 2000 (The Senate, 2006; p119). The Senate Report asserts that not only are more housing
units required, but there is a need for more Governmental assistance so that people can afford to rent existing apartments at market rates.

Integration of Services

The Senate Report highlights the importance of addressing the social determinants of health in preventing and treating mental illness. The Committee emphasizes the necessity of better integrating mental health services with a broader range of services and supports that are required by those with mental illness, including housing services. In particular, the Senate Report encourages collaborative care initiatives to foster community-based care.

Stigma and Public Safety

A large portion of the Senate Report is dedicated to acknowledging the painful and damaging effects of stigma on those living with mental illness. The Committee emphasizes the pressing need to address stigma related to mental illness in communities across the country. Additionally, the Senate Report points to negative media depictions of mental illness that increase stigma against those with mental illness, particularly portrayals that increase the fear of violence.

2.2.2 Primary Principles and Goals

The six themes identified above reflect many of the Primary Principles of the Senate Report as stated by the Committee. These Primary Principles include:

- to create the best possible conditions for recovery;
- to address social determinants of health as a requirement to promoting mental health and recovery;
• to integrate mental health services and supports;
• to address mental illness and the mental health system with more respect and seriousness

As mentioned previously, in addition to highlighting the need to address mental health, mental illness and addiction in Canada, the Senate Report contains over 100 recommendations. The Senate Report emphasizes that all its recommendations are ultimately to help those living with mental illness “live the best possible life they can” (p 479). The majority of these recommendations address the organization and delivery of mental health services, aimed at improving the structural framework of the mental health system. There is, however, a societal goal expressed in the Senate Report as well. This comes from the recognition that “profound change is essential if persons living with mental illness are to receive the help they need and to which they are entitled” (The Senate, 2006, p2). The Committee expresses its hope that readers of the report will be affected by its content, and that this will change deep-rooted public attitudes towards mental illness, subsequently reducing the stigma and discrimination faced by those living with mental illness. The analysis in this thesis aims to address this goal of the Senate Report in relation to the homeless population by determining whether the report increased the potential for a change in public attitudes regarding mental illness and homelessness. In relation to this, the potential for increased public awareness of the Primary Principles outlined above will also be explored.
2.2.3 The Mental Health Commission of Canada

The Senate Report included a recommendation for the creation of the Canadian Mental Health Commission who would, among other responsibilities, work to eliminate discrimination in the provision of affordable housing to individuals with mental illness (The Senate, 2006). In 2007, the Mental Health Commission of Canada formally launched its activities, and continued to draw attention the topics of homelessness and mental illness. One of the four major initiatives that the Commission launched in its first year was to address homelessness related to those living with mental illness through a research project funded by the Federal Government (Howlett, 2008). This ongoing project aims to study the services and systems for those who are homeless and living with mental illness in five cities across Canada with participation from 2285 homeless people living with a mental illness (MHCC, n.d.). Its scope as the largest study of its kind currently in the world (MHCC, n.d.) is an indication of the importance the Mental Health Commission has placed on investigating and addressing homelessness among those living with mental illness.

2.3 News Media

2.3.1 News Media Coverage of Mental Illness

The media is the public’s most common source of information regarding mental illness (Wahl, Wood & Richards, 2002). However, news coverage of mental illness has shown a long-standing pattern of negative portrayal (Wahl, Wood & Richards, 2002). Studies have found that news articles predominantly portray
mental illness in a negative tone and convey a strong association between mental illness and violence (Philo, McLaughlin, & Henderson, 1996; Ward, 1997; Allen & Nairn, 1997; Nairn, 1999; Hazelton, 1997). Individuals with mental illness are often depicted as a threat to the community (Allen & Nairn, 1997). Stories associating mental illness with violence and crime are given greater prominence when compared to positive articles (Francis et al., 2001, Philo et al., 1996, Day & Page, 1986). Positive statements regarding mental illness are most likely to be found in editorial articles (Philo et al., 1996). Fewer references to violence are found in articles that center their discussion around the statements of mental health professionals (Allen & Nairn, 1997). While the use of health professionals as sources of information may improve the portrayal of those with mental illness, this is subject to the journalists framing of the issue (Nairn, 1999).

News coverage of mental illness was found to reinforce stereotypical and stigmatizing views of mental illness (Wahl et al., 2002; Philo et al., 1996). It is suggested that the media perpetuate a stereotypical image of a single unemployed male with schizophrenia, while other groups are unrepresented, such as women, the elderly and those with mental illnesses other than schizophrenia (Philo et al., 1996). However, other studies suggest that coverage of schizophrenia is uncommon (Wahl, 1996; Wahl, Borostovik & Rieppi, 1995).

In Canada specifically, there were two major studies regarding media coverage of mental illness. Matas, el-Guebaly, Harper, Green, & Peterkin (1986) studied the change in coverage of mental illness in Canada between 1961 and 1981 in two newspapers. Their results show few significant differences over the time
period studied. In contrast to other studies, they suggest that articles written regarding criminal incidents were generally positive. However, they also found that articles given most prominence (i.e. front page of the newspaper) were more likely to portray mental illness as dangerous. Day and Page (1986) did a content analysis of newspapers from 1977-1984 and similarly found that negative items were given greater prominence than positive ones. Additionally, their results show that the overall tone of the articles analyzed was negative, with few (18%) positive statements.

2.3.2 News Media Coverage of Homelessness

There has been little research conducted regarding the depiction of homelessness in news media and the extent to which this may impact public opinion (Min, 1999; Lee, Link & Toro, 1991). The few existing studies focus primarily on the United States and consider mostly television news (Min, 1999). This research found that news stories regarding homelessness show an increasing trend in the United States (Min, 1999) and that the public regard homelessness as a serious issue (Lee et al., 1991). While some studies report that the news coverage focus on stories of homeless individuals, blaming them for their condition (Min, 1999), others report that homelessness is perceived to be a problem with structural roots (Lee et al., 1991). While there is no definitive picture on how homelessness is portrayed in news media, Lee et al. (1991) suggest that there is a plausible link between the volume and content of media coverage (both print and broadcast) and the public’s perception of homelessness.
2.3.3 Mental Illness, Homelessness and News Media

To my knowledge, there has only been one published journal article to date that examines the media, mental illness and homelessness collectively. This article is entitled “The Media and Homeless Mentally Ill Persons” and written by Leona L. Bachrach in 1990. This article emphasizes that while professional articles focus their attention on the homeless and mentally ill individuals who are easiest to access and study (such as shelter users), the media frequently reports on more unusual situations, giving insight into less accessible members of this population. As such, Bachrach (1990) summarizes that news media documentation of the homeless mentally ill should be considered an important supplement to scientific literature regarding this population.

2.3.4 News Media and Attitudes of the Public

The media has been widely cited as the most important source of information regarding mental illness (Granello, Pauley & Carmichael, 1999; Lopez, 1991; Benkert, Graf-Morgenstern, Hillert, Sandmann, Ehmg, Weissbecker, Kleppinger & Sobota, 1997, Philo, 1996). In Canada, the Senate Committee identifies media as the most effective means of spreading information about mental illness (The Senate, 2006). However research focused specifically on the impact of portrayals of mental illness is rare (Wahl, 1992) and as such, empirical evidence of this impact on public attitudes is limited (Dietrich, Heider, Matschinger & Angermeyer, 2006). As mentioned previously, this is even more scant with regards to homelessness.
While the amount of research is limited, the little that has been done has been confident in stating that negative depictions can have significant effects on people’s attitudes and treatment of those with mental illness (Francis et al., 2001; Wahl, 1992). Negative portrayals of mental illness have been associated with negative attitudes (Francis et al., 2001). Dietrich et al., (2006) show that adolescents who read an article that linked mental illness with violent crime are more likely to describe an individual with mental illness as violent and dangerous. Further studies have found that negative attitudes associated with media depictions of mental illness are difficult to alter once present. The presentation of positive images of mental illness does not appear to change negative attitudes (Francis et al., 2001). Positive personal experiences can also be overwhelmed by negative media images (Philo, 1996).

As news media focuses on the association between mental illness and violence, and the public become increasingly concerned, this may lead to policy decisions regarding individuals with mental illness that give priority to public safety (Paterson, 2006). As previously discussed, this is of particular importance in relation to housing as proposals for supportive housing generally encounter neighbourhood resistance, the majority of which is based on fears regarding increased crime and reduced property values as a consequence (Takahashi & Dear, 1997).
2.4 Agenda Setting and Framing

Agenda Setting and Framing are theories concerned with what the media choose to focus on and how news is presented. Agenda setting refers to the process by which problems become recognized as issues that merit public attention (Cook, Tyler, Goetz, Gordon, Protes, Leff & Molotch, 1983), and is one of the most commonly cited influences of news media (Collins, Abelson, Pyman & Lavis, 2006). The central claim of Agenda-Setting Theory was first summarized by Cohen (1963): “The press may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about.” (as cited in Weaver, 1996, p37). Agenda Setting theory asserts that while media may not necessarily tell the public how to think about issues, they shape public consciousness through telling the public what issues are important (Brosuis & Kepplinger, 1990). This results in a strong correlation between the importance media places on particular issues and the importance the public attribute to those issues (Mitchell, 2007; McCombs & Shaw, 1972). Studies have suggested this to be a dose-response relationship with the level of importance given to an issue by the public proportional to the amount of coverage it receives in the media (Collins et al., 2006; Funkhouser, 1973; Glynn, Herbst, O’Keefe & Shapiro, 1999).

Framing goes hand in hand with agenda setting theory. While agenda setting analyzes which issues are given importance through being selected as news, framing focuses on the way in which issues are presented or interpreted in the news (Entman, 1993). A media frame is a particular perspective on a news story, which
can shape the interpretation and perspective of the public, usually without their awareness (Dorfman, 2003).

As framing has wide applications, more detailed definitions of various media frames have been widely discussed (Scheufele, 1999; Scheufele, 2006; Weaver, 2006; McCombs, Shaw & Weaver, 1997; Iyengar & Simon, 1993). For the analysis in this thesis, the framing component will be discussed as the newspaper articles approach to the story. Iyengar (1990a, 1991, 1996, 1997) differentiates between two types of approach: Episodic and Thematic news framing. Episodic framing “depicts public issues in terms of concrete instances or specific events” (Iyengar, 1990b, p.7), while thematic framing “places the public issues in some general or abstract context” (Iyengar, 1990b, p.7). Episodic frames center their coverage on personal experiences and events (Iyengar, 1990b). They focus on the details surrounding the event itself, paying little attention to causes, trends or broader implications of events (Dorfman, Woodruff, Chavez & Wallack, 1997). This tends to generate large numbers of articles over a short period of time (Collins et al., 2006). In contrast, the object of coverage in thematic frames is generally impersonal (Iyengar, 1990b) and coverage of a specified issue is more continual (Collins et al., 2006). Thematic articles focus on root causes and trends (Dorfman et al., 1997), placing issues in an appropriate context (Iyengar, 1990b). While much of framing research is conducted with television news, studies have found similar framing effects and patterns are exhibited in newspapers (Collins et al., 2006; Dorfman, 2003; McManus & Dorfman, 2002). While not all articles are purely episodic or
thematic, one frame can generally be identified as the predominant one (Iyengar, 1996; Scheufele, 1999).

The difference in these framing styles becomes particularly meaningful when considering the implied attribution of responsibility they convey. Evidence shows that what people identify as causes and solutions to an issue depend significantly on the way in which the issue is framed (Iyengar, 1990a). Results suggest that episodic framing engenders individualistic attributions of responsibility, (Iyengar, 1990a). The personalization found in episodic stories draws attention away from structural causes (Dorfman, 2003), focusing the public on particular individuals or groups instead of political, historical or structural issues (Iyengar, 1996). As a result, character deficiencies (such as laziness, apathy, etc.) are blamed for creating adverse circumstances (Iyengar, 1990b), which in turn shields society and government from responsibility (Iyengar, 1996). In contrast, thematic framing assigns causation to societal factors (such as economic conditions, inadequate governmental efforts, etc.) and as such, engenders strong societal and structural attributions of responsibility (Iyengar, 1996).
3: METHODS

3.1 Newspaper Selection and Date Range

Newspapers were chosen on the criteria of being a Canadian national newspaper, of which there are two: ‘The Globe and Mail’ and ‘National Post’. Both are broadsheet English language newspapers with a daily publication schedule from Monday to Saturday. ‘The Globe and Mail’ is considered centrist in ideology, while the National Post is considered conservative/right (Mitchell, 2007), however neither newspaper is explicitly associated with a specific political party (Collins et al., 2006). Their weekly readership, as reported in 2007, was 2,768,100 (Globe and Mail) and 1,570,200 (National Post) (NADBANK, 2007).

The Canadian Newsstand Database was used to select articles from May 9, 2003 to May 9, 2009 (inclusive). This range covered three years prior to, and three years following the release of the Senate report.

3.2 Establishing Search Terms

Initial search terms were selected to target articles relevant to the research question:

- mental illness, mental disorder, or mentally ill; and
- homeless, homelessness or housing.

The search term ‘mental health’ was considered, but as it had much wider implications and less direct association with mental illness when compared to the
other initial search terms, it resulted in many irrelevant articles. A sample of articles using ‘mental health’ as a search term (and excluding the other initial search terms related to mental illness) were studied for any further phrases that may be used to point more directly to mental illness. It was found that many of the relevant articles used the terms ‘mental health issue/s’ and ‘mental health problem/s’ to refer to mental illness, and these phrases were incorporated into the initial search. ‘Mental health systems’ was also added to the search terms. Of the remaining 120 articles associated with the ‘mental health’ search term, a random sample of 40% of the articles was selected for an initial analysis, which showed that 90% of these articles were not relevant to homelessness or mental illness. These articles would ultimately be excluded from the data analysis at a later point for being irrelevant. Given the low proportion of relevant articles generated from the ‘mental health’ search term, it was not used as a search term for this analysis.

The final search terms were therefore:

- mental illness, mental disorder, mentally ill, mental health system, mental health issue/s or mental health problem/s; and
- homeless or homelessness or housing.

### 3.3 Article Selection

Once the search terms were established, all articles within the specified time period containing the search terms were selected, resulting in 414 articles. Obituaries, letters to the editor, articles under 150 words, and entertainment/art reviews were then excluded. Articles that appeared more than once were also excluded. These articles were ones that appeared in various regional editions of the
newspaper and were identical in content. A total of 81 articles were excluded as summarized in Table 1, leaving 333 articles for analysis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason for exclusion</th>
<th>Number of articles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Entertainment/Art Review</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter to the Editor</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article repetition</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word count under 150</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obituary</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Index Article</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3.4 Coding Protocol

A codesheet was developed to gather data regarding publication details and potential agenda setting and framing effects. Although media content analyses often use qualitative coding methods (Collins et al., 2006), the codesheet was designed to consist primarily of categorical variables. This was to reduce the possibility of coder subjectivity and to later allow for both a descriptive and quantitative approach to the data analysis. Pilot testing was carried out among undergraduate volunteers and the results of this identified variables that needed to be added or clarified to improve reliability across coders. The final codesheet (Appendix A) contained 23 items.
3.4.1 Theoretical Orientation

The codesheet was designed to allow analysis of potential agenda setting and framing effects as summarized in Table 2. Potential agenda setting effects were examined by coding for the quantity of coverage of mental illness and homelessness in the newspapers, the prominence of the articles, and the quantity of coverage of selected themes identified in the Senate Report. The potential for framing effects was explored in the comparison of the amount of episodic and thematic coverage (article approach), the association of the article approach to the solutions identified in the articles, and the voice that was presented through the articles.

![Table 2: Variables used to assess potential media effects](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential Effects Explored</th>
<th>Variable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agenda Setting</td>
<td>Quantity of Coverage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Article Prominence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Article themes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Framing</td>
<td>Article Approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Responsibility and benefits attributed to solutions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.4.2 Article Characteristics

Each article was assigned an identification number (ID#) and coded for basic *article characteristics* – newspaper name, article date, type of article (news or
editorial/column), author and article headline. These were primarily for identification of the articles and their placing along a timeline. The article’s word count, whether a photograph accompanied it, and its placement within the newspaper was coded to assess article prominence to see whether this changed over time. A code for article relevance was added after the pilot tests showed that although search terms were present within the article, they were sometimes misidentified (e.g. the database identified ‘elemental problem’ as the search term ‘mental problem’) or mentioned only in passing (e.g. in the job title of a quoted individual), making further coding not possible. These articles were coded as keyword only and later removed from the analysis. Remaining articles were also coded for relevance using a rough approximation of how much of the article was related to mental illness and/or homelessness. As the overlap of the homeless and those with mental illness was often not clearly defined due to the nature of this population, articles were coded for being about mental illness or homelessness in general, not necessarily the homeless mentally ill specifically because of this lack of clarity.

3.4.3 Article Themes

The Agenda Setting component of the coding was primarily in the detection of article themes. Six major themes related to mental illness and homelessness were identified in ‘Out of the Shadows at Last’, as previously discussed in the Background section of this thesis:

• Recovery: Identification of housing as a form of recovery for those living with mental illness;
• Public Safety: Concerns relating to the safety of the public at large;
• Inequity: Issues related to the unique challenges faced by this population or their increased risk of being homeless/mentally ill;
• Affordable Housing: Problems relating to the cost of housing (e.g. lack of affordable housing, need for allocation of funding towards cheaper housing, etc);
• Integration of Services: Indication of the need for services or agencies (e.g. health, housing, police, health authorities, etc) to work together, or share information;
• Stigma: Specific mention of stigma, discrimination or NIMBYism.

As Agenda Setting theory focuses on the presence of particular content, the themes were coded as being either ‘mentioned’ or ‘not mentioned’ in an article, regardless of the context or length of discussion around it.

### 3.4.4 Article Framing

The framing component of the coding was in article approach and voice. Articles were coded for whether they were episodic or thematic in their approach and what event/story they were written in response to. Episodic articles were those in which the primary focus of the article was a specific event or story, with little attention to the broader context of the issue. Thematic articles were identified as those in which the majority of the story focused on the context, trends or causes of a particular issue instead of a specific event itself. Although many articles contained elements of both approaches, the dominant approach was identified and coded. Articles were also coded for whether they stated a solution to any issues raised in relation to housing and mental illness. Pilots tests of the codesheet showed that coding for solutions that were implied in the article led to very low correlation.
between coders, signalling a need for a more objective code. As such, the codesheet was altered to code only for clearly stated solutions made by the article. The solutions were then coded for where the responsibility lay in their creation/implementation and who would benefit as a result. The final aspect that was coded was voice, which was defined as anyone directly quoted in the article, to see what perspectives and groups were represented with a direct voice, and whether this changed over time. Some articles had quotations with no persona attached to them (in name or position), and these could not be coded.

3.5 Coding Methods

Coding of the articles was done in three stages. The initial stage involved using a Perl script that was designed for this specific set of articles (See Appendix B for the full script). This script scanned all the selected articles and identified the newspaper name, identification number, article date, article type, headline, author, wordcount, page number and direct link to each article. It then entered this data into a spreadsheet where a random sample was checked for accuracy by a coder. As these details were not subject to interpretation, an automated form of coding was thought to decrease human error and provide greater accuracy of results. In the second stage, all of the articles were coded for the remaining items on the codesheet by one coder. The coder was blind to all identifying information except for ID#, such as article date, headline and author name to decrease any bias in coding. To reduce errors in recording and improve internal validity, this coding was conducted through the use of a form that identified variables for selection and automatically
transferred the data into a spreadsheet (See Appendix C for the form). In the final stage, a sample of 20% of the articles (n=68) was randomly selected and coded by another individual to assess intercoder reliability.

3.6 Statistical Analysis

Coded articles were entered into an Excel Spreadsheet (Excel 2008, Mac version) for management. Basic descriptive statistics such as frequency distributions were conducted using this software. Data was also imported into an SPSS Database, version 17.0, for cross-tabulation tests. These tests calculated the Pearson exact chi-square test (using the 95% confidence level) for tests of significant differences in the appearance of article themes and differences in episodic and thematic coverage. For small samples, Fischers exact test was used.
4: RESULTS

As stated previously, articles were selected from May 9, 2003 – May 9, 2009 (inclusive) for coding an analysis. As such, when results are referred to by year in the proceeding analysis, the year is considered to begin on May 9 (i.e. 2003-2004 refers to May 9, 2003 – May 8, 2004 inclusive). The results also reference the three years prior to and the three years following the release of the Senate Report, which will be referred to as pre-Senate Report and post-Senate report respectively.

4.1 Inter-coder Reliability.

As previously mentioned, a random sample of 20% of the articles (n=68) were coded by a second coder. Inter-coder agreement was assessed separately for specific variables, namely depth of discussion, each article theme, episodic/thematic framing and presence of a solution. Kappa scores for these variables ranged from 0.731 – 1.00 (p= <0.001 for all scores) showing substantial to almost perfect agreement (Viera & Garrett, 2005), indicating a high level of inter-coder reliability. The Kappa score for each assessed variable can be found in Appendix D.

4.2 General Overview

A total of 333 newspaper articles were coded. Articles in which the depth of discussion regarding the homeless and mentally ill were confined to ‘keyword only’ were removed (n=102), leaving 231 articles for analysis. The depth of discussion of the remaining articles was primarily ‘majority/entire article’ (n=179). Within the
sampled data range, articles were found from 13-August-2003 to 7-May-2009. Of these, 55 articles were from the National Post newspaper, and 176 were from The Globe and Mail newspaper. The number of authors (both journalists and public figures) represented in the analyzed sample was 127, with the maximum number of articles written by a single journalist being 12.

4.3 Article Characteristics

4.3.1 Quantity of Coverage

Quantity of Coverage was used to investigate agenda setting effects and was counted as the total number of articles in a given period of time. There was a greater number of articles in the three years following the release of the Senate Report (n=169) than the three years prior (n=62), as can be seen in Figure 1.
To see how this relates proportionally to how many articles were published in general in those years and to establish whether this increase was due to a general increase in newspaper article publication, a search was conducted to establish the total number of articles published by The Globe and Mail and National Post newspapers in the six years being studied. The results found 434,880 articles in the three years pre-Senate Report, and 374,270 articles post-Senate Report. These figures represent total number of articles, including types of articles that were excluded from the study sample such as letters to the editor and articles fewer than 150 words. As such, these figures are not meant to convey an accurate representation of news articles printed in that time. They are however, important in
exploring whether the increase in the number of articles related to mental illness and homelessness is meaningful. Considering this, there was a significant increase in the number of articles post-Senate Report (p<0.0001 at 99% confidence interval).


### Figure 2: Quantity of Coverage by year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. of Articles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003-2004</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004-2005</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-2006</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-2007</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-2008</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-2009</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 4.3.2 Prominence of Coverage

Article prominence was explored by analyzing the change in the average article word count, the placement of the article within the newspaper and the presence of artwork or photographs accompanying the article. The mean word count of the articles over the six years studied was 973 words/article, with a small increase between the mean word count pre-Senate Report (909 words/article) and
post-Senate Report (996 words/article). There was little variation in the mean word count by year as shown in Figure 3, with the greatest variation being seen between 2007-2008 and 2008-2009.

Figure 3: Average Word Count by year

For Article Placement, in the three years preceding the release of the Senate Report, there were three articles that appeared on the front page of the newspaper, 10 that appeared on the section front page, and 49 articles that appeared in other pages of the newspaper (see Figure 4). Comparatively, in the subsequent three years, seven articles appeared on the front page of the newspaper, 33 on the section front page, and 129 in other parts of the newspaper (see Figure 5). When comparing Figures 4 and 5, it is important to note that in addition an increase in the total number of articles appearing in the paper front page and section front pages of
the newspapers, there is an increase in the proportion of articles in prominent positions of the newspaper post-Senate Report.

Figure 4: Article Placement Pre-Senate Report (No. of articles)

![Article Placement (Pre-Senate Report)](image1)

Figure 5: Article Placement Post-Senate Report (No. of articles)

![Article Placement (Post-Senate Report)](image2)

There were few articles with an accompanying photograph (n=33) in the analyzed sample. In the three years prior to the release of the Senate Report, 10%
of the articles had a photograph (n=6), while in the three years following, 16% of the articles had a photograph (n=27).

4.4 Article Themes (Agenda Setting)

Potential agenda setting effects were further explored through the appearance of themes derived from ‘Out of the Shadows at Last’. No statistically significant differences were observed pre and post Senate in the mentions of any of the themes (p-values for each theme can be found in Appendix E). However, there was an increase in the number of articles mentioning each theme, as outlined below.

Recovery

The number of articles that mentioned the theme of ‘Recovery’ showed an increase from the time pre-Senate Report (n=6) to Post-Senate Report (n=34). Figure 6 shows the number of articles mentioning the theme of recovery by year, showing very few mentions in between 2003 and 2006, which were more than doubled in 2006 and further increased in 2008-2009.
Figure 6: Frequency of articles mentioning 'Recovery'

Public Safety

The number of articles that mentioned the theme of 'Public Safety' increased in the three years following the release of the Senate Report (from n=10 to n=27). While the number of articles with this theme was low between 2003 and 2005 (only one article in each year), it increased to eight articles in 2005-2006, and remained between eight and ten articles in the three years following, and shown in Figure 7.

Figure 7: Frequency of articles mentioning 'Public Safety'
Inequity

The frequency of articles mentioning the theme of ‘Inequity’ showed an increase in the post-Senate Report years. The frequency of articles mentioning this theme showed an increase from a total of 12 articles in the three years prior to the release of the Senate Report to a total of 38 articles in the three years following. The trend in the increase of the number of articles is shown by year in Figure 8.

Affordable Housing

The theme ‘Affordable Housing’ was the most frequently mentioned theme among all the articles, being mentioned in a total of 63 articles over the six years analyzed. The number of articles that mentioned this theme increased from a total of 16 articles pre-Senate Report to a total of 47 articles in the three years following the release the report. There was a marked increase in the number of articles mentioning this theme in 2006-2007. This decreased in 2007-2008, but the number
of articles in this year still remained higher than in any of the three years pre-Senate Report. The breakdown of the number of articles mentioning this theme by year is shown in Figure 9.

Figure 9: Frequency of articles mentioning ‘Affordable Housing’

Integration of Services

The theme ‘Integration of Services’ increased from a frequency of three articles in the years prior to the release of the Senate Report to 20 articles in the three years following. The quantity of articles mentioning this theme showed a general increase over time, as seen in Figure 10, except for 2004-2005 in which no mentions of this theme were found.
The number of articles mentioning stigma increased post-Senate Report. The frequency of articles increased from a total of five articles mentioning stigma in the three years preceding the release of the Senate Report, to a total of 30 articles in the following three years. Figure 11 shows the frequency of articles mentioning this theme by year. As can be seen, there was a marked increase in the number of articles that mentioned the theme of stigma in 2006-2007. While the frequency of articles mentioning this theme decreased in 2007-2008, it again showed an increase in 2008-2009.
Summary of themes

A summary of the frequency of the appearance of specific themes, both pre and post-Senate Report, is shown in Figure 12. As demonstrated in this figure, all themes showed an increase in the frequency of articles in which they were mentioned Post-Senate Report. The themes of Stigma, Recovery and Integration of Services showed a more marked increase in comparison to other themes, increasing by a factor of 6, 5.7 and 6.7 respectively. In comparison, the themes of Public Safety, Inequity and Affordability of Housing increased by a factor of 2.7, 3.2 and 2.9 respectively.
4.5 Framing

Potential framing effects were explored through the analysis of article approach, namely episodic or thematic. Of all the articles used for analysis (n=231), the majority were episodic (n=200). This can be seen in Figure 13.
Figures 14 and 15 show the amount of episodic and thematic coverage pre-Senate Report and post-Senate Report. While the amount of episodic coverage and thematic coverage both increase post-Senate Report, Figure 15 shows an increase in the proportion of thematic articles Post-Senate Report.

**Figure 14: Article Approach Pre-Senate Report (No. of Articles)**

![Approach Pre-Senate Report](image)

**Figure 15: Article Approach Post-Senate Report (No. of Articles)**

![Approach Post-Senate Report](image)
Figure 16 shows the amount of episodic and thematic coverage in each other analyzed years. Both episodic and thematic coverage show an increase each year, except for 2008-2009 in which the number of episodic articles dropped. The number of thematic articles was low in the first few years of analysis and increased in the years following the release of the Senate report (2006-2009). As with the coverage of many of the themes, the number of thematic articles showed a more pronounced increase the year that the Senate Report was released, followed by a decrease in the following year. This was then followed by another pronounced increase in 2008-2009.

**Figure 16: Quantity of Episodic and Thematic Articles by Year**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Thematic</th>
<th>Episodic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003-2004</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004-2005</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-2006</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-2007</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-2008</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-2009</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Primary Event/Story**

Articles were coded for their primary event/story, the summary of which is presented in Table 3.
### Table 3: Articles Primary Event/Story

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main Story/Event</th>
<th>Episodic (n)</th>
<th>Thematic (n)</th>
<th>Total (n)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No/unclear</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal story</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New building/zoning allocation/opening</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political event/election</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Release of report</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violence/crime against an MI&amp;H individual</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violence/crime by an MI&amp;H individual</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding allocation</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New policy/strategy</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Death of a homeless individual</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health policy/administrative change</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeless count</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police action</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010 Winter Olympic Games</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The most frequently coded categories were No/Unclear (n=41) or Other (n=41) accounting for 35% of the total sample of articles. These were articles that either did not have a clear event or story, or those in which the story could not be categorized in a meaningful way with others. Examples of this include reports of the creation of a homeless choir, the loss of a homeless man’s dog and a commentary on the use of a safe injection site. For visual clarity, these two variables were removed for Figure 17, to more easily show the frequency of the remaining variables. Stories
that focused on personal stories (n=24) and New building/zoning/allocation/opening (n=22) were the next most frequent stories. This was followed by Political events (such as elections), the release of a report, and violence/crime against an individual identified as homeless and mentally ill (n=15).

Figure 17: Articles Primary Event/Story (No/Other removed)

As there were few thematic articles, the stories represented in episodic articles showed a similar trend as those in the full group of articles (as seen in Table 3). The thematic articles however, showed a different pattern. While No/unclear
and Other were still the most frequent story, the next most frequent story was the release of a report.

The Primary Event/Story was then stratified by publication year, the results of which are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4: Articles Primary Event/Story over Time

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No/unclear</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal story</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New building/zoning allocation/opening</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political event/election</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding allocation</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violence/crime by an individual who was homeless and/or mentally ill</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Release of report</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health policy/administrative change</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police action</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Death of a homeless individual</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violence/crime against an individual who was homeless and/or mentally ill</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New policy/strategy</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeless count</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010 Winter Olympic Games</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Of these results, there are a few notable trends. Articles categorized as No/unclear and Other showed a similar yearly increasing trend to the total frequency of all articles, as demonstrated in Figure 18.

**Figure 18: Primary Event/Story: Other and No/Unclear**

Articles with a focus on personal stories (see Figure 19) showed a decline from three articles to none in the three years pre-Senate Report. In the year following the release of the Senate Report there was an increase in the number of articles, and a further increase can be seen in 2008-2009.
Articles written about a political event/election showed generally low coverage with peaks of higher coverage in specific years. This can be expected as most of these articles referred to politicians and their election platform regarding homelessness (and sometimes mental illness). As such, it could be expected that there would be increased coverage regarding this topic in years with an election or political controversy. Articles regarding the release of a report were only present after 2005, and while they showed increasing coverage until 2008, the number of articles on this topic declined in 2008-2009. Articles regarding funding allocations were only present post-Senate report. Articles in which the primary event/story was violence against an individual who was homeless and/or living with mental illness showed generally low yearly coverage with peaks of higher coverage in two specific years, as shown in Figure 20.
In comparison, articles in which the primary event/story was violence by an individual who was homeless and/or living with mental illness showed more generally steady reporting with a low overall yearly frequency of articles regarding this topic. This can be seen in Figure 21.
Articles written about the death of a homeless individual were infrequent and did not markedly change in the time period studied.

**Solutions – Responsibility and Benefits**

Articles were analyzed for whether they provided a clear solution to any problems identified regarding the homeless or those with mental illness. Of all the articles analyzed, 49 articles (21%) offered a clear solution. Of these, 33 were coded as episodic articles, and 16 were thematic. While there were more episodic articles among those with solutions, it is important to note that the 33 articles account for only for 16.5% of all episodic articles, while in contrast, 51.6% of the thematic articles offered clear solutions. Thematic articles offered a solution significantly more than episodic articles (p=<0.0001).

Articles that contained a clear solution were then analyzed to see whether the responsibility for implementing the solution lay with governmental agencies, or with the individuals affected by mental illness and/or homelessness themselves. The results are summarized in Figure 22.
As shown in this figure, the majority of the solutions attributed the responsibility of the solution to Governmental agencies (92%). When stratified by article approach (Figure 23), it can be seen that while both episodic and thematic articles most frequently attributed responsibility for solutions to Governmental agencies, no thematic articles suggested that the individuals affected should be responsible.
Articles that presented solutions were then coded to see which groups were identified as recipients of the solution, meaning those who would benefit from the solution if it were to be implemented. The results are shown in Figure 24, showing that the majority of the solutions offered were identified as being of benefit to those who were homeless and/or mentally ill (n=22, 45%).

**Figure 24: Benefits of the Solution**

![Benefits of the Solution](image)

When stratified by article approach (Figure 25), results showed that episodic articles that offered solutions primarily suggested that the individuals affected would benefit, while thematic articles were mainly unclear or not explicit.
Authors

Authors of the newspaper articles were grouped by the number of articles written by each individual author in the sample. This helped to distinguish between regular journalists and articles written by one-time authors (often political or other public figures). Thematic articles were found to be significantly more likely to be written by journalists who had written 4 or more articles related to mental illness and homelessness (p=0.0298).

Voice

The voice of anyone in direct quotations was noted and summarized in Table 5 below. In articles from both pre and post-Senate Report, individuals identified as homeless and/or living with mental illness were most frequently quoted.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who is quoted (Individual identified as)</th>
<th>Pre-Senate Report (No. of articles)</th>
<th>Post-Senate Report (No. of articles)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Homeless/Mentally Ill/ Homeless and Mentally Ill</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politician</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Professional, Researcher/Expert</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization/ Professional Society</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shelter/Housing representative</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police officer/representative</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry/Health Authority</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Member</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judge</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocate</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government representative</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business person</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Articles is an interview</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5: DISCUSSION

Overall, the results show that there has been a change in the depiction of mental illness and homelessness in Canadian national newspaper coverage since the release of the Senate Report. The results suggest that the Senate report had a lasting and meaningful effect on the public agenda advanced by the national newspaper coverage. The results further support that newspaper coverage regarding homelessness and mental illness shows an increasing trend in the presentation of themes identified as priorities in the Senate Report. Additionally, while the majority of coverage is focused on episodic reporting, there is an increase in the number of articles providing contextual information and solutions regarding this population.

This chapter discusses these key findings in the context of agenda setting and framing theories, followed by a discussion of the limitations of this analysis and directions for future research.

5.1 Key Findings

5.1.1 Agenda Setting Effects

There was a significant increase in the number of articles written in the three years following the release of ‘Out of the Shadows At Last’ compared to the three years prior to its release. The quantity of coverage increased each year in the time period studied. The average length of the newspaper articles showed little change.
However there was an increase in the number of articles appearing on the front page of the newspaper and front page of sections of the newspapers as well as an increase in the number of articles accompanied by a photograph. This indicates an increase in the prominence of articles related to homelessness and mental illness. The increased quantity of coverage and the greater prominence of relevant articles imply that the potential for exposure to articles regarding mental illness and homelessness increased post-Senate Report. This in turn signifies that the potential for agenda setting effects increased following the release of the Senate Report.

The analysis also indicates that in the three years preceding the release of the Senate Report, there were an increasing number of articles written each year. A likely explanation for this is found in the Senate Report itself. In the report, the Committee recognizes that during the two and a half years in which they were conducting their research, the momentum to address and change the mental health system was already building.

While the amount of coverage regarding mental illness and homelessness increased in the year the Senate Report was published, there is further evidence of this increase in the second and third year following the release of the Senate Report. As effects of reports are typically expected to be shorter, this is likely fueled by other influences. It is possible that past newspaper coverage itself generates additional coverage as reporters are more assured of literacy around these topics, and as such can ensure readership and interest of further coverage. The creation of the Mental Health Commission of Canada is also a likely influence on the continued increase of coverage. The Committee emphasized that while the Senate Report would draw
attention to mental health issues, national focus on these issues could only be maintained through the creation of the Mental Health Commission. As such, it possible that both the creation of the Mental Health Commission and their subsequent activities have continued to keep mental illness and homelessness salient topics. Similarly, it is likely that public focus and attention brought to issues concerning mental illness and homelessness afforded other groups an opportunity to comment on these topics in a public forum. The continued increase in coverage is suggestive that the Senate Report appears to have played a catalytic role in increasing the overall frequency of reporting on mental illness and homelessness.

Themes

While no statistically significant changes were observed in the appearance of the identified themes, there was an increase in the frequency of all the themes post-Senate Report. This trend is meaningful as it implies that the agenda setting potential of national news coverage with regards to these themes increased post-Senate Report. This is more pronounced in the presentation of the themes of Recovery, Stigma and Integration of Services, which showed a more marked increase. While there is no clear indication of why the increase in the coverage of some themes was more pronounced than others, the differences are likely fueled by other ensuing events, reports and findings. As with overall coverage of mental illness and homelessness, it is possible that the Senate Report acted as a catalyst in enabling these issues to be further publicly discussed.
This potential catalytic role of the Senate Report is further supported in noting the patterns of the reporting of themes over time. Five of the six selected themes (all except Integration of Services) showed a pattern in which the number of articles mentioning the theme increased in the year the Senate Report was released, declined somewhat in varying degrees in the following year, and increased again in 2008-2009, in most cases above the previous peak number of articles in 2006-2007. In comparison, the total number of articles in the sample steadily increased in this period of time, signifying that this pattern was not due to a general trend in the number of articles written. Had the coverage of themes been influenced by the Senate Report alone, it would be expected that after a peak of coverage in the year in which the report was released, a decline in the coverage of these themes would be observed in the following years. However, the observed trend reinforces that other influences likely caused coverage of these themes to not only continue to be presented in newspaper reports at an elevated level compared to prior years, but to further increase in 2008-2009.

5.1.2 Potential Framing Effects

The analysis of potential framing effects was centered on differences in article approach. Over the six year time period analyzed, a large portion of newspaper coverage used episodic framing. There was no statistically significant difference in article approach when comparing pre and post Senate Report, and both episodic and thematic articles increased post-Senate Report. However, the proportion of coverage using a thematic approach increased post-Senate Report,
and the majority of thematic articles were in the three years after the release of the Senate Report. Although episodic coverage showed a marked increase over the study period, the number of episodic articles decreased in the last year of analysis despite it being the year with most coverage regarding mental illness and homelessness. Overall, though the majority of articles remain episodically framed, article approach showed an increase in the amount of thematic reporting since the release of the Senate report.

Based on Iyengar’s (1991) theory of framing effects, this would suggest that due to the episodic framing of the majority of news coverage, responsibility for addressing concerns related to mental illness and homelessness would likely be attributed to affected individuals themselves. However, the analysis of the solutions presented in the articles indicated that this might not be the case for all episodic articles in this study. The responsibility for implementing solutions in both episodic and thematic articles was almost entirely attributed to governmental agencies. This may support Collins et al.’s (2006) suggestions that Iyengar’s (1991) theory of framing effects may apply to specific issues such as crime and unemployment but not universally to all public policy issues. It is also possible that the dissimilarity is due to differences study design, as Iyengar’s research focused on reception studies and implied attributions of responsibility, while the research in this thesis focuses only on clearly presented solutions. It is also important to note that while the episodic articles that identified solutions showed structural attributions of responsibility, they are a small proportion of all episodic newspaper coverage.
The increase in thematic reporting is likely to have a positive effect on the potential for changing public attitudes. Thematic articles place individuals and events in the context of broader social and structural systems and as such, allow readers to more easily identify that if a problem is to be solved; the context must be addressed (Dorfman & Wallack, 2008). Furthermore, thematic articles were significantly more likely to offer clear solutions. Defining clear solutions to social issues has been identified as an important factor in advocating for change through the media (Dorfman & Wallack, 2008). The increase in thematic articles post-Senate Report raised the potential of the news media to raise attitudes of change and advance the understanding of the public regarding the broader context of mental illness and homelessness.

Additionally, thematic articles were significantly more likely to be written by an author with four or more articles in the sample studied. This implies that journalists, as opposed to politicians or other public figures who would author only one article in the sample studied, wrote thematic articles. It also suggests that most thematic articles are written by journalists who have an interest in and/or knowledge of mental illness, homelessness or both, and are prolific in their reporting of these issues.

**Articles Primary Event/Story**

The primary event/story at the centre of each newspaper article was explored, and the results of this analysis offered additional details regarding the depiction of mental illness and homelessness in national news coverage. More
specifically, the analysis showed that while there was a diverse range of events/stories written in relation to mental illness and homelessness, coverage centred on violence was not among the most frequently reported event/story. Additionally, there was an increase in the coverage of personal stories post-Senate Report, suggestive of a higher potential for public sympathy towards the homeless and mentally ill.

For both episodic and thematic coverage, the most frequently coded categories were 'Other' and 'No/unclear'. This indicates that a large portion of articles regardless of their approach, were written about an isolated event/occurrence and did not focus on any particular issue regarding this population. Over the six-year time period studied, the number of articles regarding these topics showed a similar pattern to the overall increase in the amount of news coverage. This may be indicative of the nature of news reporting, which requires finding new and unusual occurrences to report (Bachrach, 1990), resulting in wide diversity of stories being reported regarding mental illness and homelessness.

Coverage of personal stories however, showed a different pattern. The number of articles centred on personal stories increased Post-Senate Report and showed further increase in the years that followed. The Senate Report itself contained many personal anecdotes and put a human face on mental illness. It appears that since the release of the Senate Report, this is increasingly occurring in national news media as well. This finding is particularly noteworthy as research suggests that personal stories can be more emotionally engaging for the public and have higher potential to change public attitudes through eliciting sympathy (Gross,
2008). While it has been suggested that episodic reports can minimize attitudes of change by focusing on the individual rather than on structural forces (Iyengar, 1991; Iyengar, 1990a, Dorfman & Wallack, 2008), research also indicates that compelling stories can lead to strong feelings of sympathy towards the subject of the story and inspire an eagerness to change the structure that created that individual's situation (Gross, 2008).

The other noteworthy patterns are those related to stories of violence and crime. As discussed in previous chapters, news coverage of mental illness has been shown to perpetuate an association between mental illness and violence (Philo, McLaughlin, & Henderson, 1996; Ward, 1997; Allen & Nairn, 1997; Nairn, 1999; Hazelton, 1997). This study found that relatively few articles were written regarding mental illness and homelessness that centred on violence or crime and this showed no marked change over time showing low coverage of specific incidents. In contrast, news reports that centred on violence against an individual who was homeless and/or living with mental illness showed peaks of higher coverage in particular years, suggesting a proliferation of articles surrounding particular incidences of violence/crime. This difference in coverage is likely due to the national scale of the newspapers analyzed and the difference in the types of crime reported. While stories of violence/crime by an individual identified as homeless/mentally ill were generally about aggressive panhandling incidents, stories of violence/crime against an individual identified as homeless/mentally ill were concerned more vicious attacks. As such, national news coverage of mental illness and homelessness does not appear to perpetuate the association of the
homeless and/or those living with mental illness with violence through increased coverage of violent incidents, except possibly as victims of it.

**Voice**

In general, the articles quoted a wide range of people, both before and after the release of the Senate Report and showed no meaningful change over time. There were no major differences observed in who was quoted in the articles when comparing pre and post Senate Report. The group that was most frequently quoted in both time periods was individuals identified as homeless, mentally ill, or both homeless and mentally ill, signifying that the population being discussed was given the greatest voice. The groups that saw the greatest increases in the number of articles quoted were those identified as homeless/mentally ill/homeless and mentally ill, health professionals/researcher/expert, and representatives from an organization or professional society. The only group that showed a decrease was Shelter/Housing representatives. This difference however, was small.

**5.2 Limitations**

Although the search terms used to select the newspaper articles for analysis provided a relatively complete set of articles regarding mental illness and homelessness in the chosen newspapers, the search terms do not account for every possible article related to mental illness and homelessness and it is likely that some articles were missed. As mentioned in the Methods section, the term mental health was not used, which may have left some relevant articles out of the sample. Names
of specific mental disorders were not used in the search terms, the addition of these may have generated more articles for analysis as well.

The search terms used also miss the inclusion of articles related to children. Children are not legally considered homeless but ‘wards of state’. While it is not anticipated that there would be many articles written about issues related to mental illness and homelessness and children, these articles could be particularly important as the public is generally drawn to and sympathizes with stories about children. It is also more likely that the public would attribute challenges related to children on structural/societal deficits rather than personal characteristics.

In coding the articles, six themes from ‘Out of the Shadows at Last’ were identified and coded. These themes were identified by myself alone, and were ones I thought addressed mental illness and homelessness most directly in the report and highlighted the primary principles it contained. There are other themes and vulnerable groups strongly emphasized in the Senate Report that were not included in the codesheet as they did not directly address homelessness. These topics however could be applicable and the identified vulnerable groups could overlap with the homeless as well. Examples of this include mental illness in seniors, children/youth and women. As such, the six themes that were identified and analyzed are not a complete reflection of the issues raised and discussed regarding this population in the Senate Report.

As with other coding research, the coding process is subjective in nature. To monitor and minimize the subjectivity of coding, a second coder was used on a
selection of articles, and had the intercoder reliability shown low correlation, the codesheet would have been revised to improve reliability. During the development of the codesheet and coding process, categories were developed for coding to increase objectivity, as the majority of the coding was conducted by a single coder (except for the sample selected for intercoder reliability). While these categories aided in identifying codes objectively, what was lost was the ability to code content that was implied and not clearly stated. This is particularly relevant in the coding of solutions and the responsibility for implementing solutions. While some articles implied ways in which homelessness could be overcome, they did not state these as a clear solution, and as such could not be coded. For example, in the description of an issue, numerous articles would assign blame on a particular individual or group for the creation of or lack of action regarding that particular issue. While this pointing of blame strongly suggested where the responsibility for the solution lay, it was not possible to code this, as the author did not present a solution to the issue directly.

With regards to the analysis of media effects, while this analysis explores agenda setting and framing effects, findings can only have implications regarding the potential effects of the newspaper coverage; it is not possible to know the actual effects on public perception. It is possible to speculate that there may be effects based on previous research conducted on public opinion. However, without conducting reception studies examining public awareness and opinion in this particular study, data analysis can only raise inferences about potential effects.
While it is not possible to say that any differences observed between the three years prior to and the three years following the release of the Senate Report were caused directly by the report, it is likely to be a considerable factor for a number of reasons. As mentioned previously, this was the first national study into the mental health system, mental illness and addictions in Canada (MHCC, n.d.). As such, the Senate Report was the first national-level report addressing mental illness to be published in Canada. The report contains 118 recommendations and as such, is a report that holds implications for action that may be carried out on various levels. As a result, it is likely to have been considered a meaningful and anticipated document by individuals and groups in the community and health related fields. It was also the only national report to address issues related to mental illness or homelessness to be published in that particular year.

5.3 Future Directions

While the results of this analysis add to previous research regarding potential media effects of news reporting on health-related topics, they also raise numerous questions that can be explored in further research. As with most previous research conducted regarding media portrayals of mental illness, this study was conducted on the assumption that media portrayal does influence public opinion. While there is research to support that this is indeed the case (Francis et al., 2001; Wahl, 1992; Dietrich et al., 2006), there have been comparatively few studies that examine this specifically and assess community attitudes towards mental illness (Francis et al., 2001). A more complex analysis examining changes in
public awareness and attitudes towards mental illness and homelessness would be useful in establishing actual effects of newspaper coverage. This would enable an examination of the implied attributions of responsibility raised in the news coverage, providing a more accurate study of the link between article approach and its associated solutions. This would also allow a more accurate comparison with Iyengar’s (1991) research, which in turn would lead to stronger conclusions on whether his theory of framing effects was supported by this research.

An expansion of a number of methodological limitations in this study would give a more complete picture of the potential changes in media portrayal of mental illness and homelessness. This study focused on Canada’s two national newspapers. Examining other newspapers would provide insight into how reporting may differ in regional, local and electronic newspapers. For example, previous research has found that tabloid newspapers tend to portray mental illness more negatively (Francis et al., 2001), and individuals citing electronic resources hold less tolerant attitudes towards mental illness (Granello et al., 1999). It would also be useful to include an analysis of comments and letters published in the newspapers as this may provide insight into public interest in these topics.

This study focuses on only six themes from the Senate Report, but as previously discussed, other themes and recommendations are present within the report. An analysis including more of these themes and recommendations would further add insight into whether the Senate Report influenced the content of newspaper articles since its release. Additionally, research over an expanded time period would be useful in providing a picture of the depiction of mental illness and
homelessness in the years before any research or public announcement related to the Senate Report had begun.

It would be interesting to see how the reporting of other issues in field of health may have changed in the same time period. This would help establish how the increase in articles regarding mental illness and homelessness compared to other health issues, and whether they show similar or conflicting trends. Additionally, this would further support the understanding of how much the Senate Report influenced the increase in reporting regarding mental illness and homelessness.

While further research on other news media channels would be useful, it is also important to note the increasing use of social media, particularly by youth, and the subsequent need to further study the role it plays in the acquisition of health and social information. Research has been begun to examine the role that social media may play in health, however a more complete analysis of the potential agenda setting effects of social media would greatly add to the existing research into these effects in other media forms.

This study raises awareness on the importance of research in other avenues of media studies that would aid in the discussion of the results. An exploration of the sources used by reporters and the influences these sources have on how newspaper articles are written would assist in understanding why the differences between articles and their approach are present. Understanding the motivation
behind journalistic writing will also aid the understanding of how public health professionals can best use news media as an effective tool.

On a broader level, the most important and useful research that this study has highlighted a need for is further study into how the media affects public opinion and policy. Understanding what the most influential media streams are for various issues, and which forms of media have greater ability to inform, to persuade and to set the agenda, will allow for media channels to be used more effectively within public health.
6: CONCLUSIONS

Since the release of the Senate Report ‘Out of the Shadows at Last’, there has been a significant and lasting increase in the agenda setting potential of Canadian National newspaper coverage regarding mental illness and homelessness. Furthermore, public awareness of specific concepts identified in the Senate Report has increased since its release. The depiction of mental illness and homelessness has shown a change in the increased thematic framing of coverage, raising the potential for increased public understanding of the contextual landscape surrounding this population.

The analyses show that there were significantly more articles regarding mental illness and homelessness after the release of the Senate Report. The increase in coverage continued in the years following the publication of the Senate Report suggesting that the report played an important catalytic role in increasing the overall frequency of reporting regarding mental illness and homelessness in national news coverage. This has likely allowed a wider diversity of sources to continue the discourse regarding this topic on a public and national level. Furthermore, the agenda setting potential of national news coverage with regards to the relevant themes has increased. This shows a heightened potential for an increase in public awareness of the primary principles and issues raised in the Senate Report.
The national news reports of mental illness and homelessness covered a wide variety of events and stories. Among these, there was an increase in the years following the Senate Report’s publication in the number of articles describing personal stories. This is suggestive of an increase in the potential for heightened sympathetic attitudes in the public towards individuals who are homeless and/or living with mental illness. It was also observed that stories that offered solutions regarding mental illness and homelessness placed the responsibility for implementing these solutions largely on governmental structures. The benefits of these solutions were generally either unspecified or suggested to only impact the individuals affected. Contrary to previous research, this analysis further found that the newspaper coverage did not frequently portray mental illness as being associated with violence.

With regards to the approach of the articles, articles were primarily episodic in their framing, with the majority of the articles paying little attention to the context and root causes of mental illness and homelessness. This showed no statistically significant change over the time period studied. However, the evidence supports that the amount of thematic coverage of mental illness and homelessness showed an increase in the years following the release of the Senate Report, and as such, the potential to influence public attitudes regarding the causes and possible solutions regarding this population increased.

Ultimately, the results of this analysis lead to a rejection of the null hypothesis that states there would be no change in the potential for altering public attitudes towards mental illness and homelessness through national newspaper
coverage since the release of the Senate Report. This research supports that the Senate Report very likely increased the potential for a change in public attitudes related to mental illness and homeless as presented in national news coverage. Since the release of the Senate Report, national news coverage regarding mental illness and homelessness increasingly made the public aware of the importance of both thinking about these issues and the themes and principles that relate to them. The increase in thematic coverage coupled with an increase in reporting of personal stories among the episodic articles have raised the potential for the public to be sympathetic of the impact of mental illness and homelessness on individual lives and aware of the broader contextual frameworks that surround them.

This thesis suggests that reports like the Senate Report have the potential to influence the public agenda as advanced by the media. It also highlights the need for increased research on the relation between policy, media and public opinion. More specifically, it suggests that public health professionals and policy makers need to further examine the effectiveness of media channels, and the factors that influence this effectiveness. Examining the interaction between policy development and media coverage is of particular importance for policies in which actions and results are influenced by public opinion. While there is still much to learn regarding media effects on public attitudes, especially in relation to specific health issues, this has become increasingly important to explore as health policies encourage community-based care and rely on public support.
## Appendix A

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Information</th>
<th>Response</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Coding details</td>
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<td>dd/mm/yyyy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coder name</td>
<td>Text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article Characteristics</td>
<td>Newspaper name</td>
<td>Categorical, National Post, Globe &amp; Mail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>dd/mm/yyyy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Type of article</td>
<td>Categorical, news, edit/column</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ID number</td>
<td>Numeric, 000-414</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Headline</td>
<td>Text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article Relevance</td>
<td>Word count</td>
<td>Numeric</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Placement</td>
<td>Categorical, paper front pg, section front page, other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Artwork/Photograph</td>
<td>Categorical, yes, no</td>
</tr>
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<td>Articles Themes</td>
<td>Recovery</td>
<td>Categorical, mentioned, not mentioned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Public Safety</td>
<td>Categorical, mentioned, not mentioned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inequity</td>
<td>Categorical, mentioned, not mentioned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Affordability</td>
<td>Categorical, mentioned, not mentioned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Integration of Services</td>
<td>Categorical, mentioned, not mentioned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stigma</td>
<td>Categorical, mentioned, not mentioned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article Approach</td>
<td>Categorical</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the article primarily episodic or thematic?</td>
<td>Categorical episodic, thematic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is it in response to a particular event or a story?</td>
<td>Categorical personal story, political event/election, new building/zoning allocation/opening,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>violence/crime against someone with MI or H, violence/crime by someone with MI or H, police</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>action, release of a report, other (to be sorted into categories post-coding)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there a clearly stated solution/s?</td>
<td>Categorical Yes, No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who is responsible for the solution?</td>
<td>Categorical Collective/Governmental, Individuals affected, Unclear/not explicit</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who does the solution/s benefit?</td>
<td>Categorical Community at large, Individuals affected, Both, Unclear/not explicit</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Voice (direct quotes)                                | Categorical                                                                                     |
| Who speaks?                                         | Categorical Government representative, Politician, Researcher/expert, Health professional,      |
|                                                     | Advocate, Person with mental illness, Person who is homeless, Person who is both homeless and   |
|                                                     | has mental illness, Business person, police rep/officer, judge, other (to be sorted into        |
|                                                     | categories post-coding)                                                                         |
#!/usr/bin/perl

#!/usr/bin/perl
‐w

# Input: A text file (Canadian Newsstand Database search result emailed via
# ProQuest) containing articles which are identified by a heading in
# the form "Document x of xx".
# Output: A tab delimited file containing a summary of data about each article,
# as outlined below.
#
# Read in input file. Parse the file into articles using the "Document x of xx"
# headings as delimiters, then further parse each article, capturing the
# following: Newspaper Name, Date, Section, Document Type, Proquest Document ID,
# ISSN, Headline, Author, Wordcount, and Page Number. Print the results in a
# tab-delimited file.
#
# Author: Joubin Moshrefzadeh (joubin_at_gmail_dot_com)
# Copyright (C) 2009 Joubin Moshrefzadeh
#

use Switch;

my $inpFile = shift;
my $outpFile = shift;
die "Usage: 
$_ FILE ...
" <inputFile.txt> <outputFile.txt>\n"
unless (defined ($inpFile) && defined ($outpFile));

open (INFILE, "< $inpFile") or die "can't open $inpFile: $!";
open (OUTFILE, "> $outpFile") or die "can't open $outpFile: $!";

# keeps track of which stanza/article we're on, and correspondingly the element
# in our hash which will contain this article's info
my $stanza = 0;
my $firstParagraph = "";  # to contain first paragraph of each stanza
my $line = 0;  # keep track of line number within a stanza

# a flag for determining when we're finished reading the first paragraph
# of a particular stanza
my $done = 0;

# For storing all the important bits from each article,
# once they've been parsed out; might as well initialize it
# for the first stanza/article
my %searchResults = {
    $stanza => {
        TEXT => ",  # the complete text of a stanza/article
        AUTHORS => ",  # the article's authors
        DOCTYPE => ",  # the article's doctype
        DATELINE => ",  # the article's dateline
        SECTION => ",  # the article's section
        PUBLICATION => ",  # the article's publication
        SOURCETYPE => ",  # the article's sourcetype
        ISSN => ",  # the article's ISSN
        PROQUESTDOCID => ",  # the article's Proquest Doc ID
        WORDCOUNT => ",  # the article's word count
        URL => ",  # the article's URL
        PAPERNAME => ",  # the article's newspaper name
        ARTICLEDATE => ",  # the article's date
        PAGENUMBER => ",  # the article's page number
        HEADLINE => ",  # the article's headline
    }
};

# begin processing file
while ( <INFILE> ) {
    # Each time "Document x of y" is seen, we have a new article/stanza.
Do initialization of variables for this stanza.

if ($_ =~ /Document [0-9]{1,2} of [0-9]{1,2}/) {
    $stanza++;               # increment the stanza counter
    $done = 0;              # reset this flag
    $firstParagraph = "";  # reset this variable
    $line = 0;              # reset the line counter

    # initialize the hash for storing the details of this stanza
    $searchResults { $stanza } = {
        ARTICLETITLE => "",
        TEXT => "",
        AUTHORS => "",
        DOCTYPE => "",
        DATELINE => "",
        SECTION => "",
        PUBLICATION => "",
        SOURCETYPE => "",
        ISSN => "",
        PROQUESTDOCID => "",
        WORDCOUNT => "",
        URL => "",
    }
}

# append each line being read to this hash element (so it will contain # all text for this stanza)
$searchResults{$stanza}{TEXT} .= $_;

# Extract first paragraph (terminated by the line containing # "Abstract Summary") and parse out the article headline
if ($_ =~ /Abstract (Summary)/ ) {
    # set this flag so we know for remainder of this stanza # that we’re past the first paragraph
$done = 1;

# Split first paragraph using ",," as delimiter
# and assigning results to an array.
my @elements = split /\./, $firstParagraph;

# Depending on the size of the resulting array,
# the Headline will be in element number...
my $numElements = @elements;
switch ($numElements) {
    case 7 {
        $searchResults{$stanza}{HEADLINE} = $elements[0];
    }
    case 8 {
        $searchResults{$stanza}{HEADLINE} = $elements[2];
    }
    case 9 {
        $searchResults{$stanza}{HEADLINE} = $elements[3];
    }
    else {
        # can't determine the headline
        $searchResults{$stanza}{HEADLINE} = "COULDN'T GET HEADLINE INFO";
    }
}

if ( $done == 0 ) {
    # We're still reading the first paragraph so...
    $line++;

    # We only want the lines after the "Document x of xx" line...
    if ( ($_.~ /Document [0-9][1,2] of [0-9][1,3]/) && ($line>2) ){
# clean up and append lines together to form one string
$firstParagraph .= $_;
chomp $firstParagraph;
$firstParagraph .= " ";
}
}

# Now we're basically focusing on the last few lines of each stanza
# which contain a heading, then a colon, then some value. Based
# on the heading, set the value of the corresponding hash element for
# this stanza.

chomp;
my ($kee, $val) = split / /, $_, 2;
if ($kee) {
    switch ($kee){
        case /Author/ {
            $searchResults{$stanza}{AUTHORS} = $val;
        }
        case /Document types/ {
            $searchResults{$stanza}{DOCTYPE} = $val;
        }
        case /Dateline/ {
            $searchResults{$stanza}{DATELINE} = $val;
        }
        case /Section/ {
            $searchResults{$stanza}{SECTION} = $val;
        }
        case /Publication title/ {
            $searchResults{$stanza}{PUBLICATION} = $val;
        }
        case /Source type/ {
            $searchResults{$stanza}{SOURCETYPE} = $val;
        }
    }
}
if ($_ =~ /(Text Word Count )\(\d+\)/) {
    $searchResults{$stanza}{WORDCOUNT} = $2;
}

# Now that we're finished processing the input file...
# Print the column headings for the output file in tab-delimited format
print OUTFILE "Input file: $inpFile\n";
print OUTFILE "Newspaper Name\t";
print OUTFILE "Date\t";
print OUTFILE "Section\t";
print OUTFILE "Document Type\t";
print OUTFILE "ProQuest Document ID\t";
print OUTFILE "ISSN\t";
print OUTFILE "Headline\t";
print OUTFILE "Author\t";
print OUTFILE "Word Count\t";
print OUTFILE "Page Number\t";
print OUTFILE "\t";
print OUTFILE "URL\t";
# Print the details of each stanza/article in tab-delimited format

for ($i=0; $i<=$stanza; $i++) {
    my @parts = split /\./, $searchResults{$i}{PUBLICATION};
    my $size = scalar(@parts);

    $parts[2] =~ s/://;
    print OUTFILE "$parts[0]. $parts[1].\t";

    print OUTFILE "$parts[2].\n";
    print OUTFILE "$searchResults{$i}{SECTION}\t";
    print OUTFILE "$searchResults{$i}{DOCTYPE}\t";
    print OUTFILE "$searchResults{$i}{PROQUESTDOCID}\t";
    print OUTFILE "$searchResults{$i}{ISSN}\t";
    print OUTFILE "$searchResults{$i}{HEADLINE}\t";
    print OUTFILE "$searchResults{$i}{AUTHORS}\t";
    print OUTFILE "$searchResults{$i}{WORDCOUNT}\t";
    print OUTFILE "$parts[3]. \n";
    for ($j=4; $j<$size; $j++) {
        print OUTFILE "$parts[$j]\n";
        print OUTFILE "." unless ($j == $size-1);
    }

    print OUTFILE "\t\n";
    print OUTFILE "$searchResults{$i}{URL}\n";
}

close INFILE;

close OUTFILE;
Appendix C

Thesis Coding

* Required

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Article Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ID number *</td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Article Prominence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Artwork/photograph *</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Article Relevance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Depth of discussion *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>regarding the homeless mentally ill</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appearance of article themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recovery *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The role of housing in the recovery of those with mental illness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Public Safety *            |
| Issues relating to the safety of the public at large |

| Inequity *                 |
| Issues related to the vulnerability of this population, increased risk of being homeless/mentally ill or suffering |

| Affordability of housing * |
| Issues relating to the cost of housing (e.g., lack of affordable housing, need for allocation of funding towards cheaper housing etc.) |
Integration of Services *
The need for services or agencies (e.g., health, housing, police, health authorities etc) to work together, or share information together

Stigma *
specific mention of stigma, discrimination or nimbysim (either that it exists, or needs to be overcome)

Article Approach

Is the article primarily episodic or thematic? *

Is it primarily in response to a particular event or story? *

Specify other:

Is there a clearly stated solution? *

If yes, Who does the responsibility of the solution lie with?

If yes, Who does the solution/s mainly benefit?
Voice

(direct quotes)

Who speaks? *

☐ Government representative
☐ Politician
☐ Researcher/expert
☐ Health professional
☐ Advocate
☐ Person identified as having mental illness
☐ Person identified as homeless
☐ Person identified as both homeless and has mental illness
☐ Business person
☐ Police rep/officer
☐ Organization/Professional Society
☐ Ministry/Health Authority
☐ article is an interview
☐ none
☐ n/a (keyword only)
☐ Other: ____________________________________________

Comments?

Submit
### Appendix D

Kappa statistics Summary

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<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Kappa Score</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Depth of Discussion</td>
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<td>Stigma</td>
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<td>Recovery</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inequity</td>
<td>0.790</td>
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<tr>
<td>Affordability of Housing</td>
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<td>Integration of Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Episodic/Thematic approach</td>
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<tr>
<td>Solution (yes/no)</td>
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Appendix E

Summary of P-Values for each theme (comparing Pre and Post- Senate Report)

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<th>Theme</th>
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<td>Public Safety</td>
<td>0.9776</td>
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REFERENCES


