“In the end, they are looking for community, for belonging”: An Analysis of the Role of Metro Vancouver Metropolitan and Community-based Newspapers in the Resettlement of Syrian Refugees

by
Pamela Aimee Rigor

B.A., Ateneo de Manila University, 2011

Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts

in the School of Communication Faculty of Communication, Art, and Technology

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SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY Summer 2019

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Approval

Name: Pamela Aimee Rigor

Degree: Master of Arts

Title: “In the end, they are looking for community, for belonging”: An Analysis of the Role of Metro Vancouver Metropolitan and Community-based Newspapers in the Resettlement of Syrian Refugees

Examining Committee: Chair: Daniel Ahadi
                         Lecturer

                         Kirsten McAllister
                         Senior Supervisor
                         Associate Professor

                         Adel Iskandar
                         Supervisor
                         Assistant Professor

                         Sherry Yu
                         External Examiner
                         Assistant Professor
                         Department of Arts, Culture and Media
                         University of Toronto

Date Defended/Approved: July 26, 2019
Abstract

This thesis explores the news media discourses surrounding the resettlement and integration of Syrian refugees in Metro Vancouver and Fraser Valley communities in British Columbia, Canada. Using a combination of content and critical discourse analyses, it examines newspaper articles in major metropolitan and local community newspapers published from September 1, 2015 to October 31, 2017. Media frames and news values were used in the analysis, and several key findings were uncovered that provided regionally specific insight on the newspapers’ treatment of the issue of resettlement. Through the lens of Orientalism, this thesis argues that Syrian refugees are still portrayed as a “dangerous Other” in major metropolitan newspapers, as they tend to replicate negative national news discourses. In contrast, the community newspaper coverage of Syrian refugees is more positive and geared towards helping the refugees successfully integrate in these communities. Thus, while this thesis critically analyzes the news discourses in these community newspapers, it also concludes that these newspapers have a positive role in the resettlement initiative through their dissemination of positive discourses about the new arrivals.

Keywords: race and representation; discourse; refugees and migration; resettlement and integration; Syrian refugees; Canadian news media
Dedication

To all Syrian refugees who have found and are still trying to find Home
Acknowledgements

My sincerest and deepest gratitude to my senior supervisor, Dr. Kirsten McAllister, for her never ending guidance and support since day one of my master’s degree program. Her passion for research has continually inspired me to move forward, and this research project would not have come to fruition without her insightful advice and excellent supervision. I am also grateful for the time and support given to me by the supervisory committee. Thank you to Dr. Adel Iskandar for providing thoughtful feedback and sharing his extensive knowledge with me throughout this research journey. My sincere thanks also go to Dr. Daniel Ahadi and Dr. Sherry Yu for sharing their valuable time and insights.

I would like to extend my gratitude to Lucie Menkveld, Jason Congdon, Jill Baryluk, Amy Soo, Wendy Addison, Dimple Patel and Dora Lau for their administrative support. I would also like to acknowledge the professors, lecturers and colleagues I’ve had the pleasure to work with in the School of Communication over the years. Thank you to the CMNS 201 teaching team composed of Dr. Jan Marontate, Dr. Frederik Lesage, Dr. Ahmed Al-Rawi, Christopher Jeschelnik, Graham Mackenzie and Pippa Adams for creating a positive working environment for me throughout my teaching assistantship.

I would also like to thank Geneva Nam, Yijia Zhang, Taeyoung Kim, Selena Hermann, Adjua Akinwumi and Maggie Poirier for being such wonderful and supportive members of my cohort. I would also like to acknowledge Dr. Erin Goheen Glanville, as our shared research interest also helped shape this research project.

A special thanks to Troy Kasting and his family for cheering me on throughout this journey. Finally, my heartfelt thanks go to my parents, Arnel and Alma Rigor, who have always supported me and believed in me as I made the move to Canada from the Philippines to pursue this graduate degree. Even with the distance and the time difference, I have always felt your unwavering love and support for all my endeavours. I owe all my success to both of you.
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BC</td>
<td>British Columbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bill C-31</td>
<td>Protecting Canada’s Immigration System Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BVOR</td>
<td>Blended Visa Office-Referral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBSA</td>
<td>Canada Border Services Agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>CDA</td>
<td>Critical Discourse Analysis</td>
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<tr>
<td>GAC</td>
<td>Global Affairs Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GAR</td>
<td>Government Assisted Refugee</td>
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<tr>
<td>IFHP</td>
<td>Interim Federal Health Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>IOM</td>
<td>International Organization for Migration</td>
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<tr>
<td>IRB</td>
<td>Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Agency</td>
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<td>IRCC</td>
<td>Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada</td>
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<tr>
<td>IRPA</td>
<td>Immigration and Refugee Protection Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISS of BC</td>
<td>Immigrant Services Society of British Columbia</td>
</tr>
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<td>PHAC</td>
<td>Public Health Agency of Canada</td>
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<tr>
<td>PSPC</td>
<td>Public Services and Procurement Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSR</td>
<td>Privately Sponsored Refugee</td>
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<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNHCR</td>
<td>United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees</td>
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Chapter 1.

Introduction

This thesis investigates the news media discourses surrounding the resettlement and integration of Syrian refugees in Metro Vancouver and several neighbouring communities in the Fraser Valley. The study originally veered towards examining the news media discourse of newspapers in the City of Vancouver. However, upon further research, it was revealed that Syrian refugees were resettled mostly in smaller communities outside the city due to issues of housing affordability (ISS of BC, 2017). Thus, this thesis recognized the opportunity to examine the news media where these refugees were being resettled, and the study evolved into a comparative analysis of major metropolitan newspapers published in the City of Vancouver and local community newspapers in Metro Vancouver and the Fraser Valley. Most of the media and communication studies done on Syrian refugees have focused on the media coverage of the Syrian refugee crisis in 2015 (see Chapter 2). In addition, most of these studies have examined the media coverage of plight of these refugees to countries in Europe, North America and Australia. For this study, however, the news media coverage of the Syrian refugee resettlement in Canada and more specifically, Metro Vancouver and the Fraser Valley, will be considered.

1.1. The Syrian Refugee Crisis

Inspired by the “Arab Spring”, a series of successful nonviolent protests that toppled oppressive regimes in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia, pro-democracy activists in Syria started their own peaceful protests in early 2011 (Marks, 2018). These pro-democracy protests were in response to the high unemployment, corruption and lack of political freedom that Syrians were experiencing under the government of President Bashar al-Assad (BBC, 2019). In March of the same year, Syrian schoolchildren were arrested and tortured by the government’s security forces for writing graffiti that supported the Arab Spring. One of the boys, aged 13, was killed (Marks, 2018). The arrest and torture of the children sparked demonstrations and protests throughout the country, starting with the southern city of Deraa, with the government responding with violent crackdowns. This
triggered a nationwide protest, and by July 2011, hundreds of thousands of Syrians walked the streets, protesting for democracy and the resignation of the President (Rodgers, Gritten, Offer and Asare, 2016). These protests were met with violence by the military and the government’s supporters. The opposition supporters then took up arms to defend themselves and to try and drive out the government’s security forces in their towns and cities. Rebel brigades were formed to fight the government’s forces for control of these towns and cities. By 2012, the conflict grew and the fighting reached the capital city of Damascus and city of Aleppo (Rodgers et al., 2016).

This event marked the beginning of the Syrian civil war and has affected the lives of millions of Syrians. The crisis in Syria is considered as one of the biggest humanitarian crisis and mass displacement since World War II (Yassin, 2018). With the ongoing violence and displacement, the country has become stricken with poverty and unemployment1 (Yassin, 2018). Before 2011, Syria’s population was estimated at 22 million people (Friedman, 2014). Over seven years later, the war has killed more than 465,000 civilians in the fighting, injured more than one million and displaced more than half of the country’s population (Chughtai, 2018). According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees or UNHCR (2018), more than 12.6 million Syrians have been forced to flee their homes and their country to escape conflict and persecution in 2017. Of these 12.6 million Syrians, around 6.3 million are refugees, 146,700 asylum-seekers, and 6.2 million are internally displaced persons (IDPs). By the end of 2017, Syria remains the main country of origin for refugees, with Syrians “accounting for almost one-third of the world’s total refugee population” (UNHCR, 2018, p. 14). That figure has seen a 14% increase by the end of 2017 (UNHCR, 2018).

While the terms “refugee” and “asylum-seeker” are often used interchangeably, the two have very different meanings. According to the 1951 United Nations (UN) Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, as amended by its 1967 Protocol (from here referred to as the Refugee Convention), a refugee is defined as:

1 Over 69% of the Syrian population is now living in extreme poverty (less than US $1.9 per day) and over 53% (even as high as 75% for youth ages 15-24) are unemployed. Over 2.3 million means of livelihood have been affected by the war (Yassin, 2018).
A person who, owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it (1951 Refugee Convention, Article 1).

An asylum-seeker, on the other hand, is defined by the UNHCR as “individuals who have sought international protection and whose claims for refugee status have not yet been determined” (UNHCR, 2018, p. 61). According to the UNHCR (2018), Syrian refugees have applied for and found refugee status in 125 countries as of 2017. Turkey remains as the country hosting the most number of Syrian refugees with over 3.4 million refugees currently residing in the country. In addition to this, Syrians have also been granted asylum in countries such as Lebanon (992,100 refugees), Jordan (653,000 refugees), Iraq (247,000 refugees) and Egypt (126,700 refugees) (UNHCR, 2018).

In 2015, many Syrian refugees attempted the journey to European countries such as Germany, Sweden, Hungary, Austria, France and the Netherlands to seek refuge. By the end of 2015, about 1 million Syrian refugees had applied for asylum in European countries. As of 2017, the countries with the highest number of accepted refugees were Germany, with more than 496,000 refugees, Sweden with 103,600 refugees, and the Netherlands with 30,900 refugees (UNHCR, 2018).

1.2. Syrian Refugees in the Media

In terms of media coverage, the years 2015 and 2016 were full of forced displacement stories about Syrian refugees, with visual depictions of their situations in Europe and their journeys crossing the Mediterranean Sea. These stories received considerable media attention and have influenced public discourse on refugees and asylum seekers (Lenette and Cleland, 2016). In Europe, the public depended on mainstream news media to provide them with information about Syrian refugees (Georgiou and Zaborowski, 2017). More importantly, it was not just the public who relied on the media—the government officials also deemed it as a trusted source of information. Georgiou and Zaborowski (2017) point out that the media’s role in disseminating information was crucial during this period for two reasons. First, with the “scale and speed of events in the second half of 2015”, the public and policy makers
relied on information that was immediately available to understand the situation and
guide their corresponding actions. Second, the lack of “familiarity with the new arrivals,
their histories and the reasons for their plight” meant that the public relied heavily on the
media to make sense of what was happening (Georgiou and Zaborowski, 2017, p. 4).

Georgiou and Zaborowski (2017) also point out that the media played a role in
framing Syrian refugees’ stories of mass displacement as a “crisis”. According to
Wallace (2018), the news coverage about refugees is often “episodic” and the media
coverage usually increased when a large number of refugees arrive in host countries
(p.5). Wallace (2018) notes that these events are usually labeled as “crises” in the news,
which in turn, draw significant attention to the ramifications of accepting such a high
number of refugees in the country. According to scholars studying the media coverage of
refugees in the year 2000s, refugees are most often associated with questions of
security and terrorism (Wallace, 2018; Bradimore and Bauder, 2011). Following 9/11,
this became more apparent as national security, border securitization and prevention of
terrorism became a priority for countries such as Canada and the United States (Molnar,
2016). This type of framing is associated with the securitization of immigration discourse,
which Milioni et al. (2015) explain as a “concern stemming from the motivation of
governments to control migration flows and comfort public opinion against the fear of
cultural erosion” (p. 2). It is also a response to the perceived threat to public order with
the arrival of increasing numbers of immigrants and refugees. Buonfino (2004) explains
that framing the arrival of immigrants and refugees as a security concern is not only
done by the government but also mass media, as the media tend to reproduce these
social fears (p. 35). As a result, refugees are often dehumanized and constructed by the
media as rapists, terrorists and security threats (Wallace, 2018; Esses, Medianu and
Lawson, 2013).

This treatment and social construction of refugees involve what scholar Said
(2003) describes as the Orientalist perspective. With the Orientalist perspective, the
refugees are seen as racialized individuals from the “Orient” who are different from the
people of the “West”. The theory of Orientalism posits that there is a binary opposition
between the West and the Orient, the West is then seen as superior, while the Orient is
seen as inferior and backwards (Said, 2003, p. 7). As a result of this binary opposition,
the refugees are socially constructed as “the Other”. According to Olsen et al. (2016),
Othering serves to mark and name those thought to be different from oneself” (p. 60). As
a process, it tends to identify and set apart certain groups from the mainstream community, which further marginalizes them. It is important to note that Othering is not an explicit process, rather it is embedded in values, social beliefs and discourses surrounding the image of a “refugee” (Olsen et al., 2016, p. 60). As such, Olsen et al. (2016) argue that refugee policies, as well as migrant classification systems in developed countries reflect this “us vs. them” divide, further reproducing the discourse of the refugee as “the Other” (p. 60).

The production of the discourse of the refugee as “the Other” is closely tied to the Gramscian concept of hegemony. Hegemony refers to “the ability in certain historical conditions of the dominant social classes to exercise social and cultural leadership, and by these means – rather than by direct coercion of subordinate classes – to maintain their power over the economic, political, and cultural direction of a nation” (Hartley, 2011, p. 127). According to Buonfino (2004) a “the prevailing ideology or political force that is hegemonic at one time will produce a hegemonic political discourse through which it will construct and reproduce power relations aimed at the preservation of its hegemony within society” (p. 25). Thus, hegemony tends to naturalize ideologies of the dominant class by framing them as “common sense”. Their power is then exercised through authority which is reflected economically, politically and culturally (Hartley, 2011, p. 127). This type of framing is associated with the securitization of immigration discourse, as Buonfino (2004) explains that the interaction of the media, government and public opinion help to form the hegemonic discourse of immigrants and refugees as a security threat. As a result, the “us vs. them” divide between refugees and citizens is strengthened, and the power relations in society is sustained.

1.3. Responses to the Syrian Refugee Crisis

In this thesis, I argue that Syrian refugees are also discursively constructed as “the Other” in mainstream Canadian news media, as demonstrated by several studies conducted by scholars (Wallace 2018; Tyyskä, Blower, DeBoer, Kawai and Walcott, 2017; Molnar, 2016). However, I also argue that this representation and the discourse on refugees are also ever changing, and the media has the power to change it. As Molnar (2016) argues:
“State responses to the Syrian conflict have shifted from suspicion to sympathy and then back again, highlighting the fragility of policy direction which is shaped by powerful discourses about nation building, securitization, and the ever-present threat of the Other – the unmitigated and uncontrollable influxes of migrants (p. 69).”

For example, a shift in discourses occurred on September 2015, after a photograph of the dead body of three-year-old Syrian, Alan Kurdi, washed up on a Turkish beach, was released in the media. Alan Kurdi had drowned with his brother and mother as they tried to reach the Greek island of Kos from Turkey (Jones et al., 2017). Jones et al. (2017) explain that this image affected the public deeply for Alan Kurdi “looked so much like a typically middle-class Western boy” that it could have been anyone’s child (p. 7). As such, this single image elicited overwhelming public sympathy and political concern all over the world (Jones et al., 2017).

In Europe, the public began supporting the plight of these refugees by donating, signing petitions, joining protests, visiting refugee camps and offering to sponsor refugees. In the United Kingdom (UK), the government announced that it would accept 20,000 refugees (Jones et al., 2017, p. 7). In Australia, former Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott announced that 12,000 Syrian refugees would be resettled in Australia. This was in response to the public outcry and protests following the release of Kurdi’s photo and story in the media, which put pressure on the Australian government to act on the issue of refugee resettlement (Lenette and Cleland, 2016).

In Canada, the Kurdi family’s tragic story came at a time when the federal election was about to take place in October 2015. Canadians pleaded with the party leaders to accept these Syrian refugees, especially since it was reported in the media that the Kurdi family’s asylum application was allegedly rejected (Jones et al., 2017). Moreover, Alan Kurdi’s aunt, Tima Kurdi, also lived in Port Coquitlam, British Columbia, and was interviewed several times in newspapers about her family shortly after the tragedy. As a result, the issue of Syrian refugee resettlement became at the forefront of the federal election campaigns. Party leaders such as Liberal leader Justin Trudeau shifted their campaign’s focus to presenting Syrian refugee resettlement plans. According to Gilmour (2018), Justin Trudeau himself became part of the narrative of Syrian refugees with this shift in campaign focus and it was central to the Liberal party’s victory in the elections (p. 233). In early November 2015, the Liberal government came into power and Trudeau, the new Prime Minister, pledged to accept 25,000 Syrian

Following the release of Alan Kurdi’s story and a change from Conservative to Liberal leadership, the Liberal government positioned themselves as more generous and welcoming to refugees. According to Molnar (2016), in addition to its election promise of resettling 25,000 Syrian refugees, the Liberal government made a number of positive policy changes, including providing universal healthcare to incoming refugees. This was done to counter the former Conservative government’s “exclusionary and unwelcoming” refugee policies, such as the denial of healthcare to refugees and asylum seekers, and the detention of refugees arriving by boats (Quan, 2017; Molnar, 2016). According to Molnar (2016), the Liberal government “positioned the Canadian response to the Syrian conflict as a hallmark of Canadian hospitality, the perfect issue to reintroduce traditional Canadian diplomacy on the world stage, after years of conservative policies that distanced Canada from its human rights defending image” (p. 71). However, despite the number of positive policy changes done by the Liberal government, this thesis recognizes that the discourse about Syrian refugees during this period is not positive throughout. According to McKay-Panos (2011) the Canadian response to the issue are still “largely influenced by real or perceived public sentiments” towards refugees and asylum seekers (p. 35). For instance, a series of shootings and explosions occurred across Paris in mid-November 2015. Dubbed the “Paris terrorist attacks”, this devastating event killed more than 120 civilians and injured more than 200 (Phipps and Rawlinson, 2015). Eight attackers were killed, and one attacker allegedly carried a Syrian refugee passport (Kingsley, 2015). This news report increased the fears of ISIS terrorists infiltrating the thousands of Syrian refugees arriving in Europe at the time. In response to this, the Liberal government made a number of statements saying it will be prioritizing Syrian refugee women and families over single men, with the assumption the men would more likely fit the stereotype of a terrorist (Molnar, 2016, p. 71). Thus, as Molnar (2016) argues, the discourse surrounding continues to shift from suspicion to

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2 The Government of Canada has resettled 21,876 government-assisted refugee, 3,931 blended visa office-referred refugee and 14, 274 privately sponsored refugees as of January 29, 2017.
sympathy and back again, throughout the development of the Syrian refugee resettlement.

1.4. Canada’s Refugee Program

According to UNHCR (2018), while Turkey (17,200 refugees), Lebanon (13,800 refugees) and Jordan (8,500 refugees) were still the top three countries with the highest number of resettled refugees, Canada is also recognized as one of the countries that admitted large numbers of refugee for resettlement (26,600 refugees) by the end of 2017. This was followed by Australia (15,100 refugees), the United Kingdom (6,200), and Sweden (3,400). In addition to this, Canada had 47,800 registered asylum claims that year, making it the ninth-largest recipient of asylum claims in 2017. This number was more than double of 2016’s 23,600 asylum claims (UNHCR, 2018).

In Canada, the refugee protection program has two parts, namely the Refugee and Humanitarian Resettlement Program and the In-Canada Asylum Program. The Refugee and Humanitarian Resettlement Program is for people applying for refugee protection claims from outside Canada while the In-Canada Asylum Program is for refugees applying from inside Canada (Government of Canada Website, 2017). The UNHCR, along with the Canadian federal government, identifies eligible refugees for resettlement before the said refugee applies for protection claims (Government of Canada Website, 2017). These refugees are considered as part of the Government-Assisted Refugees (henceforth GAR) Program. In addition to this, private sponsors in Canada can also apply to resettle refugees by signing sponsorship agreements with the Government of Canada. Lastly, the Blended Visa Office-Referred (BVOR) Program matches refugees identified by the UNHCR with private sponsors in Canada (Government of Canada Website, 2017).

According to the Immigrant Services Society of British Columbia (ISS of BC), Canada’s Syrian refugee resettlement is considered the largest resettlement effort in the history of the country. The previous record was set in 1975-1980, with Canada helping to resettle 40,271 Indochinese (Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos) refugees (UNHCR, 2017). The two main Syrian refugee resettlement initiatives occurred in November 2015 to February 2016 called “Operation Syrian Refugee” and in September 2016 to December 2016 in which a smaller number of refugees were resettled. With these two initiatives,
over 40,000 Syrian refugees were resettled in Canada from November 2015 to December 2016 (ISS of BC, 2017). According to the UNCHR (2017), this is the largest number of refugees admitted in a year for the country.

According to Good (2009), Canadian municipalities are increasingly taking on more responsibilities to resettle not just immigrants but also refugees. In the province of British Columbia (BC), more than 3,600 Syrians who were GARs were resettled in 69 communities. These communities include cities in BC such as Victoria, Abbotsford, Nanaimo, Prince George, Kelowna, Vernon, Kamloops and Penticton. However, more than half of these refugees are currently residing in Vancouver and the Lower Mainland. ISS of BC is the only agency that provides Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP) for the GAR refugees resettled in BC which means that all these refugees are initially brought to Vancouver before being resettled in other communities (ISS of BC, 2017).

From November 5, 2015 to December 31, 2016, there were a total of 1,824 GAR refugees resettled across Vancouver and the Lower Mainland. This number excludes Syrian refugees that were resettled by private sponsors. According to data provided by Immigration Refugee Citizenship Canada (IRCC), BC resettled more than 3,200 Syrian refugees through the Government Assisted Refugee (GAR) Program, the Blended Visa Office-Refereed (BVOR) Program and private sponsorship (ISS of BC, 2017).

In Vancouver and the Lower Mainland, the City of Surrey has the most number of resettled GARs with 1,082 refugees. This is due to the availability of larger and more affordable housing options in the city (ISS of BC, 2017). Syrian refugee families have mostly resettled in 3 neighbourhoods in Surrey, namely Whalley, Newton and Guildford. This is due to the families’ request to live in a neighbourhood with people of similar ethnic backgrounds and languages during their initial resettlement. There are also a number of refugee families resettled in the City Centre and Fleetwood neighbourhoods (ISS of BC, 2017). On the other hand, 191 refugees have decided to settle in the City of Vancouver. These refugee families were able to secure housing in the areas of Strathcona, Renfrew-Collingwood and Killarney (ISS of BC, 2017). Additionally, a total of

1 According to ISS of BC (2017), the refugees resettled in the province are from the southern city of Deraa and the surrounding areas in Syria. Before their resettlement in BC, most of these refugees have spent 3-5 years in cities or refugee camps in Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon. Moreover, these Syrian refugees have larger and younger families compared to the average Canadian family. Syrian refugee families are usually comprised of six family members, many of whom are young children.
197 refugees were resettled in Burnaby and New Westminster. Syrian refugee families have mostly resettled in the neighbourhoods of Burnaby North, Edmonds and Cariboo. In New Westminster, the refugees resettled in Kelvin (Moody Park), West End and Glenbrooke, where low income apartment buildings are located (ISS of BC, 2017). In the Cities of Coquitlam and Port Coquitlam, approximately 132 Syrian refugees were resettled. Many of these refugee families have resettled in the neighbourhoods of Burquitlam, Eagle Ridge, Mary Hill and Citadel. Former refugees including Syrains have also secured low income rental units in the neighbourhood of Cottonwood Drive (ISS of BC, 2017). On the other hand, approximately 105 Syrians were resettled in the City and Township of Langley. It is interesting to note that Langley also houses a significant number of former Myanmar refugees that were resettled. Syrian families are most settled in the City of Langley, as well as Aldergrove in Langley Township (ISS of BC, 2017).

Another 105 Syrian refugees were resettled in the Corporation of Delta, where most secured housing in the neighbourhoods of North Delta and Ladner (ISS of BC, 2017). On the other hand, a total of 179 refugees were resettled in Abbotsford and 44 refugees in Chilliwack, two municipalities in the neighbouring Fraser Valley Regional District (Fraser Valley Refugee Response Team, 2017). Based on this data, most Syrian refugees were not actually resettled in the City of Vancouver but rather the surrounding communities in the Lower Mainland such as Surrey, Langley, Delta and Coquitlam. This is in part due to the lower costs of living in these cities as compared to Vancouver. Good (2009) explains this as a recent trend in Canada, whereby newcomers are starting to settle outside the metropolitan cities like Vancouver, Toronto and Montreal.

1.5. Metro Vancouver as a Case Study

Metro Vancouver, formerly known as Greater Vancouver Regional District, is one of the regional districts in British Columbia, Canada. According to Metro Vancouver (2018), the regional district is made up of 21 municipalities, including the cities of Vancouver, North Vancouver, West Vancouver, Burnaby, Richmond, Surrey, Coquitlam and Langley, among many others. According to the 2016 Population Census of Statistics Canada, the regional district had a total population of 2,426,235 at the end of 2016. Out of the 2.4 million people living in the regional district, 1,185,680 of them are visible
According to Good (2009), Canada is considered a leader in adopting multiculturalism in its federal policies. The policy was first introduced in 1971, with the purpose of acknowledging the contributions of all Canadians of different ethnic backgrounds to the nation, as well as promoting a sense of belonging regardless of their different cultural practices (Hiebert, 2016). Good (2009) further explains that during the time of Prime Minister Lester Pearson (1963-1968), the historical “Charter groups”, which were composed of English and French, reacted negatively to the policy of biculturalism, which was part of the mandate of the Commission of Bilingualism and Biculturalism. It was during Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau’s first term (1968-1979 and 1980-1984) that the concept of biculturalism was replaced with multiculturalism, with the commission adding another chapter on the “cultural contributions of other ethnic groups” in the mandate (Good, 2009, p.6). Thus, the multicultural approach to diversity and its basis on ethnocultural relations and immigrant resettlement is said to have originated in Canadian policy. Hiebert (2016) also argues that while the policy has gone through several changes throughout the years, it is still “embedded in the national fabric” and is included in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Values (p. 10). It is also reflected in several programs such as “anti-racism programs, employment equity initiatives, and immigrant settlement policies” (Good, 2009, p. 7). To further support this initiative, the Canadian Multiculturalism Act was passed in 1988 in order to “preserve and enhance the multicultural heritage of Canadians” (Government of Canada, 2018).

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4 The 2016 Canadian Census uses the term as defined by the Employment Equity Act. The Employment Equity Act defines visible minorities as ‘persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour.’ Categories in the visible minority variable include South Asian, Chinese, Black, Filipino, Latin American, Arab, Southeast Asian, West Asian, Korean, Japanese, Visible minority, n.i.e. (‘n.i.e. means ‘not included elsewhere’) Multiple visible minorities and Not a visible minority (Statistics Canada, 2017).

5 The 2016 Census does not distinguish between European and North American French origins (Statistics Canada, 2016).

6 This group includes Métis, First Nations, Inuit, Native Americans, Alaska Natives (Statistics Canada, 2016).

7 This was in response to Quebec’s aspiration to considered a “national minority” in a pan-Canadian multicultural society (Good, 2009).

8 Canada’s multicultural approach to diversity served as an inspiration to countries like Australia and Sweden to include multiculturalism in their own policies (Good, 2009).
As such, Good (2009) argues that based on these policies, municipalities in Canada have a role in promoting multicultural citizenship. Good (2009) identified Metro Vancouver as one of the municipalities with a “unique immigration experience” (p. 143). Compared to major cities like Toronto and Montreal, Metro Vancouver’s largest immigrant population is Asian. The Asian immigrant population is mostly comprised of Chinese from Hongkong and the People’s Republic of China. In the year 2016 and 2017, a total of 31,541 people immigrated to Metro Vancouver from other countries, ranking third in international immigration growth in the major cities. Toronto and Montreal received the first and second place with 113,074 and 52,158 immigrants, respectively (Statistics Canada, 2018). According to Good (2009), Metro Vancouver, as a district, is considered responsive to multiculturalism and immigrant resettlement. In 2001, 73% of immigrants lived in four of the biggest municipalities in the district, namely Vancouver, Surrey, Burnaby and Richmond. In recent years, however, immigrants increasingly relocated from the “regional core to suburban municipalities such as Coquitlam, Port Moody, North and South Langley, and the North Shore” (Good, 2009, p. 143). According to Saltman (2018), while immigration drove Metro Vancouver’s population growth in 2018, it lost 9,926 people due to migration outside and elsewhere in the province in 2015 to 2016. About 4,617 people migrated to the neighbouring Fraser Valley Regional District. Others migrated to the Capital region of Victoria and other parts of BC such as Nanaimo, the central Okanagan and Squamish-Lillooet.

As mentioned in the previous section, this thesis investigates the news media coverage of the Syrian refugee resettlement in B.C. municipalities. The previous section outlined the municipalities where GARs and privately sponsored refugees were resettled after initially arriving in Vancouver. All municipalities are members of the Metro Vancouver Regional District with the exception of Abbotsford and Chilliwack, which are part of the Fraser Valley Regional District. According to Statistics Canada (2016), the City of Vancouver has the highest population in the regional district with 631,468 residents. 319,010 are members of the visible minority, which is 26.91% of Metro Vancouver’s visible minority population. Surrey has the second highest population in the regional district with 517,887 residents. More than half of those residents are members of visible minorities (299,245), which comprises about 25.24% of the regional district’s visible minority population. Langley City and the District of Langley have a combined population of 143,173. They have a combined visible minority population of 25,105,
making up about 2.12% of the total visible minority population. White Rock, on the other hand, has a total population of 19,952 and a visible minority of 3,315. The visible minority of White Rock makes up 0.26% of Metro Vancouver’s visible minority (Statistics Canada, 2016). In the Fraser Valley Regional District, the city of Abbotsford has the highest population with 141,397 residents, followed by Chilliwack with 83,788 residents. In Abbotsford, 46,635 (35,310 are South Asian) of the 141,397 residents are members of visible minorities. This makes up about 33.7% of the total population of Abbotsford. In Chilliwack, about 5,815 of the 83,788 residents are members of visible minorities, which makes up about 7.1% of the total population of Chilliwack (Statistics Canada, 2016).

Based on the census data, it is evident that both the city of Vancouver and Surrey have the highest number of visible minorities, representing more than half of the cities’ populations. Abbotsford and Langley, on the other hand, also have a considerable visible minority population among the high European Canadian population. Both cities have a European Canadian population of 85,325 and 89,920, respectively (Statistics Canada, 2016). Lastly, Chilliwack and White Rock have the lowest population of visible minorities from the chosen municipalities. The majority of their population is comprised of European Canadians, with Chilliwack having 66,685 and White Rock 15,985. The Aboriginal community in these municipalities also comprised less than 10% of the municipality’s total population, with the numbers ranging from 600-7000 Aboriginal residents (Statistics Canada, 2016).

### 1.6. Research Objectives

In terms of my own research as a graduate student, seeing Kurdi’s tragic story and heartbreaking photo throughout the news media became the driving force for this thesis. I was personally affected by the image and I would argue that the public during that time felt the same. Lenette and Cleland (2016) note that it is the most “poignant and powerful image to emerge in the media at the peak of the Syrian refugee crisis in 2015” (p. 76). According to Molnar (2016), the release of this photo in the media was “emotionally-charged” and became a vehicle for progressive change, as was the case in Australia, the UK and Canada (p. 73). I argue that while there are ethical considerations raised with the release of the photo with its very sensitive nature, it was still a very powerful image that humanized the depictions of Syrian refugees.
However, Tyyskä et al., (2017) note that while the iconic photo and the type of reporting used brought attention to the Syrian refugee crisis, the tragic images “sidelined” many other refugee stories in the media (p. 8). For instance, the media’s focus on Kurdi’s story meant that news outlets did not focus on covering other events such as the Rohingya refugee crisis. In addition to this, Wallace (2018) and Steimel (2010) point out that while reporting human interest stories like Kurdi’s story help “personalize refugees’ narratives of struggle and attempt to mitigate perceptions of threat and danger”, there is still a danger of representing them as “poor victims that are unable to achieve their social and economic goals” (Wallace, 2018, p. 5). With this representation, refugees tend to be framed as “victims” with no personal histories, whose existence began with the conflict and the war (Lubkemann, 2010). Cooper, Olejniczak, Lenette and Smedley (2017) also note that this representation also takes away the agency that refugees have in framing their own depictions in their own stories (p. 83). This representation is problematic as this fails to recognize the refugees’ pre-conflict histories, cultural practices and identities. It also fails to recognize the diversity of each refugee’s experiences.

As such, I argue that the news media has a crucial role and responsibility in selecting and reproducing stories and depictions of refugees to be consumed by the public. This was an important insight that I encountered while conducting research for this paper. According to Fairclough (1995), the media have a language that has signifying power, meaning it has the “power to represent things in particular ways” (p. 2). This power can be used to influence people’s knowledge, beliefs, values, social relations and social identities (Fairclough, 1995, p. 2). In addition to this, Hall (1982) also argues the media have the power to give events meaning by choosing which reality of the world will be presented to the public. With this in mind, the media representation of Syrian refugees can also potentially affect how these refugees will be viewed in their host countries and their respective host communities.

According to Georgiou and Zaborowski (2017), fair and ethical news reporting on immigration and refugee issues remains problematic. Moreover, studies done on media representations of refugees have repeatedly discuss the importance of being sensitive to the rights and identities of this vulnerable population (Georgiou and Zaborowski (2017). In addition to this, most academic literature has also discussed the continued use of stereotyping of these individuals in the media which in turn may result in discriminatory
attitudes and behaviors towards them (Georgiou and Zaborowski, 2017). Wallace (2018) argues that “while the Syrian refugee crisis remains an ongoing and evolving case for analysis, some early research on the crisis indicates a pressing need to address media framing in order to understand public attitudes toward the Syrian people” (p. 6). Moreover, Georgiou and Zaborowski (2017) emphasize that there is a need to analyze the media coverage of the Syrian refugee crisis for the following reasons. First, analyzing the media coverage is critical to understanding the “narratives of the crisis”. Secondly, it will also give insight to the current “geographical trends” of forced migration. Lastly, it will give insight to the “challenges to policy making, especially in relation to hate speech and freedom of expression” (Georgiou and Zaborowski, 2017, p. 4).

Through my research journey, I became interested in analyzing the Canadian newspaper coverage of the Syrian refugee resettlement in the country. As my interest in refugee studies began in 2015 with the publication of Alan Kurdi’s photo, I have consistently thought of how Syrian refugees could safely and successfully resettle in host countries such as Canada. According to Lenette and Cleland (2016), the image of Alan Kurdi sent a message that “all Syrian refugees were asking for was safe passage and compassion once they arrived in a country of asylum, and that there was a worldwide responsibility to protect people and act urgently” (p. 79). It was the message that stuck with me as a researcher and thus, my interest evolved into analyzing the media in relation to the resettlement and local integration of Syrian refugees.

I have chosen to conduct research on newspapers for I recognize that newspapers are still a trusted source of information for many people, regardless of the platform they use to access it. As Georgiou and Zaborowski (2017) note, people relied heavily on the news media to make sense of what was happening in the Syrian refugee crisis. According to News Media Canada (2016), almost 8 in 10 Canadians in major markets read a daily newspaper each week, either in print or online format. 56% of these

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9 Choosing to conduct research on newspapers meant that textual analysis will be employed as a method. According to Fürsich (2009), “textual analysis is generally a type of qualitative analysis that, beyond the manifest content of media, focuses on the underlying ideological and cultural assumptions of the text” (p. 240). Textual analysis is still the preferred method by cultural media researchers who are studying media content, for it can “overcome the common limitations of traditional quantitative content analysis such as limitation to manifest content and to quantifiable categories” (pp. 240-241). Thus, the decision to use a mixed method of content and textual analyses (discourse analysis) to study the discourses on refugee resettlement ensured that the media text chosen can be understood in its broader sense.
Canadian readers access their news using their digital devices, mostly their mobile phones (News Media Canada, 2016). Thus, this thesis recognizes the importance of exploring the news media discourses present in these Canadian newspapers about the Syrian refugee resettlement and integration. The messages that the newspapers disseminate about Syrian refugees are crucial as most Canadians can easily access this information through print or online.

This thesis also recognized the research potential of exploring local news media discourses as opposed to looking at national news media discourses. While my literature search informed me about the different news media discourses about Syrian refugees on the national level, it did not inform me about local perspectives on Syrian refugees arriving and resettling in different township and cities in Canada. As an immigrant who recently immigrated to Metro Vancouver myself, I understand that one of the key aspects to successfully resettling in a new country is to be part of a community that is open and welcoming to newcomers. As discussed in the previous section, Metro Vancouver, as a district, is considered responsive to multiculturalism and immigration resettlement (Good, 2009). Thus, as a multicultural and ethnically diverse district, it would be interesting to look at how the local media represent the Syrian refugees arriving and resettling in the district. While I originally chose to sample Metro Vancouver newspapers based solely on their readership and circulation numbers, it became apparent that to get a more local perspective on Syrian refugees, I had to choose newspapers published in areas where they were being resettled. Moreover, I was interested in the extent to which the mainstream newspapers were welcoming to refugees and how they contributed to the resettlement process. Thus, through an exploration of data about the resettlement patterns of Syrian refugees in BC, I was able to pinpoint the communities where the refugees were resettled and identify the corresponding local publications. According to a study by News Media Canada (2017b), community newspapers are still the preferred source of local news and information of small and big communities in Canada. The study revealed that locals regularly read both print and digital platforms of these newspapers to access local information about their communities (News Media Canada, 2017b).

The main objective of this thesis is to then identify the news media discourses about the Syrian refugee resettlement present in major Vancouver newspapers and local community newspapers in Metro Vancouver and Fraser Valley. As outlined in the previous section, Syrian refugees have also resettled not only in the City of Vancouver
but also in the neighbouring municipalities. As such, it would be interesting to look at local newspapers and their discourses about the Syrian refugees that resettled in their respective communities. This thesis also focuses on newspaper articles published from September 2015 to October 2017. The chosen two-year period marks the publication of Alan Kurdi’s photo and the shift to Liberal leadership, which made some positive changes to the Canadian refugee policy and had a positive effect on the media discourse on Syrian refugees (Molnar, 2016). It also marks the resettlement of more than 40,000 Syrian refugees in the country (Gilmour, 2018). Thus, this thesis will be looking at the news media coverage of the Syrian refugee resettlement in relation to these significant events.

This thesis aims to answer the following research questions:

1. How are Syrian refugees and their resettlement depicted in Metro Vancouver metropolitan newspapers and local community newspapers?

2. How are these local news media discourses different from the news media discourses found by other scholars studying the media coverage of Syrian refugees?

3. What role do these newspapers play in the resettlement and local integration of Syrian refugees in their respective communities?

I hypothesize that the shift in news media discourse and the positive changes made by the Liberal government in 2015 do not necessarily translate to a positive news media discourse on Syrian refugees throughout this two-year period. As Molnar (2016) notes, the discourses surrounding Syrian refugees are ever-changing. Thus, this thesis recognizes the importance of not only identifying the news media discourses present in these newspaper articles during this period, but also understanding the changing refugee discourses in relation to the changing social and political environment in Canada.

Moreover, Dimitrova, Ozdora-Aksak and Connolly-Ahern (2018) point out that refugee representation in the media has become an important area of research, for narratives spread by the media have the power to influence discourse, public opinion and policies on refugees and immigration. While there has been a significant amount of research done on the media coverage of the Syrian refugee crisis, there is little research done on the media coverage of Syrian refugees’ resettlement and integration in host
countries. More importantly, apart from Cooper et al.’s (2017) study in Australia, research on community newspapers is lacking as other studies are geared towards analyzing national newspapers. As such, this research aims not only to contribute to the growing number of academic literature on Syrian refugee representations in the news media, but it also aims to inform future research on community newspapers. In addition, this research also advances Cooper et al.’s (2017) study on Australian community newspapers as this study covered Canadian community newspapers. It also advances previous studies done on the Canadian news media coverage of the Syrian refugee crisis and resettlement. While scholars in Canada such as Wallace (2018) and Tyyskä et al. (2017) have conducted research on newspapers and news segments about Syrian refugees from 2012-2016, this study covered newspapers published until 2017. Moreover, the study employed a mixed-methods approach of content and critical discourse analyses, while both studies employed either content analysis or discourse analysis. Lastly, this thesis also represents one of the first studies to focus primarily on Canadian local community newspapers and the Syrian refugee resettlement in smaller communities.

1.7. An Overview of the Chapters

Chapter two explores in brief the context in which the discussion on the media coverage of Syrian refugees takes place. This chapter also provides information on international and Canadian refugee policies. It also explores the power of media discourse, as well as the discourses surrounding immigrants and refugees in Europe, Australia and North America. Lastly, this chapter reviews previous research done on the media representation of Syrian refugees in European, Australian and Canadian news media.

Chapter three discusses the theoretical framework and research design employed by the study. Following discourse scholars such as Van Dijk (2000) and Fairclough (1991), this thesis examines how discourse on Syrian refugees is reproduced using media frames and news values. It follows the Gramscian concept of hegemony, as it also explores the idea of how powerful groups control these news media discourses (Gramsci, 1971). In media studies, media framing has become a popular approach to studying media coverage. It has been used extensively to study media coverage of international news events (Dimitrova et al., 2018). Entman (1993) then explains that
media framing serves to highlight a particular idea in order to promote a certain way of understanding or interpreting the issue discussed in the media text. For the purpose of this research, the terms frame and theme are used interchangeably. The text examined in this study are the newspaper articles.

In addition to looking at media frames in news articles, this paper also uses news values in examining the news articles. In the field of journalism studies, news values are defined as “professional codes used in the selection, construction and presentation of news” (p. Hartley, 2011, p. 189). Simply put, new values are values that determine which stories are newsworthy (Bednarek and Caple, 2017). The news articles are also examined to see what kinds of discourses about Syrian refugees are produced by identifying the news values present in the newspaper articles. Both media frames and news values will be analyzed through the lens of Said’s (2003) theory of Orientalism. Using Metro Vancouver and Fraser Valley as a case study, this paper examined the representation and framing of the Syrian refugee resettlement in these two districts from September 1, 2015 to October 31, 2017. The study identified two groups of newspapers, the local major newspapers and the local community newspapers. The local major newspapers group consisted of metropolitan newspapers such as Vancouver Sun and The Province. The local community newspapers group consisted of four newspapers which are published in cities where the most number of refugees are resettled. These are The Langley Times, Peace Arch News, The Chilliwack Progress and The Abbotsford News. Factiva, an online database, was used to gather news articles from all six newspapers using certain search parameters. After data collection, the study employed a combination of content and discourse analysis. Using the qualitative data analysis software Nvivo 12, the news articles were then analyzed and sorted into themes before conducting a more in-depth discourse analysis.

Chapter four discusses the comparative analysis done on the newspapers. Utilizing the study’s preliminary content analysis and the results found through discourse analysis, several research findings were formulated. There were also two key findings gathered from the discourse analysis. First, similar to the studies done by other Canadian scholars on national and major dailies (Wallace 2018; Tyyskä et al., 2017), the discourse of Syrian refugees being a “threat” or the “Other” is still present in the major Vancouver newspapers, with Syrians not being able to use their voice and represent themselves in their own stories. The second key finding, however, is different from the
findings of other studies. Based on the analysis, the smaller, local community newspapers are more inclusive of Syrian refugee voices compared to major newspapers, with better opportunities for representation. Moreover, the news media discourse of community newspapers is geared towards helping the Syrian refugees successfully resettle and integrate in these communities. Most of the local news stories discuss successful local advocacies and announce fundraisers or community events to help resettle newly arrived refugees. The newspapers also shared news stories of Syrian refugees and their efforts to integrate into the local community through joining meetings, attending events, undergoing trainings and gaining employment. Using these examples, I argue that these newspapers have a positive impact in the resettlement and integration of the newly arrived Syrian refugees in these communities.

The UNHCR states that, while its primary purpose is to protect the rights and well-being of refugees, its ultimate objective is, “to help find durable solutions that will allow [refugees] to rebuild their lives in dignity and peace” (UNHCR, 2018). One viable solution that the UNHCR recognizes is local integration. According to UNHCR (2018), this involves “finding a permanent home in the country of asylum and integrating into the local community” (p. 30) Thus, I argue that these community newspapers, even though their representations are far from perfect, do address some aspects of the Syrian refugee resettlement by disseminating positive news media discourse about refugee resettlement and local integration. While there is still the danger of local community news stories promoting a single “refugee story” of conflict, war and “poor victims” (Wallace, 2018; Cooper et al., 2017; Lubkemann, 2010), this thesis still recognizes the efforts of the local community newspapers to frame resettlement efforts as community building events that promote a sense of belonging for not just the Syrian refugees but also for all the members of the community.

Today, more than ever, it is imperative that the public become aware of the power of mass media in influencing discourse, public opinion and even policies surrounding refugees and immigration. As Cottle (2000) explains, “it is in and through representations, for example, that members of the media audience are variously invited to construct a sense of who “we” are in relation to who “we” are not” (p. 2). Thus, this study aims to promote awareness of how Syrian refugees are constructed in the media so the public can be cognizant of the certain biases present and become more critical consumers of news media.
Chapter 2.

Refugee Discourses

This chapter provides information on international and Canadian refugee policies, as well as the current Syrian refugee resettlement initiatives in the country. It also reviews a body of literature on the current discourse surrounding immigrants and refugees in Europe, Australia and North America. Lastly, it explores previous research conducted on the media representation of Syrian refugees in European, Australian and North American news media. This thesis recognizes the importance of providing the social, historical and political context in which the discussion on the media representation of Syrian refugees takes place, as it is crucial to understanding the Canadian news media discourses surrounding the Syrian refugee resettlement in the country.

2.1. Immigrants, Refugees and Asylum-Seekers

It is important to first define the terms, “immigrant”, “refugee” and “asylum-seeker”, as the three are currently being used interchangeably in the media despite their different meanings. In broad terms, immigration means moving from one place to another. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) defines it as “a process by which non-nationals move into a country for the purpose of settlement” (IOM, 2015, p.198). Reasons of non-nationals for immigrating may include seeking better economic opportunities, greater freedom, and a higher quality of life (Liu et al., 2014). Immigrants also choose to move for personal reasons such as education and family reunion, and face no impediment to return to their home countries. If these immigrants return home, then they will be recognized and protected by their government. They also retain their citizenship status. As of 2017, there are an estimated 244 million international immigrants in the world, which comprises about 3.3% of the world’s total population (IOM, 2018).

The other facet of migration is forced migration, in which the terms “refugee” and “asylum-seeker” fall under. By definition, forced migration is a “migratory movement in which there is an element of coercion, including threats to life and livelihood, whether
arising from natural or from man-made causes” (IOM, 2015, p.195). These natural or man-made causes may include war or civil unrest, persecution, economic hardship, famine and environmental and natural disasters. Refugees and asylum seekers are people fleeing armed conflict and persecution, with asylum seekers having already sought international protection and have lodged claims for asylum in a state or country (Edwards, 2016).

Refugees are internationally recognized and have access to assistance from different states, the UNHCR and other organizations. These individuals have status that grants them rights in particular countries, as their situation in their home country is too dangerous and they require sanctuary in other countries (Edwards, 2016). The UNHCR estimates that there are currently over 68.5 million persons forcibly displaced both domestically and internationally by the end of 2017 (UNHCR, 2018). According to Lenette and Cleland (2016), more than half of any refugee population is under the age of 18, with increasing numbers of children either seeking asylum as unaccompanied minors, or separated from their parents during the journey across multiple borders.

In 1951, 147 states ratified the UN Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol with other agreements such as the 1969 OAU Refugee Convention. These documents remain the basis of modern refugee protection and has influenced international, regional, and national policies on refugees (Edwards, 2016). The 1951 Refugee Convention defines who is a refugee and outlines their basic rights, as well as identify the states that have agreed to take in refugees. The document also emphasizes key terms in international refugee protection called the principle of non-refoulement. According Article 33 of the 1951 Refugee Convention (UNHCR):

“No Contracting State shall expel or return ("refouler") a refugee in any manner whatsoever to the frontiers of territories where his [or her] life or freedom would be threatened on account of his [or her] race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion.”

This protection against refoulement states that refugees recognized by the Refugee Convention should not be returned to perilous situations. In addition to this, the Refugee Convention also highlights the importance of procedures for assessing asylum claims, as well as the importance of making sure these refugees’ basic human rights are

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10 The 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees served to expand the original 1951 Refugee Convention by removing geographical limitations to include refugees outside Europe.
respected while allowing them to live in dignity and safety (Edwards, 2016). It is important to note, however, that the countries that signed the Refugee Convention are under no obligation to resettle refugees. However, as different countries have different policies and procedures on both immigration and refugee protection, the documents serve as a guide for the countries’ refugee policies and practices (Olsen et al., 2016).

While Canada helped draft the UN’s 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol, the country did not become a signatory until June 4, 1969 (Knight, 2016). According to Molloy and Madokoro (2017), the move to sign both the Convention and Protocol meant that the government had to consider its effect on the country’s current immigration policies. On July 27, 1970, a memorandum passed by Minister Allen MacEachen entitled, “Selection of Refugees for Resettlement in Canada”, was presented to the Cabinet. The memorandum pointed out that the 1967 immigration policy of the country tended to “favour persons of European origin” (Molloy and Madokoro, 2017, p. 55). As such, the purpose of the memorandum was to spearhead the creation of a new refugee policy with the intention of selecting “refugees who have good prospects of settlement in Canada without regard to geographic origin” (Molloy and Madokoro, 2017, p. 55). With the memorandum, the Cabinet made several changes to their policy. First, elements of the Refugee Convention and its Protocol was adopted into the policy, which removed the restrictions on non-European refugees. Second, the system will use a “point system” to assess refugees for resettlement but this system can be overridden by the authority depending on the situation of the refugee. Lastly, the Cabinet recognized the selection of people persecuted in their home countries but are not recognized by the Convention through the approval of the Oppressed Minority policy11 (Molloy and Madokoro, 2017).

This move marked the creation of Canada’s first formal refugee policy, which paved the way for the creation of The Immigration Act of 1976 (Molloy and Madokoro, 2017). According to Knight (2016), The Immigration Act of 1976, which was proclaimed in April 1978, “formalized the procedure for distinguishing refugees and immigrants” (p. 17). This Act served as the cornerstone of Canada’s modern refugee policy. In 1989, the Act was amended to create a new refugee determination system and an Immigration and Refugee Board (Canadian Council for Refugees, 2009). In June 28, 2002, the 1976 Act

11 The Oppressed Minority policy is Canada’s response to the refugees being persecuted in Uganda, Chile and Argentina in the 1970s (Molloy and Madokoro, 2017).
Immigration Act was replaced with the passing of *The Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* (IRPA). The IRPA is the most recent change in Canada’s refugee policies, which places emphasis on expanding the country’s refugee program (Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, 2015).

### 2.2. Canada’s Response to the Refugee Crisis

With all these immigration laws and refugee policies in place, Canada seems to position itself as a global leader in refugee protection and resettlement (Molnar, 2016). However, McKay-Panos (2011) argue that these laws and policies are “largely influenced by real or perceived public sentiments” towards refugees and asylum seekers (p. 35). Molnar (2016) explains that after 9/11, Canada’s focus shifted from aiding refugees and resettling them to national security in the form of reducing the number of accepted refugees, border securitization and prevention of terrorism. As such, Canadian refugee policies over the years have reflected a narrative of securing its borders and preventing “bogus” refugees or terrorists from entering the country. For instance, McKay-Panos (2011) points out that Canada is more accepting of refugees and asylum seekers who make claims overseas compared to refugees who arrive in Canada before making these claims. In October 2009, a boat containing 72 Tamil asylum seekers fleeing the civil war in Sri Lanka arrived off the coast of British Columbia. Several months later, in August 2010, a larger cargo ship containing about 490 Tamil refugees also arrived off the coast of Vancouver Island, British Columbia. Despite these refugees claiming refugee status, the Conservative government of former Prime Minister Stephen Harper reacted harshly. These refugees were detained and prosecuted as part of “a campaign to deter ‘irregular arrivals’” (Quan, 2017, p.1) According to the Immigration Refugee Board (IRB), only a total of 266 refugee claims were accepted by the country, while the rest of the claims were rejected and the other refugees deported (Quan, 2017).

Following this example, Molnar (2016) argues that Harper’s Conservative government reflected refugee policies that are “exclusionary and unwelcoming”, following the narratives of the “bogus” refugee (p. 70). In June 2012, Bill C-31, also known as the Protecting Canada’s Immigration System Act, was passed into Canadian law. The Conservative government argued that Bill C-31’s purpose is to fix Canada’s asylum system that is “broken” and “crippled” by an increasing number of new unfounded and even fraudulent claims (Molnar-Diop, 2014, p. 72).
Diop (2014), this Act upheld the narrative of the “bogus” refugee by dividing refugees into two groups—the “good” and the “bad” refugee. The “good” refugees are the refugees who make a claim while in refugee camps until they are accepted by Canada as Government-Assisted Refugees (GARs). The “bad” or “bogus” refugees are the ones considered to be “irregular arrivals”—refugees who arrive at Canada’s waters and borders to seek asylum. Molnar-Diop (2014) further explains that this Act results in “systematic exclusion” of other groups of asylum seekers, as well as groups that may include “genuine” refugees (p. 67).

In addition to this, other policies by the Conservative government also reflected this “exclusionary” stance, such as the denial of healthcare to refugees (Molnar, 2016). According to Sheridan and Shankardass (2015), a policy called The Order Respecting the Interim Federal Health was also passed into Canadian law on June 2012 by the Conservative government. This Order implemented budget cuts to the Interim Federal Health Program (IFHP), which provided temporary health coverage to refugees since 1957. The Order ended the health coverage for all refugees and asylum seekers with claims. It also aimed to “deter foreign nationals from filing what proponents perceived to be bogus asylum claims to obtain access to Canada’s health care system” (Sheridan and Shankardass, 2015, p. 905). Mitrea and Jackson (2015) explain that the Conservative government’s overarching argument for passing this policy was that refugees were an “illegitimate health expense”, emphasizing the need to use Canadian taxpayers’ money wisely and properly (p.6). In 2015, this “exclusionary” stance continued with Syrian refugees as the Conservative government outlined in a document that they were resettling mostly Christian Syrians, further excluding members of the larger population of Muslim Syrians (Gilmour, 2018). Lastly, the Conservative government was also not forthcoming on their actions and response to the Syrian conflict during this period. According to Molnar (2016), up until late 2015, before the shift to the Liberal government, journalists encountered difficulty accessing information about the Syrian conflict and the Syrian refugees that were resettled in Canada. Before the federal elections in late 2015, the Conservative government also presented a reduction in the budget for Canada’s refugee program for the remainder of 2015 to 2016, and 2016 to 2017. It planned to reduce the $35 million budget while maintaining the target of resettling 6,900-7,200 Government-Assisted Refugees and 4,500-6,500 Privately-Sponsored Refugees (PSRs) (Gilmour, 2018).
It was not until the Liberal government of current Prime Minister Justin Trudeau came into power in October 2015, that several positive refugee policy changes were made (Molnar, 2016). In contrast to the Conservative government’s $35 million budget plan, the Liberal party led by Trudeau presented a budget plan of $678 million over six years as a response to the Syrian refugee crisis. This number does not include the $100 million given to the UNHCR for refugee assistance (Gilmour, 2018). As discussed in the previous chapter, the Liberal government’s priority policy after the election was to accept 25,000 Syrian refugees through government sponsorship in November 2015 (Zilio, 2017). This target was eventually reached in February 2016 and as of 2018, over 40,081 Syrian refugees have reportedly been resettled all over Canada (Gilmour, 2018). In addition to the increase in spending for the refugee program, the Liberal government also reinstated healthcare access for all refugees and asylum seekers with claims (Molnar, 2016).

According to Gilmour (2018), these policy changes strongly reflected the multiculturalism policies of former Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau in the 1970’s discussed in the previous chapter. Molnar (2016) explains that these policy changes were done to globally position Canada as welcoming and humanitarian country, and to counter the harsh Conservative refugee policies and the unwelcoming image of the country. While these policy changes aim to impact the refugee program in a positive way, the Liberal government’s response to the humanitarian crisis is not without flaws. First, there is still the problem of extended processing times for refugees lodging asylum claims (Gilmour, 2018). Second, while the Liberal government has increased the spending budget of the refugee program under the Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC, formerly Citizenship and Immigration Canada), the budget seemed to have been used to hire experts rather than increasing the budget of the IRCC itself. For instance, a team of experts were hired to be part of the Syrian refugee resettlement program that were placed in federal departments such as The Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA), the Department of National Defence or Canadian Armed Forces, Global Affairs Canada (GAC), the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) and Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC) (Gilmour, 2018, p. 236).

Additionally, this thesis would argue that despite the number of positive changes done, the Liberal government’s response to the Syrian refugee crisis is by no means positive throughout. It is still influenced by “real and perceived public sentiments”, which
this thesis will discuss extensively throughout the succeeding chapters (McKay-Panos, 2011, p. 35). For instance, while the Liberal government has positioned Canada positively as a leader in Syrian refugee protection and resettlement, it has made a number of statements suggesting that it would prioritize refugee applications from women and families, with the exclusion of single men, after the Paris attacks in November 2015 (Molnar, 2016). This once again reflects an unwelcoming and exclusionary stance, following the narrative of the “bogus” refugee and the need for border securitization.

2.3. Western Discourse on Immigration

It is important to note that the narratives reflected in these immigration and refugee policies of the Conservative and Liberal governments are situated within Canadian history and did not only emerge during these federal administrations. Central to the discussion of these narratives and how they affect immigration and refugee policies of nations are the concepts of hegemony and discourse. Coined by the Italian philosopher Antonio Gramsci (1971) in the 1930’s, hegemony refers to “the ability in certain historical conditions of the dominant social classes to exercise social and cultural leadership, and by these means – rather than by direct coercion of subordinate classes – to maintain their power over the economic, political, and cultural direction of a nation” (Hartley, 2011, p. 127). Buonfino (2004) explains that at any given time, many discourses about a certain issue such as immigration will co-exist but only one discourse can be dominant or hegemonic. According to Buonfino (2004) a “the prevailing ideology or political force that is hegemonic at one time will produce a hegemonic political discourse through which it will construct and reproduce power relations aimed at the preservation of its hegemony within society” (p. 25). For instance, an analysis of the issue of immigration reveals that there are competing discourses about immigration vying for hegemony (Buonfino, 2004).

12 While Canada has welcomed a large number of refugees in the late twentieth century, some refugee groups were still affected by the exclusionary nature of some of the country’s immigration and refugee policies. For instance, Sikhs and Jewish refugees on ships were turned away in 1914 and 1939 respectively. There was also the internment of Japanese migrants during World War II (Molnar, 2016).
These competing discourses are reflected in the changes Western nations have been implementing in their immigration and refugee policies since the 1980s. By mid-1990’s these changes have reflected the focus on economy and security rationales (Huot et al., 2016). According to Milioni, Spyridou and Vadratsikas (2015) and Buonfino (2004), economization and securitization have been the two most dominant discourses on immigration, not just in North America but also in Europe. The discourse of economization focuses on nations’ needs for foreign skilled workers to fill in gaps in their economies. It has been used by businesses and government organizations to “rejuvenate national economies in stagnation” (Buonfino, 2004, p.37).

In Canada, immigration has been generally framed as an economic solution, an integral part of nation building and an “antidote to declining fertility” (Hiebert, 2016, p. 5). Historically, there were three major instances in Canada’s history wherein immigration was presented as an economic solution. In the early 20th century, a large number of immigrants were accepted to increase the population of the western regions and to support the booming industries in the cities in Ontario and Quebec. Following this, a large number of immigrants were again accepted amidst fears of labour shortage for mass producing industries after the Second World War. Lastly, in the 1980’s, the government once again accepted another round of immigrants, citing “economic and demographic considerations” (Hiebert, 2016, p. 5). Since then, Canada has been accepting around 250,000 permanent residents every year for the past 25 years.

However, this is not to say that Canada’s immigration policy has been completely open and welcoming. According to Hyndman (2009), while immigration has been determined by the government’s economic objectives, it has also been “historically selective and exclusionary” (p. 250-251). For instance, immigration policies in the early 20th century reflected an anti-Asian discourse, giving preference to white immigrants coming from Europe. In 1885, Canada and the United States began implementing a “head tax” on Chinese immigrants. By 1903, the annual “head tax” per Chinese immigrant reached $500, a significant sum during that time. In addition to this, Chinese women were also prohibited from immigrating to Canada, which ensured that Chinese male immigrants would not be settling and raising families in the country (Hyndman, 2009, p. 251). In 1907, Canada also limited Japanese immigrants to 400, and a similar agreement to prohibit Japanese women from immigrating was signed by both Canada and the U.S. (Hyndman, 2009).
With the discourse of economization, Hiebert (2016) then argues that “Canadians expect immigration to be coordinated with economic need and, as a result, they have typically supported immigration mainly when it is aligned with economic concerns” (Hiebert, 2016, p. 5). According to Hyndman (2009), economic immigrants are deemed as “having earned admission” to the country through their demonstration of “valued skills, investment capital and other desirable attributes” (p. 262). As a result, Hiebert (2016) explains that Canadians are thus less supportive of immigration for humanitarian concerns such as accepting refugees and asylum seekers, and more supportive of immigration for economization. As discussed in section 2.2, Canadian refugee policies during Harper’s Conservative government were deemed unwelcoming and followed the narrative of the “bogus” refugee. This reflects the less supportive stance for immigration for humanitarian reasons. On the contrary, the Harper government supported immigration for economization, as it followed a “market-driven policy-making” approach towards immigration. Its focus was to select highly skilled and highly educated immigrants who can immediately integrate into the workforce (Omidvar, 2016, p. 179).

However, according to Milioni et al. (2015), anti-immigration sentiments have increased in recent years, especially during the global financial crisis experienced by North America and Europe. Larsen et al. (2009) explain that immigrants have become targets by frustrated citizens amidst the financial and economic insecurity they are experiencing. With this and the contestation of politicians over the issue of immigration, securitization becomes the more dominant discourse over economization. According to Milioni et al. (2015), the discourse of securitization of immigration “conceptualizes immigration as a security concern stemming from the motivation of governments to control migration flows and comfort public opinion against the fear of cultural erosion” (p. 2). It is a response to the perceived threat to public order with the arrival of increasing numbers of immigrants and refugees. Moreover, Buonfino (2004) explains that framing immigration as a security concern that must be contained also quells the public’s fears of “economic competition and of threat to the cohesion of the community” (p. 39).

This “market-driven” approach to immigration affected other immigrants applying using other streams that are not centered on economization. For instance, there was a “law-and-order” approach implemented in the family reunification stream that penalized many, including immigrant women applying to be reunited with their spouses who are either Canadian citizens or permanent residents. In addition to this, the Harper government also implemented with some policy changes on citizenship which reflected security concerns on immigration, as the changes made Canadian citizenship “harder to get and easier to lose” (Omidvar, 2016, p.180).
Buonfino (2004) further explains that the production of the discourse where immigration is a security concern is a result of “the interplay between public opinion, mass media and national governments” (p. 48). Buonfino (2004) argues that the discursive production of immigration is a site of a constant social and political power struggle. She explains further by stating that the interplay of mass media, the government and the public contributes to the creation of policies based on the hegemonic discourse, which in turn sustains the existing power relations in the society. In the case of immigration, the discourse type securitization is the hegemonic discourse in European and other Western societies which is reflected in the current immigration policies (Buonfino, 2004).

2.4. Immigrants and Refugees in the Media

As discussed in the previous section, the media tend to contribute to the production of the discourse where immigration is a security concern (Buonfino, 2014). This is implemented by the media using several reporting techniques. For instance, Van Dijk (2000) explains that while reporting using numbers or statistics is a rhetorical device frequently used to suggest objectivity and credibility, reporting on immigration issues using numbers tend “to associate migration with problems and threats, if only by quantity” (p. 45). In Australia, for example, when the number of Asian immigrants have reached 160,000 in 1995, newspapers reported that these Vietnamese and other Asian migrants have “descended” on Australia in such unprecedented numbers, making Australians worry about how this will affect Australia’s socio-economic infrastructure (Teo, 2000, p. 9). Pauline Hanson, the founder and leader of the anti-immigration One Nation Party back then, even called for the government to put a stop to this “influx” of Vietnamese and other Asians to prevent Australia from being “swamped” by “waves” of Asians. The use of words such as descended, influx, swamps and waves not only constructed a negative representation of immigrants but also reflected racist and xenophobic sentiments (Teo, 2000, p. 9).

This negative sentiment is not restricted to Australia, as Khosravinik (2009) argues that there is also a remarkably high frequency of metaphors and references to large quantities in British newspaper reports about refugees. Jones et al. (2018) point out that in 2015, when a large number of Syrian refugees were making their journey to Europe, the then British Prime Minister David Cameron talked of “a swarm of people
coming across the Mediterranean, seeking a better life, wanting to come to Britain” (p. 6). In addition to this, the arrival of refugees is referred to as metaphors of large quantities such as bodies of water i.e. floods, influx or ‘exodus’. For instance, other newspapers such as Los Angeles Times referred to the refugees using the terms “flows”, “flood” and “waves” (Jones et al., 2018). According to Olsen et al. (2016), metaphors of water such as “drip” and “stream” is also used to describing movements of refugees, in which scholars argue that these metaphors of water and natural disasters serve to give the impression that refugees might swarm and suffocate the host country. As such, a “siege mentality therefore arises, where refugees must be identified and treated with suspicion so as to protect the residents of the host country” (Olsen et al., 2016, p. 63).

According to Buonfino (2014), the media perpetuate these beliefs as it sees immigration as a “real concern of the public” and as such, the issue must be addressed and reported in the news (Buonfino, 2004, p. 32). Thus, the media can increase “certain concerns within society” such as the problematizing of immigrants and refugees (Buonfino, 2014, p. 37). The media, along with public opinion, can create powerful discourses on immigrants and refugees which can influence the government’s response to the issue. For example, there are currently two powerful discourses about refugees and their arrival in host countries. The first discourse is the construction of refugees as illegal, as reflected in the narratives of the “bogus” refugee in Canadian refugee policies discussed section 2.2. Second, the refugees are also constructed as victims, which will be discussed in the succeeding sections of this chapter.

2.4.1. Refugees as Illegal

In Canada, questions about the legitimacy of refugee claims are among the greatest concerns of Canadians, as discussed in section 2.2 (McKay-Panos, 2011). Gilbert (2013) points out that the public often questions whether a refugee is “genuine” or “bogus”. According to Olsen et al. (2016), the “genuine” refugee is portrayed in the current Canadian refugee policy as a vulnerable and helpless individual who should be eternally grateful to the services provided by the host country. A refugee then is constructed as “bogus” when he or she begins to “exercise agency and demand equitable care” as this negates the image of refugees as vulnerable and helpless (p. 60). A “bogus refugee” is constructed as someone who is capable so he or she must not be a refugee. As such, a “genuine refugee” is constructed as someone who is grateful to
receive any healthcare or services, no matter how limited or inefficient. This instills the idea that “beggars can’t be choosers” and that refugees must always express gratitude to the host country (Olsen et al., 2016).

The global nature of this discourse is evident in Western countries. Studies done in Australia also indicate that refugees applying for asylum in the country are socially constructed as “illegal” and “non-genuine”. According to Laney, Lenette, Kellet, Smedley and Karan (2016), these representations have played an important role in creating an “Othering” of asylum-seekers and refugees in Australia. According to Lenette and Cleland (2016), since the resettlement of Bosnian refugees in the mid-1990s, the way refugees and asylum-seekers are framed in media stories tend to intersect with deep seated colonial and racist histories and stereotypes. Most studies done on media articles highlights that Australian print media has historically depicted asylum seekers and refugees negatively, framing them as diseased, primitive, criminal, cunning, threatening, dehumanized “Others”, and attempting to infiltrate and alter the Australian “way of life” (Lenette and Cleland, 2016, p. 71).

After 9/11, anti-refugee and asylum-seeker discourses in Australia have grown stronger over time. The construction of asylum-seekers as a threatening “Other” has led to rising public support for stricter immigration policies, as political rhetoric can effectively be used to inflame public perceptions that are already negative. Laney et al. (2016) argue that traditional Australian media have perpetuated representations of asylum-seekers as social deviants, along with the production of discourses on national integrity, disease, and otherness. As such, Laney et al. (2016) argue that the discourse surrounding the immigration policy in Australia is not based on principles of “social cohesion” and “integration”.

Gilbert (2013) also explains that refugee claimants are also often associated with the term “illegal aliens”. In the UK, a study conducted by Jones et al. (2017) explored public opinion following the incident wherein a van bearing the words “In the UK illegally? Go Home” drove around the city. Jones et al. (2017) point out the danger of associating immigrants with only those “who break the rules” which is problematic (p. 10). According to the researchers, this association can lead to the public to associate refugees and asylum-seekers as “rule breakers”, even though the Refugee Convention clearly states that “it cannot be illegal to seek asylum until the claim is accepted or
rejected” (Jones et al., 2017, p. 10) As such, stereotypical representations of people as illegals and criminals served as a “justification by ruling powers for imposing measures that effectively curtail the rights of these groups in entering or remaining within the nation” (Gilbert, 2013, p.830).

In addition to the questions of legitimacy and illegality, public opinion and media coverage of refugees often revolve around refugees being a security threat. (Lawlor and Tolley, 2017). In Canada, a study done by Bradimore and Bauder (2011) examined the news media coverage of the Tamil refugees that arrived off the coast of Victoria, British Columbia on October 2009. Results of the study revealed that the Tamil refugees were negatively represented in Canadian news media. The refugees were connected to issues of criminality and terrorism, and were socially constructed as risks. The newspapers focused on issues regarding security and “abuse” of Canadian generosity rather than the issue of basic human rights.

In the United States, a study by Hoewe (2018) concluded that newspapers in the United States tend to use the terms “immigrant” and “refugee” interchangeably. As such, the study explains that this tend to influence Americans to have negative perceptions of both groups. The study revealed that American news stories discussing conflict in countries such as Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan tend to associate the term “immigrant” with terrorists and terrorism. Hoewe (2018) then argues that this interchanging of terms represents both immigrants and refugees as security threats, and possibly, terrorists.

Furthermore, refugees are also represented as individuals who might abuse the country’s social services. As discussed in section 2.2 the Harper Conservative government has “constructed the refugee as an illegitimate health expense” by emphasizing the need to be “fair” to Canadian taxpayers (Mitrea and Jackson, 2015, p.6, Sheridan and Shankardass, 2015). Buonfino (2014) also points out that the media also create negative sentiments by reporting how a big portion of taxpayers’ money is often used to support arriving refugees, in the form of housing, education or medical support. Moreover, Gilbert (2013) also points out that numbers in reporting migration issues also focus on the cost or expense of refugee services. Canadian headlines and news articles reported on the cost of services by citing a specific figure along with the constant qualifier the words “and rising daily” to keep the readers’ interests.
2.4.2. Refugees as Victims

According to Olsen et al. (2016), the diversity of the experience of refugees is not recognized with the construction of the image of “the refugee” perpetuated by international refugee discourse. Aside from refugees being portrayed as economic, social and security threats, Olsen et al. (2016) argue that countries of the global North such as Canada and the United States have also constructed the refugee as the “vulnerable and helpless Other” (p. 65). Since the refugee is seen as a “vulnerable, helpless, and lacking in agency, with his or her home state no longer taking responsibility for his or her protection, he or she is deemed a vulnerable person”, needing protection from the host country (Olsen et al., 2016, p. 62). Olsen et al. (2016) argue that that the image of an “unempowered refugee who must fall at the mercy of the receiving country” serves a purpose. The image of refugees as “helpless Other” is a stark contrast to the image of citizens living in developed countries with “a high standard of living, acknowledged political agency, and permanent legal status (with all its accompanying rights)” (p. 62). With this difference in power, the refugees then serve as the “object of charity and humanitarian endeavours” for the host country (p. 62).

The image of the vulnerable and helpless refugee is also reflected by the refugee policies of the countries of the global North. Hyndman and Giles (2011) argue that these countries’ policies have exclusionary principles which make it more difficult for refugees to apply. For example, Olsen et al. (2016) argue that Canada’s In-Canada Asylum Program perpetuates the image of the vulnerable helpless refugee. According to Olsen et al. (2016), as the individual moves forward with their application to the asylum program, “their personal identity and history, life story and cultural influences are not recognized” (p. 64) and the person will be placed in the category of “refugee”. In addition to this, he or she must convince the IRB that he or she is a “genuine” refugee, and therefore must embody the constructed image of the refugee. The refugee must also wait for a long period of time after the submission of their application, which can also prove to be a disempowering process. Olsen et al. (2016) then argue that this perpetuates further “Othering” of these individuals as Canada’s attempt to “control the threat of unwanted migrants and limitation of services supports the acceptance of this Othering discourse” (p. 64). Mitrea and Jackson (2015) also argue that both the government and the media contribute to the current refugee dialectic of security threat and helpless victim. Based on previous research done on refugee representation
discussed in this section, it is evident that refugees are simultaneously constructed as an object of charity as well as a possible threat. Refugee discourses from institutions such as the government and the media “signal to Canadians which refugees are trustworthy, deserving, and legitimate and which are to be excluded” (p.6). This idea of citizenship is supported by the discourses of the “good” and the “bad” refugee and the narrative of self-sacrificing, humanitarian Canadian citizens. The image of the “refugee” stands in contrast to the citizens of Canada and the global North. Since countries are not obligated to resettle refugees, the act of providing asylum or resettlement to these refugees is considered a sign of altruistic humanitarianism. Because of this, refugees are constructed as vulnerable and helpless individuals for wealthy host countries such as Canada to “build humanitarianism into their national identities” (Olsen et al., 2016, p. 61)

2.5. Media Discourse on Syrian Refugees

The Syrian refugee crisis is a socio-politically complex issue that started garnering increased media coverage particularly in 2015 and 2016. The year 2015 has seen a great number of forced displacement stories of Syrian asylum seekers and refugees in the media (Lenette and Cleland, 2016). The two dominant discourses on refugees, either as security threats or victims, are still present in the current portrayal of Syrian refugees in the media. This is evident in the body of literature on the current international media discourse on Syrian refugees reviewed in this section. As this thesis is interested in analyzing the news media coverage of the Syrian refugee resettlement in Metro Vancouver, it is necessary to explore these studies’ findings as they will be compared with the findings found in Chapter 4 of this study.

A considerable number of scholars started taking interest in the public discourse and media representations of Syrian refugees. For example, there are several research studies done regarding the media coverage of the Syrian refugee crisis in Europe. A study conducted by Fotopoulos and Kaimaklioti (2016) examined how the Greek, German and British newspapers covered the Syrian refugee crisis in Europe in 2015. The study employed corpus linguistics and discourse analysis in examining 1,340 news articles published online from March 20 until May 31, 2016. By analyzing two mainstream online newspapers from each European country during that period, the study revealed that the news media for all three countries had the same stance. The Syrian refugees were portrayed as victims of the civil war and there was a focus on the
number of refugees affected by the crisis. They argued that the frequent use of metaphor of numbers such as “flows” and “influx” in the newspapers emphasized the high volume of refugees (Fotopoulos and Kaimaklioti, 2016, p. 273). While using metaphors usually depict a negative portrayal, it was not the case in Fotopoulos and Kaimaklioti’s study (2016) as the articles were favourable towards Syrian refugees. They also found out that the news articles about the personal stories of refugees were shared extensively online. The newspapers also focused on the issue of child refugees having to miss school and live in unsafe conditions. In addition, the “hate speech” and the negative views of some of Europe’s leaders on the Syrian refugee crisis were also mentioned in the news media, with the public expressing concern over it (Fotopoulos and Kaimaklioti, 2016).

Another study done by Yaylaci and Karakus (2015) analyzed newspaper coverage of the Syrian refugee crisis in Turkey. The study used three Turkish newspapers and news articles published from January 1, 2014 to December 31, 2014. The articles were analyzed based on themes, styles and photographs. The results revealed that most newspaper articles on Syrian refugees were about government officials visiting refugee camps and the personal experiences of Syrians. In addition to this, stories about the Syrians’ gratefulness to Turkey were also present. The study revealed that the political standing of the newspapers as well as their stance on the current Turkish government affected the newspapers’ contents. For instance, pro-government newspaper Yeni Safak used Syrian refugee crisis as a means of emphasizing “the personal and institutional ‘generosity’ of the government members and the President of the Republic, while criticising the opposition parties and groups for their lack of attention to Syrians” (Yaylaci and Karakus, 2015, p. 245). The Turkish newspaper Cumhuriyet on the other hand, used the issue of Syrian refugees to criticize the current government, while Hurriyet remained impartial to both sides (Yaylaci and Karakus, 2015).

More recently, a study conducted by Dimitrova et al. (2018) reviewed Turkish and Bulgarian newspapers that covered the Syrian refugee crisis from 2011 to 2014. The study selected two national dailies in Turkey (Hurriyet and Cumhuriyet) and two national dailies in Bulgaria (Dneven Trud and Standart) based on readership, newspaper reputation and political orientation. The study gathered news articles from 2011 until 2014, with 65 articles coming from the Turkish sample and 83 from the Bulgarian
sample. It employed content analysis to study dominant media frames (victim, threat, administrative, humanitarian etc.) used by the newspapers. Based on the results, the study concluded that 23.4% of the Turkish news articles shared more personal stories of Syrian refugees compared to only 6% of the Bulgarian articles. However, Turkish newspapers also used the “victim frame” more often than the Bulgarian newspapers. In contrast, the Bulgarian news coverage shared less personal stories of the refugees. The Bulgarian news coverage placed more emphasis to the “administrative frame” at 55.4%, which included “local bureaucracy, handling of the refugees, border crossing, or focusing on national bureaucracy, including legal status, paperwork, and lawyers working with the refugees” (Dimitrova et al., 2018, p. 538) Lastly, the humanitarian frame is also dominant in both newspaper samples, with 39.2% of news articles referring to humanitarian efforts during the Syrian refugee crisis (Dimitrova et al., 2018).

Studies done on American news media have similar findings in terms of news frames. Research done by Bhatia and Jenks (2018) reveal that American mainstream and alternative news media tend to portray Syrian refugees as either victims or threats. By analyzing opinion, editorial and news stories published from 2016 to mid-2017, the study points out that left-leaning news outlets tend to represent these refugees as victims, and not as individuals that are “potentially dangerous to Americans” (p. 26). On the other hand, right-leaning media portrayed Syrian refugees as a “dangerous Other”. The research explains that the victim narrative serves a purpose following the current administration’s Muslim ban. According to Bhatia and Jenks (2018) the victim narrative serves to humanize not only the refugees but also the “current immigration policy debates that treat communities from predominantly Muslim countries as a threat to the American way of life” (p. 26).

While majority of the studies about the media coverage of Syrian refugees examine national and major metropolitan newspapers, a study by Cooper and colleagues (2017) focused on the smaller, regional newspapers in Australia. Cooper et al.’s (2017) study on regional newspapers is very significant in relation to this thesis as it is one of the very few studies also analyzing local community newspapers. Using critical discourse analysis, the study gathered and examined news articles from 4 regional newspapers such as The Border Mail, The Coffs Coast Advance, The Area News and The Daily Advertiser. The study’s sample consisted of 64 news articles published between July 1, 2014 to April 15, 2015 that were categorized by story type (local or
Results revealed that 78.4% of the regional news articles used a positive tone in covering the Syrian refugee crisis. According to Cooper et al. (2017), this finding contrasts with the negative tone Australian major metropolitan newspapers usually employ. Moreover, the findings reveal that in news stories covering national events, 41.5% of the news articles quoted Australian politicians and government officials, 26.4% interviewed refugees and 24.5% quoted refugee support organizations. In news stories covering local community events, however, refugees and charity organizations were more frequently interviewed and quoted (Cooper et al., 2017).

2.5.1. Refugees in Canadian News Media

Researchers in Canada, on the other hand, have also conducted interesting studies on how the Canadian media portrays Syrian refugees. A study done by Tyyskä et al. (2017) analyzed the coverage of the Syrian refugee resettlement in Canadian newspapers such as The Globe and Mail, Toronto Star and National Post, and news segments of CBC and CTV. The study’s sample consisted of 94 articles from The Globe and Mail, 80 articles from National Post, 130 articles from Toronto Star and 84 news segments. Based on the content analysis of these samples, the study uncovered three main themes. Firstly, the media discourse on Syrian refugees emphasized Canadian values, with the positive representation of the Liberal government and the citizens as humanitarian and generous. For instance, 28 out of the 94 news articles from The Globe and Mail urged the Canadian government to do more to help Syrian refugees as it is deemed as a core Canadian value (Tyyskä et al., 2017).

Secondly, the media represented these refugees as “lacking agency, vulnerable and needy amidst challenges”, as seen in 23 out of the 94 The Globe and Mail sources (Tyyskä et al., 2017, pp. 4-5). Aside from representing Syrian refugees as vulnerable individuals, there was also an observed trend in which these newspapers ignored Syrian refugee voices, focusing instead on interviewing other ethnic minorities and former refugees in Canada. While the study found that Toronto Star is slightly more inclusive of Syrian refugee voices (with 37 of the 90 articles) compared to The Globe and Mail and National Post, the number of Syrian refugee interviews were still low and the newspapers only focused on the general needs of the refugees upon resettlement (Tyyskä et al., 2017). Lastly, the study also revealed gendered representations in the media. Syrian male refugees were portrayed as security threats while there is no
representation of the female refugees. This was evident in 12 articles from *The Globe and Mail*, 14 articles from the *National Post*, and 17 media videos (Tyyskä et al., 2017).

A more recent study on Canadian news media discourse and its relationship to the current political climate was also conducted by scholar Wallace (2018). In her study, Wallace examines 8 English-language major dailies such as *The Globe and Mail*, *The National Post*, *The Toronto Star*, *The Vancouver Sun*, *The Calgary Herald*, *The Winnipeg Free Press*, *The Montreal Gazette* and *The Chronicle-Herald*. The sample consisted of newspaper articles covering Syrian refugees published from January 1, 2012 to December 31, 2016. Using automated content analysis, 4,473 news articles were gathered and examined using different media themes and frames such as *conflict*, *family*, *citizenship* and *resettlement*. The study analyzed the news articles in relation to time periods indicating the shift from the Conservative to the Liberal government: Conservative government leadership (January 1, 2012–July 31, 2015), federal election campaigns (August 1, 2015–October 31, 2015), and the Liberal government post-election (November 1, 2015–December 31, 2016) (Wallace, 2018, p.12). The study concluded that during the Conservative government leadership, the theme of conflict, which refers to the discussion of the Syrian conflict, Canadian military, ISIS and humanitarian aid was the most dominant. It was the most dominant in the coverage of Syrian refugees during this period with almost 50% of the news article samples referring to it. After the iconic Kurdi photo was released in the media and the shift to the Liberal government, the reference to the conflict theme dropped to around 27%, with the family theme surpassing it with 29%. There was a considerable shift in the framing of the Syrian refugee crisis, with an emphasis on humanizing refugee families and their integration into Canadian culture (Wallace, 2018).

### 2.6. Understanding the Changing Refugee Discourses: A Conclusion

This chapter provided a historical overview of international and Canadian refugee policies. It also provided information on the current immigration and refugee discourses in the global North. In addition, the chapter also outlined previous research conducted on the media representation of Syrian refugees in European, Australian and North American news media. The purpose of this chapter is to provide sufficient historical, social and political context, as one of this study’s main objectives is to understand the
changing news media discourses surrounding Syrian refugees in relation to the changing social and political environment in Canada. According to Molnar (2016), while there has been a shift in hegemonic ideas with regards to the Syrian refugee crisis with the transition from the Conservative to the Liberal government, the discourses and representations remain problematic, as this study has outlined above.

In the UK, Jones et al. (2017) observed that there was also a shift in public opinion after the release of Alan Kurdi’s photo. Following the release of the images in the media in September 2015, the UK government announced that under the UN resettlement program, the country would take in 20,000 refugees living in refugee camps in Syria over the course of five years. Jones et al. (2017) points out that the move to resettle refugees in Syria and not refugees that are already in Europe at the time (also refugees seeking refuge from elsewhere) represented Syrians as “legitimate and deserving refugees” (p. 7). However, this representation of Syrian refugees as being deserving of help changed in November 2015 when a Syrian passport was found in one of the attackers in Paris. After the attacks, UK government official Theresa May gave a speech “associating immigrants with terrorists, superimposing an announcement of ‘targeted security checks’ on to a promise of more stringent control at both national and European borders” (p. 8).

Following these shifts in public sympathies and government policies, Wallace (2018) notes the importance of examining the changes in depictions of refugees as it reflects changes in the agenda of policy makers. As discussed in section 2.2, the Conservative government had an exclusionary and unwelcoming stance towards refugees, which is reflected in the narratives of the “bogus” refugee and border securitization. On the other hand, the current Liberal government has had a more welcoming stance, as it sees this Syrian refugee crisis as the “perfect issue to reintroduce traditional Canadian diplomacy on the world stage, after years of Conservative policies that distanced Canada from its human rights defending image” (Molnar, 2016, p. 69). However, as discussed in section 2.2, the Liberal government’s stance on refugees is not completely positive. These refugees are still simultaneously represented as “security threats” and “helpless and vulnerable Others”, as presented in section 2.5.
While the current media discourse aims to portray Canadians as humanitarians, hateful narratives are still present (Tyyskä et al., 2017, Molnar 2016). For instance, a Muslim mother in Toronto was assaulted after the attacks in Beirut and Paris in 2015. A mosque was also burned down in Peterborough, Ontario while another one was defaced twice in Alberta during the same year (Molnar, 2016). In Vancouver in early 2016, a group of newly arrived Syrian refugees arrived in Vancouver were pepper sprayed by a man riding a bicycle (Kahrmann, 2016). As such, Molnar (2016) argues that to counter these narratives, these Syrian refugees must publicly declare how grateful they are because they are resettled in Canada. Thus, one prevalent media discourse is that “these refugees should be grateful because they are here at the benevolent behest of Canada, once more upholding the trope of Canada’s generosity” (Molnar, 2016, p. 71). According to Weiss and Wodak (2003), ideologies are constantly formed and reshaped by new discourses and the interactions of long standing ones. Thus, this study recognizes the importance of examining both past and present refugee discourses to better understand the changing news media discourse about Syrian refugees in Canada.
Chapter 3.

Theory and Research Design

This chapter discusses the theoretical perspectives that guide the research design employed by the study. It provides overview on news media, the different types of news format and news discourse. This thesis examines how news media discourse on Syrian refugees is reproduced using media frames and news values. In media studies, media framing has become a popular approach to studying media coverage. It has been used extensively to study media coverage of international news events (Dimitrova et al., 2018). In addition to looking at media frames in news articles, this paper also considered news values in examining the news articles. News values are values that determine which stories are newsworthy (Bednarek and Caple, 2017). The news articles are examined to see how their news values produce discourses about the Syrian refugee resettlement. Both media frames and news values will be analyzed through the lens of Said’s (2003) theory of Orientalism.

This chapter also discusses the methods of data collection and sampling employed by the study. The chapter also explains the methods of selection used to gather newspaper articles from major and local Vancouver newspapers published from 2015 to 2017. An online database was used to gather news articles from these newspapers using certain search parameters, which this chapter also discusses in detail. Lastly, the chapter also provides an overview of the coding and framework for content and discourse analysis of these selected news articles.

3.1. News Media

This thesis will delve into the Canadian news media and its coverage of the Syrian refugee resettlement. News can be defined as “new information about an event or issue that is shared with others in a systematic and public way” (Zelizer and Allan, 2010). It is a form of media that can be distinguished from other forms of media by its “textual-generic features, mode of production, mode of address, its institutional form and professional practices (Hartley, 2011, p. 189)”. It is also found in numerous forms such as newspapers, magazines, radio, television and online platforms. This study will
approach news that is produced by news organizations and will be defined as “a report of what a news organization has learned about matters of significance or interest to the specific community that the news organization serves” (Fuller, 1996, p. 6). This definition puts emphasis not only on the intended audience of the news but also on the news that is considered significant by these audiences. As such, scholars Franklin, Hamer, Hanna, Kinsey and Richardson (2005) argue that news is inherently selective as not all news stories make headlines and not all are worthy of being included in newspapers.

The idea of what it is about a story makes it news and why some news are considered more valuable or “newsworthy” than others has been extensively studied by scholars (Franklin et al., 2005). Norwegian academics John Galtung and Mari Ruge (1965) are some of the earliest scholars who have analyzed content of newspapers and attempted to define news values. According to scholars studying news media, the selection, creation and presentation of news is mostly determined by professional codes called news values. Bednarek and Caple (2014) define news values as “properties of events or stories or as criteria/principles that are applied by news workers in order to select events or stories as news or to choose the structure and order of reporting” (p. 136). Galtung and Ruge (1965) has originally identified 12 news values, namely “frequency, threshold, unambiguity, meaningfulness, consonance, unexpectedness, continuity, composition, reference to elite nations, reference to elite people, reference to persons and reference to something negative” (as cited in Franklin et al., 2005, p. 2)

Other scholars such as Bell (1991) have built on the original list by adding competition, predictability, co-option, and prefabrication. Academics Harcup and O’Neill (2017) also continually redefine and refine some of these news values from the original list. In their own study, Harcup and O’Neill (2017) explored how news values can be identified in news reports. Based on their study, they concluded that news stories must contain news values such as power elite (referring to stories of powerful individuals or organizations), entertainment, bad news (negative stories such as conflict or tragedy) and good news (positive stories such as cures and rescues) in order to be published (p. 1471). In addition to this, Bednarek and Caple (2014) further identifies more news values such as “proximity (geographical or cultural ‘nearness’); negativity (negative aspects, e.g. conflict, death, disaster, accidents, negative consequences); eliteness (elite status); and superlativeness (‘the more X, the more newsworthy’)” (p. 136).
According to Hartley (2011), news values “prioritise stories that are recent, sudden, unambiguous, predictable, relevant and close to the relevant culture, class or location” (p. 190). As such, stories about “the economy, government politics, industry and business, foreign affairs, domestic affairs either of conflict or human interest, disasters or sport” are also prioritised (p. 190). Like Bednarek and Caple, Hartley (2011) also explain that elite nations and elite people such as celebrities and decision-makers are also included.

As mentioned, part of the creation of news media stories involves determining which stories are considered “newsworthy”. Certain criteria must be met before a story can be considered more newsworthy than others. According to Gravells (2017), the topic of a news story must be “of significant size and intensity, unexpected, unambiguously catastrophic and involving elite nations” (p. 8). In addition, certain individuals and groups have influence over which stories are newsworthy. Politicians, business owners, community representatives and organizations are also involved in the creation of news articles. They are considered stakeholders who represent important members of society whose views and lives are of importance to readers (Gravells, 2017, p. 8; Fowler, 1991).

Influence can come from both inside and outside the publication. In addition to the stakeholders, journalists and editors also influence the selection of the news stories. According to Franklin et al. (2005), journalists are people with their own opinions that can be reflected in the news stories they write. In addition, Gravells (2017) explain that newspaper editors’ political stance may also be reflected in what is selected as a news story and what is emphasized. This view of news having a “gatekeeper” originated in a study done by academic David White (1950). In the study, White (1950) examined how a single newswire editor selected the news stories and determined that selection was subjective based on the editor’s experiences and attitudes. Hartley (2011) describes the gatekeeper in news media as “key decision-making personnel in the choice of which news stories will be published, with what prominence” (p. 121). Zelizer and Allan (2010) explain that the theory of gatekeeping has been used widely in understanding the flows of information but in the context of news media, gatekeeping refers to what happens to a news story once it enters the various news production channels.

Another source of influence for the selection and creation of news stories is the advertisers for the publications. Robert and McCombs (1994) suggest that advertisers
have a degree of influence over the content of the publication since they buy space in these newspapers, a major source of income for the publications. In addition to this, the public has also influenced story selection in recent years. A good example of this is that often, “what’s trending” on the Internet influences which stories are of interest, while social media platforms such as Twitter act as a vehicle that provides comments and feedback from the public (Gravells, 2017, p. 1). Out of all these stakeholders, Gravell (2017) argues that “some will have greater and more regular access to representation than others, and it follows that these will have a greater influence on which stories are chosen and how they are eventually presented for public consumption” (p.8).

Scholars have extensively studied the media in terms of its functions and effects. One such theory that emerged in the field of mass communication is the “agenda setting theory”. The agenda setting theory posits that mass media tend to present certain issues “frequently and prominently with the result that large segments of the public come to perceive those issues as more important than others” (Coleman, McCombs, Shaw and Weaver, 2008, p. 147). To put it simply, the theory suggests that the more media coverage a certain issue or event receives, the more importance people give to it. The theory has its roots in Walter Lipmann’s (1922) book, called Public Opinion, in which he argues that “citizen’s perceptions of public affairs are decisively shaped by what the media recurrently attach significance to, as well as by what is ignored or trivialized, over a period of time” (as cited in Zelizer and Allan, 2010, p. 3).

In 1972, scholars Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw (1972) coined the term “agenda setting” in their paper entitled, “The Agenda-setting Function of the Mass Media”. In their study, McCombs and Shaw (1972) examined the news media coverage of the 1968 United States presidential election and found a high correlation between the media’s agenda of issues and the public’s agenda. Since then, the theory has expanded from “describing the transfer of issue salience from the news media to the public to a broader theory that includes a ‘second-level’ describing the transfer of attribute salience for those issues and many other ‘objects’ such as political figures” (Coleman et al., 2008, p. 147). The theory has become one of the most used in the field of communication research and it has also been adopted by other disciplines such as health communication, political communication and business. (Coleman et al., 2008).
According to Coleman et al. (2008), research done on agenda setting and mass media has also paved way for more research on media framing. To frame is to “select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described” (Entman, 1993, p. 52). To put it simply, frames used in news stories tend to highlight pieces of information about an event or issue to make it “noticeable, meaningful, or memorable to the audiences” (Entman, 1993, p. 52). The theory is rooted in sociologist Erving Goffman’s (1974) writing called Frame Analysis and since then, other scholars have expanded the theory further by studying the news media coverage of certain events (Entman, 1993; Gamson, 1992; Gitlin, 1980). While there has been debates about the similarities and the differences about the two approaches, many argue that both theories focus on the “perspective of communicators and their audiences, how they picture topics in the news and, in particular, to the special status that certain attributes or frames can have in the content of a message” Coleman et al., 2008, p.150).

3.2. The News Format

This thesis will also make a distinction between hard news reports and soft news reports in the newspaper articles that are selected and examined. Scholars studying news media often categorize news stories into “hard news” or “soft news” (Gravells, 2017; Bird and Dardenne, 1988; Fulton, Huisman, Murphet and Dunn, 2005; Martin and White, 2005; White, 1997). Bird and Dardenne (1988) differentiate hard news and soft news by stating that hard news are stories that are “important”, while soft news are stories that are “interesting”. Fulton et al. (2005) further explain the difference between the two:

“‘Hard’ news reports on politics, economics, the doings of the powerful and international affairs—in other words, on those aspects of a nation’s public life that are considered to have the greatest influence on the lives of its citizens. It is contrasted with “soft” news, which is about “human interest”, about celebrity, crime, the small scale and domestic. (p. 143)”

Zelizer and Allan (2010) expand these definitions further by stating that hard news is “a type of news associated with importance, significance, immediacy and relevance which reflects the news that the public ‘needs to know’” (p. 53). Also called “straight news”, hard news typically attempts the answer the five Ws and H – the who,
what, where, when, why and how. According to Zelizer and Allan (2010), this type of news organizes information and facts about the issue in a hierarchical way which is often described as an inverted pyramid. Moreover, its production is determined by the 24-hour news cycle which means that timeliness and newsworthiness is of utmost importance.

Soft news, on the other hand, is defined as “news that is primarily interesting rather than important” (Zelizer and Allan, 2010, p. 142) This type of news is generally associated with human interest stories and is seen as news that is of secondary importance compared to hard news. Moreover, it does not follow the 24-hour news cycle which means that it does not follow the seriousness and timeliness that hard news requires. An example of soft news is the feature article. Zelizer and Allan (2010) define the feature article as a story that is “of greatest interest to the target audience though not necessarily about those of most importance” (p. 42). Like hard news, these articles present empirical information or “facts” but also generally include human interest stories. They may or may not be related to the news released that day but they are included in the publication when there is space needed to be filled in (Gravells, 2017; Cotter, 2010). Feature articles also tend to deal with issues in more depth and detail compared to hard news reports. This type of news often includes the opinions of the journalists, interviews from personalities and more description of the issue at hand (Zelizer and Allan, 2010). Moreover, Bird and Dardenne (1988) also distinguish two styles of narrative present in feature articles. The first one is can be considered as a “chronicle” for it is primarily descriptive, while the “story” is more subjective and follows a narrative pattern. While the “chronicle” narrative style is more in tune with journalism values and practices “story” style is known to engage readers better which is why in writing news, journalists adopt a writing style that is somewhere in between the two. In addition to this, feature articles can also be distinguished from the news report for “represented participants are often recognisable stereotypes brought to life by quotations, and that there can be a conflict or parable, leading to the outlining of a (shared) moral position” (Gravells, 2017, p. 17).

Other types of news media writing include the editorial and the column. These types of news writing differ greatly from the hard news and soft news genres. An editorial is defined as “a statement of opinion written under the collective responsibility of a news organization’s editor or publisher and a descriptive term for news-related activities within the organization which are distinct from advertising/sponsorship, technical production and circulation/viewership” (Zelizer and Allan, 2010, p. 34). According to Zelizer and
Allan (2010) the editorial typically appears on the second page of a newspaper, and the commentary often uses the word “we” to represent the news organization’s political or ideological stance. The column or opinion, on the other hand, is defined as “a personal, authored and often recurring opinion article which typically addresses public events or issues” (p. 22). While this type of news writing was originally limited to “humour, gossip and politics, the column has evolved into an “essay” or “opinion” piece that covers different topics (Zelizer and Allan, 2010, p. 23). It differs from the editorial in a way that the column is signed and authored, while the editorial is unsigned and is representative of the news organization. Moreover, the authors of the columns are also free to discuss events or issues, as well as review public events, books, movies or the arts (Zelizer and Allan, 2010, p. 23).

According to Gravells (2017), the “language of judgement and evaluation” is present in these news writing as these articles tend to analyse events rather than report them (p. 17). In editorials and columns, the writer tends to present his or her own view on propositions. In addition to this, the purpose these news writing is “to persuade the reader of the validity of a point of view, and this genre frequently exhibits rhetorical features associated with persuasive argument” (Gravells, 2017, p. 18). As such, Gravells (2017) argue that hard news reports are descriptive compared to the other types of journalism pieces such as feature articles, editorials and columns which are more evaluative.

In addition to the types of news writing, a distinction is also made between the two newspaper formats. In print journalism, there are two main types of newspapers – the broadsheet and the tabloid. Broadsheets refer to the larger format of a newspaper “which are typically situated at the ‘serious’ end of the quality continuum, where they are contrasted with the ‘popular’, ‘sensational’ tabloid press” (Zelizer and Allan, 2010, p. 13). The broadsheet is often associated with prestige and credibility. Its format originated in the 1600s and early 1700s and is still currently popular in some parts of the world. According to Zelizer and Allan (2010), the distinction between the broadsheet and tabloid began to disappear in the mid-1990s when newspapers moved to a tabloid format for financial reasons, as tabloids are less expensive to produce than broadsheets. For instance, a number of national broadsheets in the UK such as the Independent and Times moved to the tabloid format in early 2000s (Tryhorn, 2005). In the United States, some national broadsheets switch to tabloid format some days of the week, while some
newspapers such as *The New York Times*, reduced the size of the pages of their broadsheet (Zelizer and Allan, 2010, p. 13).

The tabloid, on the other hand, refers to a smaller format of a newspaper compared to the broadsheet. The term “tabloid” first emerged in the 1800 but it was not until 1896 that it came to mean as a paper “about one half the size of a horizontally folded ‘broadsheet’ title” (Zelizer and Allan, 2010, p. 151). Zelizer and Allan (2010) explain that over time, the distinction between broadsheet and tabloid expanded to not just about the size and the format but also to the tone, content and presumed audience of the two newspapers. According Sparks (2000), modern tabloids tend to select topics such as sports, scandal, entertainment and the personal lives of celebrities over politics and economics. Moreover, it prioritizes providing entertainment over information as its working-class audience is “presumed to be more interested in entertainment than information” (Zelizer and Allan, 2010, p. 151). As such the term has come to be associated with “a particular style of journalism, which presents the news in a popular, simplified, sensational, titillating, emotional or easily accessible fashion” (Zelizer and Allan, 2010, pp. 150-151).

3.3. **Discourse, Power and Hegemony**

The news media coverage of events such as the Syrian refugee crisis have shown the tremendous power of the media. According to Lawlor and Tolley (2017), media coverage is not just a textual artifact. It is a data source from which we can draw inferences about public opinion. Since media do not exist in a vacuum and are reflective of societal norms and culture, the stories they present reflect and influence the attitudes and opinions of the intended audience.

According to Fairclough (1995), the media have the power to “influence knowledge, beliefs, values, social relations and social identities” (p. 2). In addition to this, he also argues that the media have a language that has signifying power, meaning it has the “power to represent things in particular ways” (Fairclough, 1995, p. 2). Norman Fairclough, a Professor of Linguistics at Lancaster University and one of the founders of discourse analysis, has been primarily concerned with language, power and how the messages in the media are affected by the power relations in society (Fairclough, 1995). These questions concerning the power of mass media has also been studied extensively
by communication scholars in the field of media studies, such as Stuart Hall (1982).

According to Hall (1982), the media have the power to give events meaning. Furthermore, he argues that the media do not simply reflect the “reality” of the world but rather it constructs its meanings. As such, Hall (1982) explains that the media is a site of ideology involved in the process of giving meaning to events, and choosing which reality will be publicly represented.

Ideology can be defined as a society’s belief systems that are “not individual, personal beliefs, but social beliefs shared by members of social groups” (Van Dijk, 2001, p. 382). These beliefs are shared by group members who use them to understand the world. Van Dijk (2001) then goes on to argue that ideologies can control a variety of social practices and not just discourse. He also argues that since people are members of different social groups, individuals may “participate in various ideologies: one may be a feminist, socialist, pacifist, journalist etc. and one’s activities and discourses may then be influenced by (fragments of) several ideologies at the same time, even when on each occasion one or a few such ideologies will be dominant” (p.384). Van Dijk (2001) also points out that these ideologies are not acquired by members of social groups overnight as these ideologies take time to “learn”. These members of social groups can “learn” these ideologies through personal experience, social institutions, public discourses as well as interactions with the members of their social group. According to Fairclough (1995), discourse in language studies is defined as a “social action and interaction, people interacting together in real social situations” (p. 18). Post-structuralist theory, on the other hand, defines discourse as a “social construction of reality, a form of knowledge” (p.18). It is important to point out that the media are carriers of ideological practices such as discourses. As such, Fairclough uses both definitions of discourse in analyzing media texts and media discourse.

For this study, critical discourse analysis will be employed in examining the newspaper articles on Syrian refugees. Critical discourse analysis (henceforth CDA), as an approach in discourse analysis, posits that discourse is not only a container and carrier of ideologies but is also a social action on its own. Key scholars who developed this critical perspective include Fairclough (1995), Fowler (1991) and Van Dijk (2001). According to Van Dijk (2001), CDA is socially and politically committed. It provides the links between its textual linguistic analysis and the different levels of socio-political contexts affecting the production, distribution and interpretation of language. At the basic
level, a discourse is text communicated orally, visually or through writing. It is a body of written text, visual, or oral communication that conveys a set of social rules, norms, and conventions. CDA holds that discourse is both “socially constitutive as well as socially conditioned” (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997, p. 258). Fairclough (2001) argues that discourse not only portrays a picture of the ideology at work, but it also shapes those social cognitions, which makes the relationship between discourse and ideologies a “dialectic” one.

One of CDA’s core objectives is to attempt to explain the relationship dynamics between discourse and society. CDA also aims to analyze how more powerful groups control a discourse and how this discourse affects the ideas and actions of others. Powerful groups or individuals are considered as people who have access to and control over mass public discourses such as politicians, journalists, scholars, writers, directors and policy setting boards of internationally effective media (Van Dijk, 2005). According to Van Dijk (2005), these groups have preferential control over the creation and reproduction of dominant narratives about current issues and events. Consequently, mass media and the apparatus of reaching out to collective minds gain a central role in proliferating these ideas.

The idea of powerful groups controlling discourse is drawn from the Gramscian concept of “hegemony” (Gramsci, 1971). As discussed in the previous chapters, hegemony refers to “the ability in certain historical conditions of the dominant social classes to exercises social and cultural leadership, and by these means – rather than by direct coercion of subordinate classes – to maintain their power over the economic, political, and cultural direction of a nation” (Hartley, 2011, p. 127). The dominant social class referred to exist in both private and public spheres and can take the form of the state, the law, the educational system, the media and the family (Hartley, 2011, p. 128). They are considered organizers and producers of knowledge and meanings in society which become dominant in the social consciousness of the public. In media and cultural studies, hegemony is used to show “how everyday meanings, representations and activities are organized and made sense of in such a way as to render the interests of a dominant ‘bloc’ into an apparently natural and unarguable general interest, with a claim on everybody” (Hartley, 2011, p. 128). As such, hegemony tends to naturalize ideologies of the dominant class by framing them as “common sense”. Their power is then
exercised through authority which is reflected economically, politically and culturally (Hartley, 2011).

3.4. News Media and News Discourse

The concept of hegemony and discourse is closely tied to the study of news media and news discourse. While there are numerous studies already done on news media, Van Dijk (2008) points out that it was not until the 1980s when discursive approaches were used to analyze news structures, news production and news media coverage. One of the studies that is considered classic research in ideology in news rooms is Gitlin’s (1980) analysis of media coverage of the students’ movement in the United States. In his study, Gitlin (1980) employed the Gramscian framework of hegemony in his study of the news. The study revealed that “the ideologies of editors and reporters are quite similar, as is the case for journalists and most of their sources” (Van Dijk, 2008, p. 197). Moreover, the study revealed that if these editors, reporters and journalists have conflicting ideologies, hegemony works by “imposing standardized assumptions over events and conditions that must be “covered” by the dictates of the prevailing in news standards” (Gitlin, 1980, p. 264).

Van Dijk (1988) himself studied news discourse by adopting categories (i.e. summary, new events, previous events, context and commentary) to organize news topics and reports. In 1991, Bell (1991) adopted some of these categories as he studied the language used by news media. Perhaps the most important contribution Bell (1991) made to the study of news discourse is his exploration of the “ideological dimension of news in the press, for instance with a systematic analysis of how the news may ‘misreport’ or ‘misrepresent’ events” (as cited in Van Dijk). In Bell’s (1991) book, the study of the media coverage of climate change revealed that only 29 percent of the new stories presented accurate information while over 70 percent of the reports had inaccuracies. Based on these findings, Bell (1991) argued that news reports tend to become “distorted” by means of overstatement, overgeneralization based on stereotypes and by having prejudices in conversations. The study pointed out that there seemed to be a change in content or meaning during the translation of the “news source discourse” to “news discourse”, and some information tend to be emphasized or de-emphasized (as cited in Van Dijk, 2008, p. 195).
According to Harcup and O’Neill (2017), it is also important to look at news values as it adds another layer of analysis in the study of news discourse. As discussed in section 3.1 of this chapter, “what is considered newsworthy is not naturally predetermined but selected and prioritized according to journalistic codes” called news values (Gravells, 2017, p. 8). According to Gravells (2017) these news values reflect the ideologies of “politics, power and social agreement” that exist in within the media organizations. For instance, while different news organizations will share certain practices in story selection, newspapers will still have different headlines or lead stories and will have a different focus on current issues or events (Gravells, 2017, p. 8).

Following a more Gramscian approach, Hall (1973) also argues that “news values themselves are part of an ideologically constructed way of perceiving the world that favours and “naturalises” the perspectives of powerful elites” (as cited in Harcup and O’Neill, 2017, p. 1471). Drawing from these perspectives, scholars argue that news are not neutral for they correspond to what is important not only to the media organizations and but also to society (Bednarek and Caple, 2014, p. 137; Bell, 1991).

Both Gravells (2017) and Blommaert (2005) explain that “there is no version of a news story which can be taken as purely objective as “a story or a representation of a story will always be influenced by not only the writers but also by different cultures and social norms but also by groups and individuals with access to ‘voice’ (Gravells, 2017, p. 7). Hartley (1982) explains this further by stating that there are two voices in a news stories, the institutional voice and the accessed voice. According to Hartley (1982), the institutional voices are those of the news correspondents, journalists and reporters on location while the accessed voice are from the individuals who are interviewed or asked to provide on the spot comments that are separated from the reporter’s own account (pp. 110-11). Hartley (1982) argues that the institutional voices are “naturalized” and are constructed as professional, while the accessed voices are seen as “outsiders”.

In addition to this, even the types of news story affect how a story is represented and perceived. According to Gravells (2017) it is not only the voices or content of the story that should be considered but also the type of news reports. For instance, the discursive approach and positioning of hard news and soft news do affect how the audience perceives news stories (Gravells, 2017, p. 15). Gravells (2017) argues that the term “hard news” connotes that these stories are factual and objective, as compared to soft news. In addition to this, hard news reports also contain a high number of empirical
information such as dates, places and times which audience may perceive as a representation of fact. Hard news stories are also narrated in third person, compared to soft news stories that are often narrated in first and second person (Gravells, 2017; Landert, 2014). While some soft news stories are also narrated in first and second person, Gravells (2017) point out that “the viewpoint of the writer is foregrounded, and he/she directs the attention towards the desired reading” (p. 17).

Moreover, studies done on news media language and representation (Gravells, 2017; Cotter, 2010; Conboy, 2007; Cameron, 1995) also reveal that broadsheet newspapers and tabloid newspapers through their use of language and their different styles, which also affect how the audience may perceive the material. According to Gravells (2017), broadsheets tend to use a style that “connotes authority, formality and seriousness” (p. 14). The vocabulary used and the structure tend to have a formal register with longer sentences. Thus, broadsheets are then perceived to be objective and even-handed. On the other hand, tabloids tend to give an impression of subjectivity as its style tend to connote “familiarity, camaraderie and entertainment” (p. 14). They tend to have a more conversational language, which often uses “contractions, slang, idioms, nicknames, indications of spoken emphasis such as italics or bold type” (Gravells, 2017, p. 14; Bignell, 2002; Fowler, 1991). Thus, Gravells (2017) argues that the discourse of tabloid newspapers then tends to be more personal and subjective compared to broadsheet newspapers.

As such, Gravells (2017) point out that news stories are mediated at every level. She explains that the mediation happens as news stories go through the journalistic process, from “selection and choice of emphasis, through journalistic practices and constraints, through their structure, format and co-text, and in terms of their language” (p.7). Thus, Van Dijk (2008) argues the importance of analyzing news structure and news making practices as a means to see “where and how ideologies preferably manifest themselves in news reports” (p. 195). Moreover, Van Dijk (2008) also explains that ideologies also tend to manifest in a number of news practices such as information gathering, interviews, news writing and editing as it reflects “specific group attitudes” and “personal mental models of journalists” (p. 195). Van Dijk (2008) then points out that it is important to look at the combination of the current setting (i.e. location, deadlines, etc.), news participants (i.e. reporters, editors, news actors, sources, etc.) and other
professional codes such as news values when evaluating the discursive functions of the news media.

3.5. Orientalism and Othering

As discussed in Chapter 2, section 2.3, there are competing discourses about immigrants and refugees that are vying for hegemony. One of these discourses, the hegemonic discourse of securitization of immigration, has its roots in setting up boundaries between “us” and “them” (Buonfino, 2004). Buonfino (2004) explains that the production of boundaries in society stems from the need to make sense of the world as well as to create and preserve one’s identity. This perspective has come to represent immigrants and refugees as “the Stranger” or “the Other”, a perspective drawn from Orientalism (Buonfino, 2004). In the field of refugee studies, the theory of Orientalism is often used to analyze the constructed image of refugees, along with theories of postcolonialism, neoliberalism and feminism (Tyyskä et al., 2017).

Orientalism is a term coined by scholar Edward Said (2003, 1978) and is used in numerous studies done on race and media representations. The theory once again draws from the Gramscian concept of hegemony. According to Said (2003), Orientalism is the result of “cultural hegemony at work” with the idea that European identity is superior in comparison to all the non-European people and culture (p.7). In addition to this, Said (2003) also explains that there is a hegemony of European ideas about what it constructs as the Orient, which further pushes European ideas as superior and the Oriental ideas as backwards. Said (2003) points out that that with this binary opposition of the West and the Orient, the West is then seen as superior, while the Orient is seen as inferior and backwards (p. 7). Hartley (2011) notes that Orientalism is often used in Western media. For example, numerous Western films often portray their Western hero as “noble, brave, strong, sexual and of consummate ability” while the Oriental characters are portrayed as “helpless victims awaiting the arrival of the hero (especially if female), or villains who enslave their own people (if male)” (Hartley, 2011, p. 194).

Iskandar and Rustom (2010) expand on this by saying that the media and other “institutions of cultural production” Orientalize others through “a hegemonic media structure, format, and style that systematically commodify, decontextualize, and simplify all forms of discourse” (Introduction, para. 36). With the notion of the media as “experts”
along with the “mythology” of the press being free and open, the media serve to “further Orientalize the other—notably “colored” peoples or various resistance narratives—by arguing that these have an innate propensity for self-victimization that allows them to exploit the innocent and well-meaning Western media to further their agendas of plight” (Introduction, para. 36). Drawing from these ideas, this thesis argues that the hegemonic news media discourse surrounding Syrian refugees, as discussed in Chapter 2, often portrays them as the Oriental Other. Moreover, Olsen et al. (2016) explain that the hegemonic discourse is not just reflected in the media but also in Canada’s refugee policies. According to Olsen et al. (2016), “the constructed image of “refugee” involves a dialectical relationship between the self-image of developed countries as humanitarian or charitable, and the construction of “refugee” as a victim and a “vulnerable and burdensome Other” (p. 61). Following Said (2003), I argue that in hegemonic discourse, the countries of the global North are constructed as well-meaning Western heroes who are saving the refugees from the Orient. Thus, this thesis also recognizes that this hegemonic discourse is perpetuated by these countries in order to sustain existing power relations between them and the refugees.

3.6. Methods and Sampling

The overview of the structure of news media, as well as the theoretical perspectives of media framing, news values and Orientalism discussed in the previous sections will serve as framework for analyzing the Canadian news media coverage of Syrian refugees. As mentioned in Chapter 1, this thesis will focus on analyzing the news media coverage of the Syrian refugee resettlement during a two-year period, from September 1, 2015 to October 31, 2017. There are several reasons for this. First, the beginning of the chosen time period marks the release of the photo of Syrian refugee Alan Kurdi. It was the image that many consider as a political turning point in the Syrian refugee crisis, as it shifted the discourse about Syrian refugees, as discussed in Chapter 2, section 2.6 (Molnar, 2016). Secondly, the beginning of the chosen time period also marks the shift from the Conservative to the Liberal government. As discussed in Chapter 2, section 2.2, the Liberal government has a more welcoming stance towards Syrian refugees compared to the Conservative government, as their election promise included resettling 25,000 refugees by the end of 2015 (Molnar, 2016). Lastly, the Liberal government’s target was eventually reached in February 2016 and as of 2018,
more than 40,000 Syrian refugees were resettled all over Canada (Gilmour, 2018). Thus, the chosen time period covers all these important events of the Syrian refugee resettlement initiative, which is considered the largest resettlement effort in the history of the country (ISS of BC, 2017). This thesis then aims to identify the kinds of discourses present in Canadian news media coverage of Syrian refugees during this significant time period. It also aims to identify trends and compare them to the trends found by other researchers studying the media coverage of Syrian refugees discussed in Chapter 2, section 2.5.

For its research design, this study uses a combination of content analysis and critical discourse analysis to examine the news articles about the Syrian refugees. While previous research done on the media coverage of Syrian refugees have employed either content analysis or discourse analysis as a means of analyzing the news media as seen in Chapter 2 section 2.5, this study will employ a mixed methods approach. This study recognizes each method’s strengths and weaknesses which will be discussed further in this chapter, and as such, recognizes that a combination of both can be a powerful tool in analyzing news media.

3.6.1. Content Analysis and Critical Discourse Analysis

It is important to first discuss the differences of the two research methods. Content analysis, as a quantitative research method, is a systematic means of “investigating mass-mediated texts with a view to making wider claims about the content of various media channels” (Hartley, 2002, p. 38). As a method, it uses the concept of frequency to examine the presence of certain lexis in chosen texts. After examining the frequency, the researcher will then create categories to classify the data based on objective criteria. Often, the data will also be assigned coded value as it is compared with other texts (Sullivan, 2009). According to Franzosi (2008), while content analysis was originally developed as a qualitative approach, quantification is an integral part of the method as counting frequencies is considered one of the main activities used to conduct the analysis. According to Hartley (2002) content analysis as a method has some advantages. According to him, the method is objective as it requires the researcher to use statistics (frequencies) and adhere to systematic rules and procedures. Moreover, Franzosi (2008) argues that the techniques used goes hand in
hand with precision of measurements and the high probability of replication of procedures and findings.

Discourse analysis, on the other hand, is a qualitative approach related to content analysis. Discourse analysis is a broad term used for an analysis technique that examines “written text, spoken language, or signed language to reveal the discourses within it or the linguistic and rhetorical devices involved in its construction” (Sullivan, 2009, p. 2) Often employed in the fields of linguistics, anthropology, social psychology and communication, this method is often adopted by researchers who are interested in the study of the production of discourse in society and its connection to power and knowledge (Sullivan, 2009, p. 2). Under the tradition of discourse analysis, critical discourse analysis (CDA) is an approach that is more firmly grounded in linguistics (Van Dijk, 1995). According to Van Dijk (1995), while CDA adopts the techniques of discourse analysis, its focus is on how powerful groups in society control discourse. Van Dijk (1995) posits that CDA “examines patterns of access and control over contexts, genres, text and talk, and their properties” (p. 24). Moreover, it examines these structures in details in the lens of power and social inequality (Van Dijk, 1995, p. 24).

According to Franzosi (2008), the technique of turning words into numbers (frequencies) in content analysis poses the risk of potentially losing the context of these words. Moreover, he also argues that the method is “inherently descriptive and can provide only limited insight into why significant relationships or trends are observed” (p. 38) As such, Franzosi (2008) argues the importance of providing additional information to explain the context of the phenomenon being studied. Moreover, he explains that providing context can also give insight into the trends and changes in the topic being researched. On the other hand, Meyer (2001) suggests that one of the limitations of discourse analysis is the risk of misinterpretation. Rahimi and Riasati (2011) point out that the method’s aim to critically analyze the text requires not only studying the text as it is, but it also requires the awareness of the researcher of the “invisible”. This refers to the “different aspects of text production such as the writer's socio-political background, the historical setting, and the cultural tendencies” (Rahimi and Riasati, 2011, p. 111).

Thus, to avoid misinterpretation, Rahimi and Riasati (2011) suggests being conscious of these factors when critically analyzing the media text. Meyer (2011) also suggests providing sufficient contextual information to minimize that risk. According to
Meyer (2001), "to provide ‘contextualization’ in one sense is to accentuate the role of ‘historicity’ in the process of production and interpretation of discourse and ‘explicitly includes social-psychological, political and ideological components and thereby postulates an interdisciplinary procedure” (p. 15). With this in mind, the study recognizes that contextualization is an important part of the data gathering process and the analysis of the results. Thus, this study ensures that contextualization will be employed during the analysis of the newspaper articles.

For this reason, I have decided to employ a mixed methods approach of content analysis and CDA. This decision stems from the awareness that both methods have their limitations. Recognizing the limitations of both methods, such as misinterpretation and lack of contextualization, I argue that employing the mixed method approach serves to keep each method in check by supplying each other with the needed contextual information. The descriptive data objectively gathered from content analysis is supplemented by the discursive techniques of CDA. On the other hand, discourse analysis was greatly substantiated by the information gathered from content analysis. By combining qualitative and quantitative methods, this study can delve deeper into the media coverage and the production of news media discourse on Syrian refugees in Canada.

3.6.2. Metro Vancouver and Fraser Valley Newspapers

The study chose six newspapers to conduct analysis on. Two English-language major metropolitan newspapers in Vancouver and four English language local community newspapers from Metro Vancouver and Fraser Valley were selected for analysis. Metro Vancouver major newspapers Vancouver Sun and The Province were selected for analysis based on the publications' digital and print readership numbers, distribution and accessibility. Both newspapers were also chosen based on the number of refugees resettled in the city. According to ISS of BC (2017), 191 refugees have decided to settle in the City of Vancouver from the year 2015 to 2016. As discussed in Chapter 1, most Syrian refugees are also initially brought to the City of Vancouver before they are resettled in other BC municipalities, as part of the Resettlement Assistance Program (ISS of BC, 2017). As such, it would be interesting to look at the two newspapers in terms of their media coverage of the resettlement. The Vancouver Sun is the most read paid for daily broadsheet in Vancouver with a weekly print and digital
circulation of 820,719. The Province, a paid daily tabloid, on the other hand, have print and digital circulation numbers of 686,805 per week (Circulation Report: Newspapers Canada, 2015). Both Vancouver Sun and The Province are owned by Postmedia Network Inc., which currently publishes 36 newspaper titles, along with the country’s national newspaper, The National Post (News Media Canada, 2018).

As discussed in the Chapter 1, most refugees resettled in the province of British Columbia are currently located across the Greater Vancouver Regional District and Fraser Valley Regional District. Thus, the study will include four local community newspapers from these municipalities. According to a study conducted by News Media Canada (2017b), community newspapers are still the favourite source of local news and information of communities all over Canada. Locals read both print and digital platforms of these newspapers to access local information about their communities (News Media Canada, 2017b). Community newspapers are considered “hyper-local” as they are effective in targeting and representing their respective communities (News Media Canada, 2017c).

The four community newspapers chosen are published in Langley, Surrey and White Rock area, Abbotsford and Chilliwack. Langley City and the District of Langley have a combined population of 143,173 (Statistics Canada, 2016). They have a combined visible minority population of 25,105, and have accepted approximately 105 Syrian refugees during this period (ISS of BC, 2017; Statistics Canada, 2016). Surrey has the second highest population in the regional district with 517,887 residents. More than half of those residents are members of visible minorities (299,245), which comprises about 25.24% of the regional district’s visible minority population (Statistics Canada, 2016). Surrey is also the largest recipient of Syrian refugees from November 2015 to December 2016, with over 1,082 Syrian refugees resettled (ISS of BC, 2017, p. 12). In the Fraser Valley Regional District, the City of Abbotsford has the highest population with 141,397 residents, 46,635 of which are part of the visible minority population (Statistics Canada, 2016). The municipality resettled 179 refugees (Fraser

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14 In terms of media landscape, media outlets in BC are considered highly diverse, as a study by Murray, Yu and Ahadi (2007) revealed that along with the mainstream media, there are also 144 ethnic media outlets in the region (p. 16). According to Murray et al. (2007), ethnic media outlets are considered “healthier” than the mainstream media in BC. Moreover, they are also more competitive than the community media. As such, it would also be interesting to look at how the Syrian refugee resettlement was represented in the context of local ethnic media.
Valley Refugee Response Team, 2017). On the other hand, the City of Chilliwack has a population of 83,788 residents, 5,815 of which are members of visible minorities (Statistics Canada, 2016). Chilliwack resettled 44 refugees during this period (Fraser Valley Refugee Response Team, 2017). These figures are a combination of Government Assisted Refugees (GARs) Blended Visa Office-Referrred (BVOR) refugees and Privately Sponsored Refugees (PSRs) (ISS of BC, 2017).

The four newspapers from these communities are named *The Langley Times* (now *Langley Advance Times* as of March 2019), *Peace Arch News*, *The Chilliwack Progress* and *The Abbotsford News*. *The Langley Times* is a weekly tabloid in the City and Township of Langley published on Wednesdays and Fridays with a combined circulation of 68,795. *Peace Arch News*, on the other hand is a weekly tabloid in the City of Surrey that is published every Wednesday and Friday with a total circulation of 74,356 (News Media Canada, 2017a). *The Chilliwack Progress* is a weekly tabloid in the City of Chilliwack that is published every Wednesdays and Fridays with a combined circulation of 58,268. Lastly, *The Abbotsford News* is a weekly broadsheet published Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays with a total circulation of 112,231 (News Media Canada, 2017a). These community newspapers were chosen based not only on their readership numbers, distribution and accessibility, but also on the number of Syrian refugees resettled where these newspapers are circulated. While both the Burnaby and Coquitlam municipalities have a higher number of Syrian refugees resettled in the area compared to Langley and Chilliwack, there was limited access to their corresponding publications in the online database used to collect the newspaper samples. As such, the study included both *The Langley Times* and *The Chilliwack Progress* in the data set.

Both *Vancouver Sun* and *The Province* are owned by Postmedia Network Inc. On the other hand, all four local community newspapers are owned by Black Press Ltd. Black Press currently publishes 89 newspaper titles in Canada, 78 of which is circulated in BC (News Media Canada, 2017a). The concentration of news media ownership is apparent in these newspapers as the titles sometimes share news stories. For instance, I observed that *Vancouver Sun* tend to share stories with *The National Post* and *Ottawa Citizen*, both of which are owned by Postmedia Network Inc. The Black Press Ltd. newspapers also tend to cover the same events, which are published in several of their titles.
All six newspapers have their own digital platforms. With a combined digital readership of 613,000 weekly, Postmedia Network’s Vancouver Sun’s and The Province’s digital news platforms are free to access, though there are a few paid monthly subscription options available for added content (Vancouver Sun, 2016). Black Press, on the other hand, reports having a combined 6.2 million monthly page views for all their newspaper titles (Black Press Media, 2019). All four community newspapers, namely, The Langley Times, Peace Arch News, The Chilliwack Progress and The Abbotsford News have online platforms that are free to access free of subscription. In addition to this, electronic editions of their printed weekly publications are also available for download on the platform (L. Farquharson, personal communication, June 14, 2019). Lastly, while both Vancouver Sun’s and The Province’s printed editions are paid circulation, the printed editions of all four community newspapers are free and delivered to the residents’ doorsteps and in select areas of each community\(^\text{15}\) (L. Farquharson, personal communication, June 14, 2019).

### 3.7. Data Collection

The online database Factiva (accessible online via the Simon Fraser University Library) was used to access the newspaper articles. Once the newspapers were selected from the database, the selected newspapers were narrowed down based on publication dates. The study examined news articles within a two-year timeframe, starting from September 1, 2015 to October 31, 2017. As discussed in the previous section, the selected timeframe marks the publication of Alan Kurdi’s photo, the election of the Liberal government and their pledge to accept 25,000 Syrian refugees, and the current resettlement efforts of the Canadian government. It is important to note that this study will mostly focus on the media coverage of the Syrian refugees after Prime Minister Justin Trudeau was elected in November 2015 to examine the depictions of

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\(^{15}\) Using the contact information posted on the official Facebook page of Langley Advance Times, a message was sent to request publicly available information about Black Press Media’s online platform subscriptions and the distribution of their printed editions, in which the group publisher for Aldergrove Star and Langley Advance Times responded. As per the Tri-Council Policy Statement on Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (2014), this was to “collect information from authorized personnel to release information or data in the ordinary course of their employment about organizations... procedures, professional practices.... [where such] individuals are not considered participants for the purposes of this Policy.” (p. 14)
Syrian refugees during their resettlement in the Metro Vancouver and Fraser Valley communities.

The search terms used in the Factiva database to collect the articles were Syria* and refuge*, and the search was limited to news articles published during the selected timeframe. This search process was performed twice on two sets of newspapers. The first search process yielded samples for the Vancouver major newspapers Vancouver Sun and The Province, while the second search process yielded samples for the four local community newspapers The Langley Times, Peace Arch News, The Chilliwack Progress and The Abbotsford News.

For the search process involving Vancouver major newspapers, the search terms and timeframe yielded 1,042 news articles with 173 duplicates, with 725 of those articles coming from Vancouver Sun and 317 coming from The Province. Due to the large number of articles, systematic sampling was used. According to Babbie and Roberts (2018), systematic sampling is a type of probability sampling in which “every kth element in the total list is chosen (systematically) for inclusion in the sample” (p. 160). The k, which is considered the sample interval, is computed by dividing the size of the population by the target sample size (Babbie and Roberts, 2018). Every fifth article (sample interval) from the 869 news articles (population) were chosen for a more manageable sample size. A total of 160 news articles were acquired by selecting every fifth news article from the original population size, which is comparable to the sample size acquired for the local community newspapers.

For the search process involving the community newspapers, the search terms and timeframe yielded 157 news articles, with 49 of them coming from The Langley Times, 32 from Peace Arch News, 27 from The Chilliwack Progress and 49 from The Abbotsford News, respectively. The sample news articles were then exported to a qualitative data analysis software called Nvivo 12. The sample news articles were divided into two sets and were called Major Newspapers (containing Vancouver Sun and The Province articles) and Community Newspapers (containing The Langley Times, Peace Arch News, The Chilliwack Progress and The Abbotsford News articles). The two sample sets were exported separately and sorted according to newspaper name, article type and date published.
The study adopted Tyyskä et al.’s (2017) method of selecting news articles. The final selection of news articles was chosen by the researcher through skimming and scanning each article, ensuring that each article is of “some length and substantive content (excluding short “newsflash” types of reports); having clear Canadian content relating to Syrian refugees; content with representation of Syrian refugees; content about public perceptions of the Syrian refugee crisis; and topics regarding the settlement of Syrian refugees along with actions of the Canadian government” (p. 4). The final sample size is further restricted to the articles pertaining to Syrian refugees in Canada and those which links to the Syrian refugee resettlement and presence since the election of the Liberal government. Identifying the trends such as the general rise in the number of articles about a certain issue can be roughly linked to relevant events during the Syrian refugee resettlement. Doing this made the text selection sensitive to the aims of deconstructing the representation of Syrian refugees in the context of settlement and relevant socio-political developments, instead of applying a randomized text selection by strictly quantitative approaches.

3.8. Coding and Framework for Analysis

This study examined the news articles using the lens of Orientalism as its theoretical framework. For its methods of analysis, the study adopted framing theory and the analysis of news values to examine the media text as explained the previous sections of this chapter. Framing theory was adopted in the content analysis to identify the media frames or themes present in the news articles. The media frames and themes were adopted from Wallace’s (2018) study on the framing of Syrian refugees in Canadian news media. In doing CDA, the study followed the approach to analyzing news values developed by scholars Bednarek and Caple (2017) as a guide.

Content analysis was the first method used to examine the news articles. By exporting the news articles to Nvivo and sorting the sample articles as the starting point, it became possible to conduct a search query and automatically code the sample news articles. A preliminary examination of the news articles was conducted by doing a corpus analysis. The frequency of specific words present in the articles was checked using the software’s text search query option. The criteria and categories used in the content analysis was adopted from the study done by Wallace (2018). In Wallace’s study, automated content analysis was also performed on the news articles using WordStat, a
content analysis software program. The study used the software to look for the most frequently occurring terms and phrases in the corpus that related to certain media frames or themes.

As discussed in section 3.1, frames “highlight some bits of information about an item that is the subject of a communication, thereby elevating them in salience” (Entman, 1993, p. 53). A piece of information is salient when it becomes memorable or meaningful to the audience (Entman, 1993). This study examined the salience of information about Syrian refugees by identifying keywords and categorizing them into themes or frames. It categorized keywords used in the articles such as terrorist, war, Muslim, newcomers, immigration, resettlement and put them under media frames or themes such as conflict, religion and citizenship (Wallace, 2018). For instance, a newspaper article containing the word “ISIS” or “war” was categorized under the media frame conflict.

With the intent to do a more organized and systematic analysis of the articles, this study replicated Wallace’s methods. The study also added the keywords Islam, Islamic, church and mosque to the theme Religion, in order to expand the category and exhaustively cover all the terms used in reference to Syrian refugees. Table 3.1 shows some of the themes and the corresponding keywords used in the preliminary content analysis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Keywords</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conflict</td>
<td>conflict, fear, ISIL, ISIS, Islamic, military, mission, region, terror, terrorism, terrorist, war</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>Christian, Islam, Islamic, Muslim, religion, religious, church, mosque</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizenship and Resettlement</td>
<td>arrive, citizenship, immigration, integration, newcomers, officials, plan, private, privately, process, program, resettlement, sponsor, sponsorship</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The full list of themes and keywords can be found in Appendix A.

The Nvivo text search query was used to determine the presence of certain keywords in the text. It also provided information on how frequent the keyword is used (see Figure 3.1). After the text search, the articles were then placed into different nodes with the corresponding themes. This was done to initially sort the articles by themes before conducting a more thorough discourse analysis.
After conducting an automated content analysis using Nvivo, the samples were coded again, manually, to examine the news values present. In their book, *The Discourse of News Values: How News Organizations Create ‘Newsworthiness’*, scholars Monika Bednarek and Helen Caple (2017) have argued that analyzing news values and how they help form discourse on an issue can be done systematically by looking for specific linguistic resources present in the media text. Drawing on the landmark study of Galtung and Ruge (1965) on the structure of news, these linguistic resources corresponded to specific news values. Bednarek and Caple (2017) identify these news values as Consonance, Eliteness, Impact, Negativity, Positivity, Personalization, Proximity, Superlativeness, Timeliness and Unexpectedness (for the list with full description see Appendix B) (p. 79). For example, the news value Negativity makes references to negative emotions, behaviour, lexis and language in media texts. For instance, a newspaper article may use words such as *conflict, damage, death, condemn, distraught* to signify the presence of the news value Negativity (Bednarek and Caple, 2017, p. 79). On the other hand, the news value Positivity makes references to positive emotions and attitudes associated with words such as *joy, celebrate, success or win* (Bednarek and Caple, 2017, p. 79).

According to Bednarek and Caple (2017), analyzing news values and how they discursively construct news events can provide another view of how the media perpetuates existing ideologies. For example, a study done by Baker, Gabrielatos and
McEnery (2013) analyzed the representation of Islam in British news media. The study revealed that news about Islam and Muslims in the British press contained a high number of stories about conflict. The researchers then argued that negative news stories tend to have a higher news value compared to good news stories. As such, the news value of Negativity is present in these stories as these stories are discursively constructed as negative, with the amount of references to conflict (Bednarek and Caple, 2017). Thus, this study used Bednarek and Caple’s (2017) list of news values to manually code all the news articles in the data set.

In addition to analyzing the news values present, the overall tone of the articles was also considered. Adopted from Wallace’s (2018) study, tone signifies the “general sentiment of an article” (p. 8). The articles were sorted based on their negative, positive or neutral tone, depending on the terms and phrases that were used to describe the topic. Overall, after the initial thematic categorization, the articles were analyzed based on Newspaper, Story Type, Date Published, Themes, News Value and Tone (see Appendix C for the complete list). The findings were also sorted by newspaper type (local community newspapers and major newspapers) to conduct a comparative analysis. The findings were then compared to the findings fellow researchers have gathered on the media discourse surrounding Syrian refugees (Dimitrova et al, 2018; Wallace 2018; Bhatia and Jenks, 2017; Tyyskä et al., 2017). By using this approach, the study aimed to reveal a comparative view of the metaphors and the overall communicated messages about Syrian refugees in Canadian news media.

3.9. Theory and Research Design: Conclusion

As outlined above, this chapter discusses the theoretical framework and research design employed by the study. It examines how Canadian news media discourse on the Syrian refugee resettlement is reproduced using media frames and news values. The thesis uses media frames adopted from Wallace’s (2018) study and news values adopted from Bednarek and Caple’s (2017) study to examine the Canadian newspaper articles. Both media frames and news values will be analyzed through the lens of Said’s (2003) theory of Orientalism. Also outlined in this chapter are the methods of data collection and sampling employed by the study. This thesis examines newspaper articles from major and local community newspapers in Metro Vancouver and Fraser Valley that were published from 2015 to 2017. The chosen time period coincides with significant
social and political events of that marked the beginning of the Syrian refugee resettlement initiative. I argue that in choosing this particular time period, the study is able to provide proper social and political contextualization in the interpretation of the Canadian news discourse on Syrian refugees (Rahimi and Riasati, 2011; Meyer, 2011). For this reason, the study also employs a mixed methods approach of content analysis and critical discourse analysis. Recognizing the importance of contextualization, I argue that this approach serves to keep each method in check by supplying each other with sufficient contextual information. Moreover, while Nvivo was initially used to conduct an automated content analysis, the sample news articles were all manually coded during the discourse analysis to ensure validity. By combining both qualitative and quantitative methods, this study can delve deeper into the news media discourses surrounding the Syrian refugee resettlement in the Metro Vancouver and Fraser Valley communities.

In addition to understanding the changing refugee discourses in relation to the changing social and political environment in Canada, the second objective of this study is to identify the kinds of discourses present in the Canadian news media coverage of Syrian refugees during this significant time period. As discussed in the previous chapter, a shift in refugee discourse has occurred during this period and as such, it would be interesting to examine the current discourses present. Lastly, this study aims to not only identify these discourses, but also to compare them to the discourses found by other researchers studying the media coverage of Syrian refugees discussed in Chapter 2, section 2.5. These comparisons will be discussed in detail in the succeeding chapter, as part of the study’s findings.
Chapter 4.

Results and Discussion

As outlined in Chapter 3, this thesis employed a mixed methods approach of content analysis and critical discourse analysis (CDA) for examining the Canadian media discourse about the resettlement of Syrian refugees in the country. Also outlined in Chapter 3, this thesis selected news articles from two groups of newspapers—the major Metro Vancouver newspapers and the local community newspapers published in Metro Vancouver and Fraser Valley. This chapter first discusses the preliminary research findings of the content analysis by presenting the selected newspaper articles by newspaper, date published and story type. Sorting by newspaper and date published presents the sample news articles according to which newspaper they were published in well as the year they were published. The newspaper articles are also presented according to newspaper type identified in Chapter 3, section 3.2: hard news, soft news, editorial and column or opinion (Gravells, 2017; Zelizer and Allan, 2010; Cotter, 2010; Bird and Dardenne, 1988). After the initial categorization, this thesis employed content analysis using media frames and themes adopted from Wallace’s (2018) study. After the content analysis, it also employed critical discourse analysis through the identification of news values adopted from Bednarek and Caple’s (2017) study. This chapter presents the results of both content analysis and critical discourse analysis, as framed through the lens of Said’s (2003) theory of Orientalism.

It is important to note that this thesis made two types of comparative analysis throughout the discussion of the research findings. First, a comparative analysis between the major newspapers and the local community newspapers were made in the content analysis and CDA results sections (sections 4.1 to 4.3). Second, the Canadian media discourses identified in this study that are present in the two groups of newspapers were also compared to the discourses identified by other scholars studying news media discourse on Syrian refugees (Wallace, 2018; Tyyskä et al., 2017). These comparisons are discussed extensively in sections 3.3 and 3.4 of this chapter. As discussed in the previous chapter, one of this thesis’ main objective is to not only identify these discourses, but to also compare them to the discourses and trends found by other
researchers mentioned in Chapter 2, section 2.5. This is done to better understand the changing refugee discourses in relation to developing events in the Syrian refugee resettlement initiative, as explained in Chapter 2, section 2.6.

Several research findings were also formulated by this study, all of which will be discussed in detail in sections 4.2 and 4.3 of this chapter. The two key findings, however, are as follows. First, similar to the studies done by other scholars studying Canadian national newspapers and major dailies (Wallace, 2018; Tyyskä et al., 2017), the discourse of Syrian refugees being a “threat” or the “Other” is still present in the major Vancouver newspapers, with Syrians not being able to lend their voice and represent themselves in their own stories. The second key finding, however, is different from the findings of other studies. Based on the analysis, the smaller, local community newspapers are more inclusive of Syrian refugee voices compared to major newspapers, with better opportunities for representation. Moreover, the media discourse of community newspapers is geared towards helping the Syrian refugees successfully resettle in these communities.

As outlined in the previous chapters, this thesis focuses on the Canadian news media discourse about the Syrian refugee resettlement. As a researcher, my interest is specifically in refugee resettlement and local integration. Thus, this thesis focuses on the Canadian news media coverage of the Syrian refugee resettlement initiative from September 2015 to October 2017. The end of 2015 marks the release of Alan Kurdi’s photo and the shift to Liberal leadership, which made some positive changes to the Canadian refugee policy and had a positive effect on the media discourse on Syrian refugees (Molnar, 2016). However, I would argue that these positive changes do not necessarily translate to a positive news media discourse on Syrian refugees throughout this two-year period. This point will be evident throughout the discussion of this study’s results. However, this thesis also recognizes the efforts of local community newspapers in disseminating positive media discourse about refugees. Thus, section 3.4 of this chapter discusses the role these newspapers have in promoting resettlement and local integration of newly arrived Syrian refugees in these respective communities.
4.1. Preliminary Analysis: Major Newspapers

The preliminary content analysis involved sorting all the newspaper articles by *Newspaper, Date Published* and *Story Type*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Newspaper</th>
<th>Initial Count</th>
<th>Final Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vancouver Sun</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Province</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Using the software Nvivo, the major newspaper articles were identified by *Newspaper* as seen in Table 4.1. I read through the 160 news articles and reviewed the content, with duplicates and articles not connected to Syrian refugees removed. For example, articles mentioning the word “Syria” or “refugee” but do not pertain to Syrian refugees were excluded from the data set. The initial count of 160 news articles was reduced after this process, so the final count of the news articles was 144 (111 from *Vancouver Sun* and 33 from *The Province*).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>News Article Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The major newspaper articles were also sorted based on the year of publication. Table 4.2 shows that 2015 had the most number of articles about Syrian refugees in Vancouver newspapers, comprising of 76 out of the 144 news articles. This can be attributed to the Syrian refugee crisis being a pressing issue during the 2015 federal election, followed by the Liberal government’s announcement of resettling 25,000 Syrian refugees by the end of that year. The year 2016 followed with 48 articles while 2017 had 20 articles.

The articles were also sorted based on the newspaper sections in which the articles appeared. The major newspapers had 9 sections, with the newspaper section *Canada and World* having the most articles at 57. The sections *News* and *Other* have 35 and 24 articles, respectively. *Opinions* and *Editorials* both have 8 articles each while the
City news section have 7. The Entertainment and Scene sections both have 2 articles each while Comment has 1 article.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>News Article Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hard News</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soft News</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opinion</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Editorial</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Following the news story types discussed in Chapter 3 section 3.2, it became possible to collapse these news categories further. Table 4.3 shows the breakdown of the news articles by news type. The sections Canada and World and News are placed in the hard news report category. The soft news category was made up of feature articles from the City, Entertainment, Scene, Comment and Other news sections. The Opinion and Editorial sections had their own category. As discussed in Chapter 3, section 3.2, both the Opinion and Editorial sections are considered as other types of news media writing, separate from hard news and soft news. In total, the hard news category was comprised of 92 articles, while the soft news category was comprised of 36 articles. The Opinion section had 8 news articles while the Editorial had 8.

4.2. Preliminary Analysis: Community Newspapers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Newspaper</th>
<th>Initial Count</th>
<th>Final Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Langley Times</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peace Arch News</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Chilliwack Progress</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Abbotsford News</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Using the software Nvivo, the community newspaper articles were also identified as seen in Table 4.4. By reading through the news articles, duplicates and articles not connected to Syrian refugees were also removed. The initial count of 157 news articles was reduced to 114, with 23 of the articles coming from The Langley Times, 31 from Peace Arch News, 18 from The Chilliwack Progress and 42 from The Abbotsford News, respectively.
Table 4.5. Community Newspaper Data Set by Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>News Article Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The local community newspaper articles were also sorted based on the year of publication. In contrast to the Vancouver major newspapers, 2016 had the highest number of articles published about Syrian refugees in the 4 community newspapers with a 69 article count. 2015 had 23 news articles while the year 2017 had 22. This can be attributed to the arrival of Syrian refugees in these communities at the throughout the year 2016, after the Liberal government’s announcement of resettling 25,000 Syrian refugees in November 2015.

The articles were also sorted according to newspaper sections. The community newspapers had 7 sections. The News section had the most articles with 43 articles, followed by Opinion and Community with 30 and 29 respectively. Seven articles were from the Entertainment section while 3 articles were from the Lifestyle section. Lastly, both Editorial and Business sections had 1 article each.

Table 4.6. Community Newspaper Data Set by Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>News Article Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hard News</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soft News</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opinion</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Editorial</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Like the categories created for the major newspapers, these news categories were collapsed further, as seen in Table 4.6. The News section was sorted under the hard news report category. The soft news category was made up of feature articles found in the Community, Entertainment, Lifestyles and Business news sections. The Opinion and Editorial sections each had their own categories. In total, the hard news category is comprised of 43 articles, while the soft news category is comprised of 40 articles. The Opinion category had 30 opinion pieces, while the Editorial had 1 article. Compared to the major newspapers with a higher hard news count, the community newspapers have an almost equal number of hard news and soft news reports. This can
be attributed to the high number of feature articles in the *Community* section, which focused on the arrival of the refugees in the said communities.

### 4.3. Content Analysis: Themes

As discussed in Chapter 3, section 3.7, this thesis will be using media frames or themes from Wallace’s (2018) study on the national media coverage of Syrian refugees in Canada. The newspaper articles will be sorted under themes depending on the presence of certain keywords in the articles. For example, a newspaper article containing the word “ISIS” or “war” will be categorized under the media frame *conflict*. To give a better understanding of the themes adopted from Wallace (2018), Table 4.7 gives a description of each theme with a corresponding sample taken from either the Metro Vancouver major newspapers or the local community newspapers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Sample Text with Keyword</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Citizenship and Resettlement</td>
<td>Discussion of citizenship, immigration and sponsorship, as well as the refugees’ arrival in Canada.</td>
<td>“On Monday, the group held a regular meeting to prepare for the expected arrival of refugees in late February at the very earliest.” <em>(Abbotsford News, January 2016)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict</td>
<td>Discussion of conflict such as the Syrian war, the military and groups such as ISIS/ISIL.</td>
<td>“Six Canadian fighter jets have been bombing ISIL targets in Iraq since October 2014. The mission was expanded to include Syria in March 2015. Canada also has two surveillance aircraft and a refuelling plane operating in the two countries, and 69 commandos training Kurdish forces in northern Iraq.” <em>(Vancouver Sun, February 2016)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>Discussion of refugee family and children, as well as children’s schooling and health.</td>
<td>“For Heveen and Shergo, it was their first time in school in four years. They were in grades 6 and 5, respectively, when fighting forced them to flee their home in Syria. They fled to Turkey, where they were not allowed to attend school because they were Syrian.” <em>(Vancouver Sun, August 2016)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>Discussion on religion and religious practices i.e. Muslim and Christian faith.</td>
<td>“That complicating factor aside, Lo said ACS has received substantial support from the community, and especially from the local Muslim association. Other faith groups, both Christian and Sikh, have also been of great assistance, according to Imam Islam Ullah at the BC Muslim Association.” <em>(Abbotsford News, February 2016)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services and Programs</td>
<td>Discussion of resettlement services and programs for refugees, as well as housing, work and other government support.</td>
<td>“Masalmeh says learning English is not easy for him or his family. English lessons are just three times per week, on Mondays, Fridays and Saturdays.” <em>(Peace Arch News, July 2016)</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Using NVivo, the news articles were analyzed based on the themes present and was sorted by newspaper type – the major newspapers and the local community newspapers. The themes were also tallied based on Sources and References. For this study, sources in NVivo referred to the number of news articles that contained the media frame or theme. References, on the other hand, referred to the frequency of the presence of keywords under the corresponding media frame or themes in the sources. Table 4.8 shows the top themes and the corresponding sources and references present in the major newspapers, Vancouver Sun and The Province:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Sources</th>
<th>References</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Services and Programs</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>1187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>564</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizenship and Resettlement</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>574</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>479</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For this section, the two types of comparative analysis will be evident throughout the discussion of the research findings. This will be done to keep track of the trends and changes in Canadian news media discourse about the Syrian refugee resettlement. To reiterate, the City of Vancouver has resettled 191 Syrian refugees during this period. For the results of the content analysis of the major newspapers in the City of Vancouver, the top three themes were services and programs, family and citizenship and resettlement, as seen in Table 4.8. It is important to note that there was also a high number of articles with the theme of conflict for the major metropolitan newspapers, with 96 sources and 479 references. However, this research finding is significant as it is evident that the themes surrounding refugee resettlement are now more dominant than the conflict theme. According to Wallace (2018), the conflict theme was dominant in the national Canadian newspapers before the election of the Liberal government (before November 2015). It was especially dominant in the newspaper samples during the Conservative government leadership (January 2012 to July 2015), as most of the news coverage on Syrian refugees during the said period discussed the Syrian war and the conflict happening outside of Canada. Looking at this study, however, there is a considerable shift as the conflict theme comes after the themes surrounding refugee resettlement, as the study mostly examined articles published after the election period (September 2015 onwards). Molnar (2016) explains that this shift can be attributed to the Liberal
government winning the federal election, as Liberals had a more accepting stance on refugees than the Conservative government, as discussed in Chapter 3, section 3.2. As such, from the dominance of the conflict theme, the themes have shifted to themes corresponding to refugee resettlement such as services and programs, family and citizenship and resettlement.

As discussed in Chapter 3, the newspaper articles examined in this study were taken during a two-year period, starting from September 1, 2015 to October 31, 2017. This time period marked the publication of Alan Kurdi’s photo, the election of Liberal Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and the resettlement of more than 40,000 refugees in the country. The major newspapers’ dominant topic during the first 5 months of this period (September 2015 to February 2016) was the discussion on how Canada can fulfill Trudeau’s election promise of accepting 25,000 Syrian refugees by the end of 2015\textsuperscript{16}, which is reflected in the themes of services and programs, family and citizenship and resettlement. For example, an article from \textit{Vancouver Sun} entitled “Government will fall short of refugee target, data shows” discussed the number of refugees the country has accepted by the end of the said year. According to the article, while the Liberal government scaled back their promise of 25,000 refugees to 10,000 refugees, data shows that only around 6,300 have arrived in the country by December 31\textsuperscript{st} of that year (Berthiaume, December 31, 2015).

There were also trends in reporting that were evident in the major newspaper sample. For instance, 15 newspaper articles from November 2015 to February 2016 showed the trend of questioning the Liberal’s decision to accept 25,000 refugees within a given deadline. For example, an article from \textit{The Province} entitled “Canada can vet refugees quickly, safely: Expert” describes how accepting a high number of refugees within the timeframe can be done despite Immigration Minister John McCallum explaining that the government imposed deadline can be extended for the refugees to be undergo adequate security screening (MacLeod, November 19, 2015). This trend is also evident in Tyyskä et al.’s study (2017), with the newspaper \textit{National Post} also extensively discussing the 25,000 refugee target from November 2015 until February 2016 in 16 news articles. Tyyskä et al. (2017) argue that the focus of these discussions

\textsuperscript{16}While it would be interesting to discuss the implications of Trudeau’s politicization of the Syrian refugee crisis during the 2015 federal elections as part of the research findings, it was beyond the scope of this research.
was not about the refugees’ plight to Canada but rather the “viability, moral obligation, and support, with criticism of the government imposed deadline for refugee arrivals” (p. 5). In addition to this, the news articles also showed the Canadian public question the resettlement and the broader plan of immigration and integration (Tyyskä et al., 2017). Like the results of Tyyskä et al.’s study (2017), this study also revealed that the focus of the newspapers was not on the difficulties the refugees are experiencing but rather the potential problems the country might face in accepting a high number of the Syrian refugee population.

The focus on the administrative aspects of the Syrian refugee resettlement identified in Dimitrov et al.’s (2018) study is also evident in the major metropolitan newspapers. The administrative aspects such as temporary housing, healthcare and resettlement services for Syrian refugees were discussed extensively in 26 newspaper articles published from November 2015 to September 2016. For instance, an article in Vancouver Sun (2015) entitled “Liberals scale back hotel bill estimate for refugees; Money spent on processing, medical support, housing” discusses the federal government budget of $80 million for the reception of the 25,000 refugees. According to the article, the budget will not only be used for temporary housing at hotels in Toronto and Montreal, but it will also be used to cover airport processing, the processing of permanent residency cards and medical support (Quan, December 28, 2015). Thus, like Dimitrov et al.’s (2018) study on Turkish newspapers discussed in Chapter 2 section 2.5, the focus of both Vancouver Sun and The Province during this period was on “logistical issues such as refugee paperwork, legal status, transportation, and housing availability” (pp. 539-540).

In addition to this, Vancouver major newspapers also tend to focus on other immigrant groups that were previously resettled. For example, an article from Vancouver Sun entitled “PM says fear of immigrants ‘nothing new’; Integration takes time, Trudeau says” mentions the Greek and Italian settlers in Montreal back in the 1950s and how they eventually integrated into society (Vancouver Sun, September 16, 2016). According to Tyyskä et al. (2017), this trend is also evident in newspapers such as Toronto Sun. Tyyskä et al. (2017) explain that Toronto Sun showed a more liberal leaning towards the refugee resettlement by highlighting Canada’s values and humanitarian obligations. One of Toronto Sun’s reporting strategy during this period was to discuss “the record of humanitarian acts of Canadians and their government with regard to past refugee
groups” such as the Hungarians, Czechs and Vietnamese (Tyyskä et al., 2017, p. 6). Similarly, Vancouver Sun’s article entitled “Long, slow process of integration lies ahead for refugees” discusses how 60,000 Vietnamese “boat people” and Somalis were accepted into the country. Initially, they struggled with the language and unemployment but ultimately succeeded in integrating into Canadian society (Kirkey, November 28, 2015).

Still evident in the top three themes, the news articles in the second half of the time period (around April 2016 to October 2017, after the initial resettlement of the 25,000 Syrian refugees) also discussed refugee resettlement and services. For example, an article in The Province entitled “Syrians settling in non-traditional places: Many have moved to unexpected areas but Surrey remains most popular destination” discusses the support received by Government Assisted Refugees resettling in areas such as the city of Surrey (Saltman, May 5, 2017). The article discusses the help these refugees received from homeowners, landlords and organizations to find more affordable housing in the Metro Vancouver. Moreover, the said time period (April 2016 to October 2017) also made mention of refugee families participating in so called Canadian activities. Another article by The Province entitled “Syrian refugees hit the slopes; Mount Seymour: hundreds try skiing, snowboarding and tobogganing” describes Syrian refugee children participating in winter activities with the help of volunteers (Colebourn, April 4, 2016).

Overall, 8 articles published in Vancouver Sun and The Province focused on what the Syrian refugees are doing after resettling in cities in Metro Vancouver.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4.9. Community Newspapers Top Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Themes</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services and Programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizenship and Resettlement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As discussed in Chapter 1 and 3, the community newspapers chosen are published in Langley, Surrey and White Rock area, Abbotsford and Chilliwack. To reiterate, Langley accepted approximately 105 Syrian refugees during this period (ISS of BC, 2017). Surrey, on the other hand, resettled over 1,082 refugees, while Abbotsford resettled 179 refugees (ISS of BC, 2017; Fraser Valley Refugee Response Team, 2017). Lastly, the City of Chilliwack resettled 44 refugees during this period (Fraser Valley
Refugee Response Team, 2017). The four newspapers from these communities are named *The Langley Times* (now *Langley Advance Times* as of March 2019), *Peace Arch News, The Chilliwack Progress* and *The Abbotsford News*. For the community newspapers data set, the top three themes are services and programs, family and citizenship and resettlement, as seen in Table 4.9. This is similar to the dominant themes in the two major newspapers in Metro Vancouver. However, compared to the major newspapers, the number of articles mentioning conflict is considerably lower with 49 sources and 191 references.

While the top three themes of the two data sets are similar, the topics discussed are different. Most notably, the community newspapers included articles on community efforts to resettle arriving refugees. For example, after the release of Alan Kurdi’s photo in the media in September 2015, newspaper *Abbotsford News* released an article entitled, “Local organizations mobilize for refugee crisis” which describes how two local organizations in the City of Abbotsford (179 refugees resettled) are accepting donations to provide support for incoming refugees (Olsen, September 12, 2015). After the election of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau in November 2015, another article by *Abbotsford News* entitled “Forum covers Syrian resettlement” announced a forum open to the public which will provide information on the current Syrian refugee resettlement efforts in their community and what community members can do to help (Abbotsford News, January 15, 2016). Another article by *Chilliwack Progress* entitled, “Syrian family could touch down in Chilliwack within weeks” discusses the process of how a group of five individuals from Chilliwack (44 refugees resettled) came together to sponsor a Syrian family from Damascus (Feinberg, January 19, 2016). Evident in the news article samples, the topic of resettlement was not focused on criticisms or questions about the Liberal government resettling 25,000 refugees like in Metro Vancouver newspapers. The focus was on community efforts to help resettle the refugees arriving in their communities.

After the initial resettlement of 25,000 refugees in February 2016, 26 news articles from the community newspapers focused on stories of the refugee resettlement experience and services provided by the community, both of which still fall under the top three themes of resettlement. For example, an article by *Chilliwack Progress* entitled “Long road for Syrian family in Chilliwack” describes how a Syrian father hopes to get certified as an electrician in Canada, as well as get a copy of his driver’s license in
Arabic to be able to drive in the country (Feinberg, May 13, 2016). Another article by *Langley Times* called “Adjusting to life in Langley is a challenge to Syrian families” discusses Syrian refugee children’s struggles in school and how the community of Langley (105 refugees resettled) is providing English language support for these children (Tamminga, June 27, 2016).

### 4.4. A Comparative Analysis of the Themes

As discussed extensively in Chapter 3.8, this study adopted Wallace’s (2018) news frames in conducting content analysis. While her study covered a long period of news media coverage that spanned Harper’s Conservative leadership (January 1, 2012-July 31, 2015), the 2015 federal election campaigns (August 1, 2015-October 31, 2015) and the shift to Trudeau’s Liberal government (November 1, 2015-December 31, 2016), my study covered the 2015 federal election campaigns in conjunction with the publication of Alan Kurdi’s photo (September 1, 2015-October 31, 2015) and Trudeau’s Liberal leadership (November 1, 2015-October 31, 2017). In Wallace’s (2018) study, the conflict theme is the most frequently referenced theme with over 40,000 references in her sample of 4,473 newspaper articles. However, looking at the themes in relation to the federal elections, the study observed a decrease in the frequency of the conflict theme after the shift to Liberal leadership. It was observed that after the election period, the frequency of the themes about family, citizenship, services and human rights exponentially increased. During the post-election period, the family theme surpassed the conflict theme, and the conflict theme was closely followed by the citizenship and services themes (Wallace, 2018). Thus, the post-election news coverage then shifted the focus from the conflict in Syria to questions about how Syrian refugee families can resettle in Canada (Wallace, 2018).

Wallace’s (2018) findings are consistent with this study’s findings as this study also examined newspaper articles for the frequency of the themes in a two-year period that coincides with the end of the elections campaign to the shift to the Liberal government. However, while the conflict theme is the second most dominant theme in Wallace’s (2018) study (second only to the family theme), it only comes fourth in this study after themes such as services and programs, family and citizenship and resettlement (as seen in Tables 4.8 and 4.9). This finding is the same for both major Vancouver and local community newspapers. Wallace’s (2018) study also examined
newspaper articles from the *Vancouver Sun*. Her findings revealed that during the chosen period, *Vancouver Sun* discussed issues about housing and refugee services more extensively than the other newspapers (Wallace, 2018, p. 18). Wallace (2018) then speculated that the prominence of the services theme in *Vancouver Sun* may be tied to issues of housing affordability in the region (p. 18). This speculation is confirmed by this study as indicated in the previous section, as the administrative aspects of the refugee resettlement such as issues about temporary housing, healthcare and other services were discussed extensively in the major Vancouver newspaper sample in which *Vancouver Sun* is a part of.

Despite the prominence of the same themes for both major Vancouver and local community newspapers seen in Tables 4.8 and 4.9, I would argue that the framing of the issue surrounding the resettlement of refugee families and the services available to them were different. As Entman (1993) argues, news framing of a political issue tends to show the news text as a site of power, with politicians, journalists and other actors competing to dominate the framing of the text. Furthermore, Entman (1993) explains that in many cases, news texts tend to display “homogenous framing” of an issue when analyzed (p. 55). Thus, in the case of Metro Vancouver newspapers, this thesis argues that politicians and journalists dominated the framing of the issue of Syrian refugee resettlement by focusing on the administrative concerns of accepting refugees. This was evident in 29 out of 114 news articles from *Vancouver Sun* and *The Province*. Moreover, the framing of resettlement in major newspapers were riddled with criticisms of the Liberal government refugee policy, as well as questions about the broader plan of immigration and integration of these refugees in the country. This focus can also be attributed to the high number of hard news reports in the major newspaper data set, with 92 of the 144 articles being hard news articles. As discussed in Chapter 3, hard news reports tend to focus on “politics, economics, the doings of the powerful and international affairs” (Fulton et al., 2005, p. 143). Moreover, Cooper et al. (2017) suggest that national newspapers are also required to focus more on national government legislation and international events. As such, the focus of *Vancouver Sun* and *The Province* during this period was not on the refugees themselves but on the politics of accepting these refugees.

In contrast to the two major newspapers, the four local community newspapers in the data set focused on the communities’ humanitarian efforts during the Syrian refugee resettlement. This was evident in 51 out of 144 newspaper articles. The focus was not
on the administrative side of the issue but on the services and programs provided by the communities for the refugee families. Moreover, some articles also focused on the refugees’ personal experiences of struggle. Thus, this thesis argues that journalists and community members alike dominated the framing of the local community news by focusing on the community efforts to resettle refugees accepted in their city or township. This focus can also be attributed to the high number of soft news and opinion pieces in the data set. The soft news category had 40 articles while the opinion category had 30, which made up 70 articles out of 114 total number of articles. The two news categories contained a high number of human interest stories, which would explain the abundance of news reports on the lives of refugees, their experiences in the community and the stories of their Canadian sponsors. For instance, an opinion article from Abbotsford News (2016) entitled “Extraordinary People” details how University of Fraser Valley students who are members of the Arab Club have helped newly arrived Syrian refugees resettling in Abbotsford. These students offered to become translators for the Syrian refugees and their sponsors in order to help with the language and cultural barriers they might face (Neufeld, March 18, 2016).

As Steimel (2010) explains, human interest stories frame issues in an emotional or personal way that enables audiences to connect with the individuals represented in the news stories. Moreover, Cooper et al. (2017) also explain that these regional newspapers have more freedom and opportunities to explore these kinds of news stories as there is a need to have a more local angle and local content. As such, I argue that these community newspapers during this period were able to focus on the more personal aspects of the refugee resettlement in the country. Based on the high number of articles that focused on various community efforts, it is evident that the treatment of the topic of resettlement in community newspapers was solution oriented. Thus, this thesis notes that community newspapers’ focus during this time period was to provide solutions to help refugees resettle and integrate in these communities. This was

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17 According to Jóhannsdóttir (2018), one of the ways in which the news media industry is commercialized is through the practice of “emphasizing entertainment more than political information, or ‘soft’ news rather than ‘hard’, meaning news that is relevant to citizens” (p. 2). While the presence of a high number of soft news stories in these newspapers can allude to the commercialization of community newspapers, this claim cannot be made in the findings of this research as it is beyond the scope of the study.
achieved through continuously providing information on community fundraising events and services available for the Syrian refugees in these local communities.

4.5. Critical Discourse Analysis

After the initial content analysis, all the newspaper articles were sorted and further analyzed according to News Values and Tone. The news values were adopted from Bednarek and Caple’s (2017) study and are as follows: Consonance, Eliteness, Impact, Negativity, Positivity, Personalization, Proximity, Superlativeness, Timeliness, Unexpectedness (see Appendix B for the definition of each news value). The newspaper articles were also categorized according to the following tone: positive, negative or neutral. Through this analysis, the study came up with several findings by comparing the major and local community newspapers (see Appendix C for a list of attributes and coding).

4.5.1. Negativity and Superlativeness: Syrian Refugees as Threats

First, while the conflict theme is not as dominant after the shift to the Liberal Government in 2015, the news value Negativity is still present in 45 out of the 144 major Vancouver newspaper articles. The Negativity news value is evident in the discourse of Syrian refugees being security and economic “threats” that was present in both major newspapers. For example, while the news articles in late 2015 mostly discussed the resettlement of more than 25,000 refugees and the services available to them, the Paris attacks in November 2015 spurred discussion on terrorists possibly hiding among refugees (Faiola, November 19, 2015). An editorial from The Province entitled, “Our safety is more important than our promise to refugees” describes how steps should be taken to ensure “not one of the 25,000 refugees Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is promising to bring us before the end of the year is planning on repaying our hospitality by killing as many of us as possible” (Tupper, November 17, 2015, p. 15). In addition to being constructed as security threats, Syrian refugees are also represented as economic threats by focusing on the costs of refugee services. For instance, an article from Vancouver Sun entitled, “Liberals to restore health care benefits; Most Canadians don’t want more, poll says” discussed the extension of health care benefits to incoming Syrians in conjunction with Canadians saying they did not want to accept more refugees, as Canada is already “reaching its limit” (Levitz, February 19, 2016, p. B1). In another
opinion piece from *Vancouver Sun* entitled, “Help Canadians in need first”, the columnist expressed negative sentiments regarding the cost of the refugee resettlement being shouldered by Canadian taxpayers. According the columnist, the budget for Syrian refugee resettlement should be used to help Canadians who are homeless, war veterans or are members of the First Nations community (Murray, November 24, 2015).

According to Hier and Greenberg (2002), the media tend to focus on reporting the costs associated with the processing, resettlement and integration of refugees. As discussed in Chapter 2, section 2.5, this trend in reporting creates negative public sentiments (Mitrea and Jackson, 2015; Buonfino, 2014). Lawlor and Tolley (2017) explains that this primes the Canadian public to think of themselves and “givers” while the refugees are merely “takers”. As such, I argue that Metro Vancouver newspaper *Vancouver Sun* not only represented Syrian refugees during this period as security threats or terrorists but also as economic threats, as the focus of the news coverage were mostly on the negative news stories (news value Negativity) during the resettlement. Overall, 37 articles from both *Vancouver Sun* and *The Province* discussed the resettlement of Syrian refugees in terms of its costs.

In addition to this, 39 out of the 144 news articles contain the news value, Superlativeness, whereby Canada’s Syrian refugee resettlement efforts are discussed using quantifiers, metaphors and simile relating to the high number of refugees (Bednarek and Caple, 2017). For instance, after the photo of Alan Kurdi was released in September 2015, an article by *Vancouver Sun* entitled, “Liberals say rule causes refugee backlog; Parties would exempt privately sponsored Syrians” quoted former Conservative Prime Minister Stephen Harper, saying that Canada "cannot open the floodgates and airlift tens of thousands of refugees out of a terrorist war zone without proper process. That is too great a risk for Canada", citing the possible security and health risks of doing so (Berthiaume, September 9, 2015, p.1). While there is the obvious representation of Syrian refugees as threats, the phrases “open the floodgates” and “airlift tens of thousands of refugees” also represent the arrival of these refugees in such large quantities that serve to give the impression that they might swarm the host country (Olsen et al., 2016). Another article from *Vancouver Sun* (2015) entitled, “A terrorist among refugees; Suicide bomber arrived in Greece Oct. 3 with fake Syrian passport” describes the refugee plight as “the same trail into Western Europe trodden by hundreds of thousands of asylum seekers escaping war and conflict in the Middle East” (Faiola,
November 19, 2015, p. 3). Again, along with the representation as “possible risks” and “security threats” these references to the arrival of large quantities of refugees, as Olsen et al. (2016) argue, causes a “siege mentality” that promotes suspicion of these refugees” (p. 63).

Thus, the news values Negativity and Superlativeness present in these two Metro Vancouver major newspapers serve to perpetuate the discourse of Syrian refugees being a “threat” to Canada. Following Said’s (2003) theory of Orientalism, I argue that these refugees are cast as different and as a “dangerous Other” through this hegemonic discourse of securitization as identified by Buonfino (2004). According to Buonfino (2004) “incoming Other” such as refugees tend to produce “collective fear” within host societies through messages of criminalization and threats to safety and health (p. 35). This was evident in the news articles from Vancouver Sun and The Province, as demonstrated by the Negativity and Superlativeness news values.

4.5.2. Canadians as Humanitarians

Another news media discourse identified in this study is the discourse of Canada being a humanitarian country and Canadians being generous. This is present in both the Metro Vancouver major metropolitan newspapers and local community newspapers, though it is more evident in the local community newspapers. It was evident in only 6 out of 144 major Metro Vancouver newspapers while it was present in 24 out of 114 local community news articles. These articles mostly focused on discussions of Canadians being humanitarians. For example, after the photo of Alan Kurdi was released to the public in September 2015, an editorial from Abbotsford News entitled, “Calling for compassion” describes Canadians as compassionate people who have taken in thousands of Vietnamese “boat people” in the 1980s. As such, the writer urges the public to also be open to the issue of resettling Syrian refugees (Abbotsford News, September 17, 2015, p.1). This finding is similar to the findings of scholars studying news media discourse on Syrian refugees in Canada. These scholars also concluded that the media discourse in Canada on Syrian refugees revolves around upholding Canadian values and promoting Canada’s humanitarianism (Tyyskä et al., 2017; Molnar, 2016).
Consequently, the idea of Canadians being compassionate and generous is complemented by the discourse of Syrian refugees having to publicly announce how grateful they are under the “benevolent behest of Canada” and Canadians (Molnar, 2016, p. 71). This “grateful” discourse seems to be done to counter the hateful narratives of citizens who might view them as people who are abusing help provided by the community or the services provided by the government. This was also evident in some of the newspaper articles. For example, when a group of newly arrived Syrian refugees arrived in Vancouver in early 2016, they were pepper sprayed by a man riding a bicycle (Kahrmann, 2016). Despite this, the reporter covering the event still emphasized how grateful the refugees were in an interview. In an article from Vancouver Sun entitled “Pepper-spray attack victim still grateful to Canada”, Syrian Ahmad Hwichan recalls “coughing up blood and hearing children screaming” after the attack and yet he is quoted saying “I love you Canada so much” (Vancouver Sun, January 14, 2016, p. 4). In addition to countering hateful or negative opinions, this may also have been done to portray the refugee as “genuine”. As discussed in Chapter 2, section 2.4, a “genuine” refugee in the Canadian context is a vulnerable and helpless individual who should always be grateful to the host country (Olsen et al., 2016). In contrast to the constructed image of the “bogus” refugee who exercises agency and demands to have rights as any other citizen of the host country, the “genuine” refugee will always express gratitude to the host country no matter the situation they are in (Olsen et al., 2016).

4.5.3. Eliteness and Personalization: Conflicting Discourses

The third finding, however, is different from the findings of other studies about the media coverage of Syrian refugees in Canada. This thesis found that the majority of these community newspapers were inclusive of Syrian refugee voices. Refugees are better represented in community newspapers than in major Vancouver newspapers18. In the major newspapers, 77 out of the 144 news articles contained the news value Eliteness, meaning the voices present were mostly from the elite, such as organization

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18 A study by Yu and Ahadi (2010) also compared The Vancouver Sun and The Province with two local ethnic newspapers, The Vancouver Chosun and The Korea Daily. While their study examined the presence of visible minorities in the news coverage of the 2008 federal election, their results have parallels to this study. Their study revealed that both The Vancouver Sun and The Province dedicated only 5% of their news to covering visible minorities, while the local ethnic newspapers dedicated 21%.
leaders and politicians. 52 of the 144 news articles interviewed government officials, while 25 used organization leaders as a news source. Moreover, out of the 144 news articles, only 16 interviewed Syrian refugees, 11 used former refugees as a news source and only 4 interviewed refugee sponsors.

Content analysis done on the major news articles revealed that the framing of the issue of resettlement focused the administrative side of the issue—meaning the focus was on the country’s refugee policies and the politics of refugee processing and resettlement. This focus then accounts for the dominance of the voice of the elite in the news stories about Syrian refugees. As such, similar to other studies done on national newspapers (Wallace, 2018; Tyyskä et al. 2017; Molnar, 2016), there is a lack of representation of Syrian refugees telling their own stories in major Vancouver newspapers. Instead, their stories are being told by the powerful elite, as substantiated by the presence of the Eliteness news value.

On the other hand, based on the analysis done on the community newspapers, 72 out of the 114 news articles contained Personalization as a news value, which means that both refugees and regular members of the community were given a voice in these articles. Out of the 72 news articles, 10 news articles interviewed Syrian refugees, 10 interviewed refugee sponsors, 2 interviewed former refugees and 50 used the regular members of the community such as teachers, students and volunteers as news sources. While there were only 10 community news articles that interviewed Syrian refugees compared to the 16 in major Vancouver newspapers articles, I still argue that these refugees are better represented in the community newspapers, as most of these major newspaper articles utilized only a comment or two from the refugees to provide context to the Syrian refugee conflict.

Going back to the news value of Personalization in community newspapers, 60 newspaper articles used community members and refugee sponsors as news sources compared to only 10 articles that interviewed Syrian refugees. This finding can be interpreted in two ways. First, it can be argued that the community members’ voices are still more dominant than those of the refugees. This then takes away the agency of these refugees to frame their own depictions, as most of their stories are being told by other members of the community. However, as McAllister (2011) points out, it may be difficult for refugees to step forward “to identify the denigrating circumstances of their existence”,

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especially when they “have no legal citizenship rights and are suffering from loss, violence and fear for their family and friends elsewhere” (p. 11). It may also be difficult for them to step forward and be interviewed as they may be experiencing cultural and language barriers as newcomers. Thus, the dominance of the voice of the community members and refugee sponsors in these community papers as they rally for support for the new arrivals then serve a purpose. The news articles extensively discuss the kind of services and support these refugees need, based on the interactions these community members had with the members of the resettled refugee families who may not be ready to step forward yet.

Moreover, the focus of the 10 news articles that interviewed newly arrived Syrian refugees were the refugees’ stories of plight, survival, resettlement and starting a “new life” in Canada. They were not presented as potential threats nor were they dismissed – these refugees were named and were allowed to share their personal experiences in these news articles. For example, an article in *Chilliwack Progress* entitled “Meet the first Syrian family to arrive in Chilliwack” interviews the Hadla family about their experiences in their hometown of Daraya, Syria (Feinberg, March 28, 2016). Another article from *Abbotsford News* entitled “The text message that changed life for a Syrian refugee family” details the story of a young couple named Heba and Mohammed who lived in United Arab Emirates and Lebanon before being granted asylum to Canada (Olsen, February 13, 2016). Perhaps the most detailed account of a Syrian family’s journey to resettlement was from *Abbotsford News*. The article, entitled “Long Road Home: A family starts fresh after a turbulent decade”, tells the story of a refugee family who were detained in Syria, Cyprus and then Indonesia, while they waited to be resettled in Abbotsford, Canada (Gawley, October 12, 2016).

In addition to sharing personal stories in the community news articles, some articles also represent Syrian refugees as educated individuals, citing their educational background and their occupations before the resettlement. For example, an article from *Peace Arch News* interviews a Syrian refugee family sponsor who says Syrians are very familiar with digital technology, citing their knowledge in using ATM machines and transit cards (Browne, February 11, 2016). In addition to this, another article from *Abbotsford News* describes refugee Shanga Rahim Karim as a journalist working for women’s right’s issues while her husband, Bakr is an accountant (Hopes, February 7, 2016). Another article in *Chilliwack Progress*, describes refugee Zach Al-Khawaldeh as an
electrician with knowledge in high voltage wire repairs, who hopes to also get certified as an electrician in Canada (Feinberg, March 28, 2016). Lastly, an article Peace Arch News describe refugee Masalmeh as having a clerical job for the Syrian government, and that he was happy and content before the war (Hoekstra, July 14, 2016).

While these findings provide evidence of community newspapers personalizing and humanizing these refugees, this thesis argues that some of the depictions of Syrian refugees still Orientalize them. For instance, the article from Peace Arch News (2016) describing how a sponsor views a Syrian refugee’s familiarity with ATM machines and transit cards seems to assume that the locals in these communities are not aware that these refugees are digitally literate. Moreover, the focus on these refugees’ former employment and educational reminders also seem to serve as a reminder to the locals that these refugees are also educated and employed in their home country. Following Said’s (2003) theory of Orientalism, this thesis argues that this is “cultural hegemony” at work, with European ideas being regarded as superior over Oriental ideas, which are deemed inferior and backwards (p. 7). As such, there is the discourse of Canadians seeing themselves as more educated, digitally literate and superior compared to Syrian refugees who are uneducated and poor victims of conflict. Thus, despite the good intentions of community newspapers, I still argue that this viewpoint further marginalizes Syrian refugees and constructs them as “the Other”.

Despite these conflicting discourses, I still argue that these local community newspapers are more humanizing than their major counterparts, as most of the articles represented these refugees as people with their own stories and experiences. An article from Langley Times entitled “They are people who need refuge” interviews a sponsor and former refugee named Shigali who is quoted saying:

“They are people like us — like me and you — and in the end they are looking for community, for belonging. They’re looking for ... a place to call home, and when we step back and think about those things it becomes a bit easier to engage in sponsorship (Langley Times, February 9, 2016, p.1)”

Another redeeming quality of these community newspapers is that they also show the refugees’ desire to have agency and independence. As discussed extensively in Chapter 2 section 2.5, studies on the Canadian media representations of Syrian refugees revealed that these refugees are often represented as vulnerable, helpless
victims who need to be “saved” by the host country (Bhatia and Jenks, 2018; Dimitrova et al., 2018; Tyyskä et al., 2017; Fotopoulos and Kaimaklioti, 2016; Olsen et al., 2016). While some community newspaper articles still portray Syrian refugees as “victims”, most articles portray these refugees as individuals who do not want to be seen as a burden to the host country. These news articles interview both refugees and Canadian sponsors, and both sides acknowledge this desire. For example, an article from Abbotsford News quoted a refugee sponsor as saying, “They want to be independent, they’ve been very clear on that. I’m fully confident that they will be able to integrate into society very well. (Olsen, February 6, 2016, p.1)” A refugee interviewed by the same newspaper also expressed her desire to “dispel those notions” about refugees taking advantage of government services such as healthcare (Hopes, February 7, 2016, p. 1). Instead, she argues that foreigners like her can make contributions to her community, and that “she and the refugees she has met are eager to give back to their communities because they are so appreciative of the opportunities they have been given (Hopes, February 7, 2016, p. 1). While this particular news story also reflects the discourse of being grateful to the host country, I argue that it still serves to not only humanize these refugees but to also empower them.

More importantly, the study found that these community newspapers respond to the refugees’ and their community’s needs. This was evident in 51 out of 114 community newspaper articles, in all the news story types. These news stories announce community meetings and orientations about the Syrian refugee resettlement, ways to help in the resettlement process, as well as community fundraising activities to help sponsor refugee applications or resettle newly arrived refugees. For example, a news article from Peace Arch News announced a folk and flamenco fundraiser by a local church to help sponsor a Syrian family of four (Browne, May 27, 2016). Chilliwack Progress, on the other hand, published a story on the Immigrant Services for Chilliwack Community Services’ efforts to gather donated Arabic-English dictionaries to help Syrian refugees (Chilliwack Progress, April 14, 2016). In addition to this, there were several events announced by these newspapers in which Syrian refugees were invited to share their experiences through storytelling and performances. For instance, Langley Times published an article that invites readers to a gathering hosted by Langley Community Services Society for newly arrived Syrians and community members. The gathering included a presentation by Syrian refugees in which they shared their personal stories.
These efforts of the communities show what McAllister (2011) calls “the strength of the social and political networks” that have been established over time as the community members and the refugees interact and co-exist (p. 11). The willingness of these refugees to share their stories and participate in these events also show that they “feel safe” in these respective communities and that their presence is legitimized by the community members (McAllister, 2011, p.11).

Given the considerable number of negative news stories about Syrian refugees in major Vancouver newspapers, it is remarkable that the community newspapers are also supporting community efforts to understand cultural differences. For instance, one of the communities hosted a cultural sensitivity workshop to better understand and relate to the newly arrived Syrian refugees. Newspaper *Chilliwack Progress* announced a local workshop hosted by Peter Twele, a Surrey-based linguist, author and speaker who spent more than a decade in Jordan, Yemen and Syria. In this workshop, Twele offered cultural sensitivity tools with the aim of “dispelling the fear factor” and promote empathy and understanding especially for those sponsoring refugee families (Feinberg, February 24, 2016). This is a very clear example of these community newspapers being solution oriented when it comes to refugee resettlement in their communities. They do so by responding to the needs of the newly arrived refugees and by acting as a promoter of community building activities.

Lastly, a new narrative emerges in community newspapers that is not evident in major newspapers according to other studies. In these community newspapers, Canadians articulate that Syrian refugees are not the fortunate ones, rather they are the more fortunate ones for being born in the country. This discourse sees Canadians themselves as grateful for being born in a country that is not torn by conflict. In an opinion column from *Langley Times*, a Langley resident writes, “Of course, our being here in the first place is purely an accident of birth. It’s not like we did anything to deserve the privilege of having been born in Canada (Anderson, September 7, 2016, p. 1).” Moreover, some individuals recognize that their grandparents or great-grandparents

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19 According to Yu (2016), visible minorities in Canadian mainstream media are often “under-represented” or misrepresented, despite the country’s effort to embrace multiculturalism (p. 344). As such, this thesis finds the efforts of this community and their publication to address these cultural differences remarkable.
are also immigrants that resettled in Canada. In an opinion letter from Abbotsford News, an Abbotsford resident recalls her grandparents arriving from Ukraine as refugees 80 years ago, before becoming Canadian citizens (McMorris, July 6, 2016). Thus, this new discourse shows Canadians themselves being grateful and not the other way around.

4.5.4. Tone

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tone</th>
<th>Major Newspapers</th>
<th>Community Newspapers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>24 (16.67%)</td>
<td>73 (64.03%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>59 (40.97%)</td>
<td>21 (18.42%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>61 (42.36%)</td>
<td>20 (17.55%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>144 (100%)</td>
<td>114 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall, the content and discourse analysis of the two sample data sets revealed that a high number of the Vancouver major newspapers articles had a negative tone in their news coverage of the Syrian refugee resettlement. This tone was evident in 40.97% of the sampled news articles from the Vancouver Sun and The Province. These articles criticized the government’s plan to resettle the initial 25,000 refugees and the potential cost of accepting such a large number to Canadian taxpayers. These articles also focused on the conflict in Syria, as well as the discourse of these refugees as threats. In contrast, only 18.42% of the local community newspapers articles had a negative tone. These articles also echoed some concerns about Syrian refugees being threats, as well as the potential cost of supporting these refugees. However, some of the news articles from both samples that contained a negative tone also questioned the government or themselves for not supporting the refugees enough. This was apparent in the samples published from September to November 2015, which coincides with the publication of Alan Kurdi’s photo. This finding provides evidence that the discourses around Syrian refugees are ever-changing, and are affected by the changing social and political context in Canada.

In contrast, community newspapers had a more positive tone and had more positive news stories about the issue. This was evident in 64.03% of the community newspaper articles sampled, compared to the 16.67% of the sampled major newspapers. Most of the community newspaper articles with a positive tone focused on the resettled refugees in their respective communities and their optimism about starting
a “new life” in Canada. Other articles acknowledged the fundraisers and events the community members have planned to provide support for the refugees. As such, it is evident that these publications disseminate positive news stories in order to help Syrian refugees successfully resettle in their communities.

4.6. The Role of Canadian Newspapers in the Syrian Refugee Resettlement: A Conclusion

As outlined in sections 4.2 and 4.3 of this chapter, this thesis made two types of comparative analysis throughout the discussion the findings. A comparative analysis was done between the major newspapers and the local community newspapers and another analysis was conducted by comparing the news media discourses identified in this study with the discourses identified by other scholars (Wallace, 2018; Tyyskä et al., 2017). Looking at the findings from the two newspaper data sets, it is clear that there are two competing news media discourses on the issue of Syrian refugee resettlement present in the two groups of newspapers. Based on this study’s findings, this negative framing and negative news media discourse about Syrian refugees is present in major newspapers in Vancouver. According to McKay, Thomas and Blood (2011), major metropolitan newspapers tend to follow national discourses on immigration and frame refugees and asylum seekers negatively. Thus, this thesis argues that the negative national discourse on refugees in Canada is replicated in the major metropolitan newspapers. In particular, this thesis also argues that the hegemonic discourse of securitization of immigration as identified by Buonfino (2004), still remains as the dominant discourse on refugees and asylum seekers in Vancouver’s major newspapers. Following this hegemonic discourse of securitization, Syrian refugees are still then portrayed as a security concern and as a “dangerous Other”, as demonstrated by news articles from the Vancouver major newspapers.

Also outlined in this chapter, Syrian refugees are discursively constructed as “threats” and also as “victims” that Canadians extend humanitarian assistance to. They are constructed as either a “vulnerable and helpless Other” or the other side of Othering, a “national threat” (Olsen et al., 2016, p. 65). As such, Buonfino (2004) argues that the discourse of securitization is justified by the notion of placing boundaries between the two different groups, the citizens and “the refugees”. Thus, following Said’s (2003) theory of Orientalism, a binary opposition then is created between the citizens of the West
(Canada) and the East (Syria). As explained by Olsen et al. (2016), Syrian refugees are portrayed in contrast to Canadian citizens, further marginalizing them. Furthermore, it is interesting to note the refugees' lack of representation in their own stories of resettlement in major newspapers. As Yu (2018) argues, “the continued marginalization of minority voices and limited access to those voices for the rest of society hinders opportunities to listen and be listened to” (p. 6). With the focus on government legislation and the logistics of resettlement, the study revealed that the dominant voices in these news articles were of the politicians and journalists. Thus, this thesis argues that the dominance of the voices of the politicians and journalists serve to further marginalize and Other this vulnerable population.

With the dominance of the voices of the elite, Buonfino (2004) then argues that the issue of immigration then becomes highly politicized. Following Van Dijk’s (2008) approach to CDA, access or control of public discourse and communication channels is an important resource for a group to assert dominance. Thus, this thesis argues that the Canadian media discourse is controlled by Canadian politicians and leaders which then reproduces the hegemonic discourse of securitization in response to the issue of resettlement. Buonfino (2004) supports this by explaining that the hegemonic discourse serves to keep the status quo.

Contrary to the major newspapers, the local community newspapers were more sympathetic towards the struggles of Syrian refugees. As outlined in the previous section, the analysis of the local community news articles revealed that the news media discourse surrounding refugees and asylum seekers was more positive compared to the media discourse of major newspapers. Moreover, these newspapers were more inclusive of refugee voices as they used a range of sources including Syrian refugees, former refugees from other countries, refugee sponsors and regular members of the community. This key research finding is similar to Cooper et al.’s (2017) finding when they conducted an analysis of Australian regional newspapers, as discussed in Chapter 2, section 2.5. According to Cooper et al. (2017), their analysis of regional or community newspapers revealed that the refugees that were resettled in the community were framed in humanizing ways. The focus of the news articles were on the refugees’ personal stories, their hopes for the future, as well as integration through education, training and employment. This reporting strategy was also evident in local community newspapers, as demonstrated by the analysis done on the news articles. This, along
with less use of government sources in the news stories, result in local communities having a stronger voice over elite leaders and politicians (Cooper et al., 2017).

However, Cooper et al. (2017) also warn of the voice of the journalists overpowering the voices of Syrian refugees. In their study, for instance, despite a refugee sharing a positive story about her experience in refugee camps, the news story inadvertently reverted to recounting the “horrors of civil war” to better fit the “refugee story” of conflict, plight and survival (Cooper et al., 2017, p. 85). Thus, in this case, the journalists continue to have the strongest voice in these news stories take away the agency that refugees have in framing their own depictions (Cooper et al., 2017, p. 83). This was also observed in some of the community newspaper samples, as most of the refugees’ depictions seem to follow the “refugee story”. While resettled Syrian refugees could share their personal histories through numerous interviews, the voice of the journalists were apparent, as they controlled the direction of the story. For example, in an article by Abbotsford News (2016) Syrian refugee Mohammad recounted his time with his brother in United Arab Emirates (UAE) and his marriage to his wife Heba during what was supposed to be a “three-day ceremony and party in the large backyard of Mohammad’s family home” that turned into “a two-hour wedding that was held in a hotel in Jordan” because of the war (Olsen, February 13, 2016, p. 1). While Mohammad shares his personal story of displacement, the journalist could not help but add details such as "a small country torn to shreds by warring functions" and "refugees desperate to escape their homeland" to frame the news article closer to the “refugee story” that readers are familiar with. Thus, the “refugee story”, as told through the voice of the journalist, poses the danger of the identities of Syrian refugees being defined by the war. Lubkemann (2010) notes that refugees tend to be framed as “victims” with no personal histories, whose existence began with the conflict and the war. As such, Kyriakides, Bajjali, McLuhan and Anderson (2018) argue that refugee policies and the media tend to silence the Syrian refugees’ “pre-conflict identities and social roles” by failing to recognize the refugees’ pre-conflict histories and cultural practices.

Regardless, this thesis recognizes the positive role of the selected local community newspapers in the resettlement and integration of newly arrived Syrian refugees in the communities. According to the UNHCR (2018), one of the durable solutions for refugees is local integration. UNHCR (2018) defines local integration as the process of “finding a permanent home in the country of asylum and integrating into the
local community” (p. 30). According to UNHCR (2018), the ultimate objective is for refugees to become not just permanent residents or citizens of the country, but also “to be able to pursue sustainable livelihoods and contribute to the economic life of the host country, and live among the host population without discrimination or exploitation” (p. 30). According to Birjandian (2016), it is crucially important for refugees to have “a net of support immediately upon their arrival, followed by a package of customized programs and services to help them overcome their personal barriers to integration” (p. 52). In addition to this, it is also equally important to create a welcoming environment for these refugees as creating positive experiences will further help in successfully resettling and integrating them (Birjandian, 2016, p. 52).

As discussed in Chapter 1 section 1.6 and Chapter 2 section 3.6.2, community newspapers are “hyper-local” as they are effective in addressing the needs of the community (News Media Canada, 2017c). In the case of the Syrian refugee resettlement in Metro Vancouver and the Lower Mainland, they are then driven by the need of the communities for additional support to help the new arrivals. For instance, these community newspapers published stories about sponsors welcoming refugees at the airport and their need for volunteer translators. The newspaper articles also published stories of community organizations’ fundraising events to help pay for the refugees’ housing, as well as other efforts to provide other services such as English language lessons. Moreover, the newspapers also shared news stories of Syrian refugees and their efforts to integrate into the local community through joining meetings, attending events, undergoing trainings and gaining employment. Using these examples, it is evident that community newspapers act as a vehicle for information on the Syrian refugee resettlement, with the purpose of rallying community members to provide a welcoming environment for the new arrivals. Moreover, the findings of this thesis suggest that the discourse of being grateful to the host country is now being articulated by Canadians themselves in these community newspapers. Several news articles have interviewed community members who stated that Syrian refugees are not the fortunate ones for being resettled, rather they as Canadians are the more fortunate ones for being born in a country not torn by war or conflict. These community newspapers then serve to challenge the conservative national news discourses about refugees and about how Canadians do not want them to resettle in the country.
Despite singular events such as the Paris attacks shifting the news media discourse on Syrian refugees as explained in Chapter 2 sections 2.5 and 2.6, I argue that these community newspapers in general help with the local integration of newly resettled Syrian refugees through dissemination of positive media discourse about refugees. According to Cooper et al. (2017), while positive news stories do not directly translate to immediate acceptance in the community, framing issues such as immigration positively can lead to a positive impact. Pedersen and Hartley (2015) explain further by saying positive news stories may serve to challenge negative perceptions and can be a powerful factor in changing negative attitudes about refugees and asylum seekers. As such, this thesis argues that community newspapers are actively committed in transforming attitudes towards the refugee resettlement through the setting of the local agenda. It does so through the dissemination of discourses about community building and social inclusion. According to Birjandian (2016), successful resettlement and integration can only begin if refugees feel "welcomed, supported and accepted" in their respected communities (p. 52). Thus, I argue that community newspapers frame resettlement efforts as community building events that promote a sense of belonging for all the members of the community. Most of the news stories discuss successful local advocacies and announce fundraisers or community events to help resettle newly arrived refugees. These events are open to everyone and combined with the positive tone of the news stories, I argue that these newspapers have a positive impact in the Syrian refugee resettlement initiatives in these communities.
Chapter 5.

Conclusion

My interest in the media representation of refugees began with the release of the photo of Alan Kurdi back in September 2015. Three years later, the image remains as the driving force behind this research. It is the image that many consider as a political turning point in the Syrian refugee crisis. The release of the heartbreaking photo also galvanized the public all over the world, with many protesting that their government act on the pressing issue of the refugee resettlement. With the events that followed the release of this image, this thesis sought to explore the news media discourses surrounding the resettlement of Syrian refugees in Metro Vancouver and two neighbouring communities of the Fraser Valley. It recognized the opportunity to explore the news media discourses in these communities where these refugees were resettled, through the analysis of local community newspapers. The study then evolved into a comparative analysis of Vancouver major metropolitan newspapers and local community newspapers from Metro Vancouver and the Fraser Valley. This was done not only to compare the discourses present in these newspaper articles, but also to understand the changing refugee discourses in relation to the changing social and political environment in Canada.

Using the qualitative data analysis software Nvivo, the newspaper articles from the two newspaper groups were sorted and analyzed. A total of 144 news articles were selected from Vancouver Sun and The Province, while 114 community news articles were selected from The Langley Times, Peace Arch News, The Chilliwack Progress and The Abbotsford News. The study employed a mixed methods approach, using content analysis to explore media frames and discourse analysis to examine the news media discourses in these newspapers. This thesis found two key findings. First, the negative national discourse surrounding Syrian refugees found in national broadsheets were replicated in Vancouver newspapers. The Syrian refugees were not only portrayed as a security threat, but also as helpless victims that are a burden to Canada. This may be in part of these newspapers’ focus on the administrative aspects of the Syrian refugee resettlement and integration. One of the key reporting strategy of these newspapers is to
discuss the resettlement initiative in terms of its cost to be shouldered by Canadian taxpayers. In addition to this, major newspapers tend to use government news sources, along with experts and organization leaders whose concerns are mostly administrative issues. As such, it is interesting to note the lack of presence of Syrian refugees in their own news stories. According to Tyyskä et al. (2017), “the assigning of neediness and passivity to refugees, combined with the low numbers of interviews with them, in favour of other expert or insider informants, reflects how the media engage in the process of “Othering” Syrian refugees” (p. 11). As Olsen et al. (2016) explain, Syrian refugees are constructed as either a vulnerable or a dangerous Other, which stands in contrast to the citizens of the host country such as Canada.

The second key finding was that local community newspapers were more humanizing in their portrayal of Syrian refugees, much more so than their major counterparts. The study revealed that the news media discourse surrounding Syrian refugees and their resettlement was positive in community newspapers. While both major and community newspapers reported the issues of refugee resettlement and integration, the focus of community newspapers was not on the administrative aspects but rather the community efforts to help the newly arrived refugees. This may be attributed to the high number of human interest stories published in community newspapers during this period. As Steimel (2010) explains, human interest stories personalize the issue by helping the audience personally connect to the people in the news stories. This, along with the use of Syrian refugees and community members as news sources, the newspapers became more inclusive of Syrian refugee voices in their reporting.

However, as Cooper et al. (2017) note, there is a danger of the voice of the journalists overpowering the voices of Syrian refugees. This was evident in some of the local community newspaper articles in the data set. While the refugees were interviewed and asked to share their experiences before the war, the journalists still directed the news story closer to the narrative of “the refugee” by focusing on recounting their escape from the violence and persecution they face in their home country. Thus, Cooper et al. (2017) note that there should be an awareness of the dominance of the voice of these journalists and other news sources as they can take away the agency that refugees have in framing their own depictions (p. 83). Nevertheless, this thesis finds that local community newspapers have a positive role in the Syrian refugee resettlement with its
humanizing refugee depictions and its promotion of community building activities
dedicated to helping the new arrivals. Community news coverage is then a practice in
integration. It contributes to the resettlement by providing instructions about how to help
Syrian refugees and organizing the community to act.

The study also recognized the importance of analyzing media discourse in
relation to developing events. Following the release of the photo of Alan Kurdi back in
September 2015, Molnar (2016) explains that the image had the same galvanizing effect
on the Canadian public. Many wrote to newspapers stating Canada should do more to
help refugees like Alan Kurdi. In response, the Liberal government pledged to accept
25,000 Syrian refugees by the end of 2015, with this target eventually being reached in
February 2016 (Gilmour, 2018). Looking at these events, it is evident that the media and
the public discourse around this time was more positive and supportive of Syrian
refugees. However, the discourse suddenly changed after the November 2015 Paris
attacks, with the Canadian news media associating Syrian refugees with terrorist
attacks. As Molnar (2016) explains, Canada’s response to the refugee crisis is not static
but highly subject to change, as it shifts from “suspicion to sympathy and then back
again” (p. 69). This shift from negative to positive media discourse and back highlights
the fragility of refugee discourse. Thus, it would be interesting for future studies to delve
deeper into the changing factors in the Canadian refugee discourse in response to the
developments in the Syrian refugee resettlement initiative.

This research study also encountered several limitations. First, the news articles
from the data sets were downloaded from Factiva, an online database. As such, non-
verbal elements such as photographs, print size and the article layout were not
considered in the analysis. While these elements can add more support and context to a
well carried out discourse analysis, it is one of the limitations this study encountered.
Second, some studies argue that the media, policymakers and the public reinforce each
other and function in a feedback loop (Lawlor and Tolley, 2017; Buonfino, 2004). For the
purposes of this study, however, this loop was not examined and the focus was solely on
the media frames and discourses that the news media produce. In addition to this, the
study only analyzed newspaper articles published during a particular time period. The
two-year period (September 1, 2015 to October 31, 2017) was chosen for it covers
important events of the Syrian refugee resettlement initiative such as the release of Alan
Kurdi’s photo, the shift from a Conservative to a Liberal leadership and the resettlement
of over 40,000 Syrian refugees in the country (Gilmour, 2018). While these events are major developments in Canada’s refugee resettlement initiative, I recognize that the scope of this research only addresses a portion of relevant issues regarding the news media discourses associated with the Syrian refugees resettling in the country. Nevertheless, this study aims to make sense of the complex issue and should be considered alongside other studies on Syrian refugees and news media discourse in Canada.

Several important future research considerations emerged from the process of conducting this study. First, additional themes associated with refugee resettlement may be further explored in the analysis such as multiculturalism, social inclusion, cultural integration and economic and labour considerations. The exploration of these themes may add another layer of analysis in the role of the news media in the resettlement and integration of these refugees. Moreover, a discussion on the politicization of the Syrian refugee crisis and the commercialization of the news media can also be incorporated in the analysis for future research. This can provide a more in-depth insight on refugee issues and the trends in reporting news about refugees. In addition to this, a more comprehensive analysis can be conducted by adding the non-verbal elements to the data set. This could be done by sourcing the newspaper articles from another database that includes these non-textual attributes. Moreover, further testing on the trends of community newspapers that this study has outlined is required. Field work in the form of interviews conducted with the locals of these communities can also be done to crosscheck the events portrayed in the newspaper articles that were analyzed. The newspaper editors themselves can also be interviewed regarding their opinions on the role of these newspapers in their respective communities. It will also be helpful to conduct interviews with the resettled refugees, to gather their opinions on the refugee depictions presented in these newspapers.

Additionally, it would be interesting to explore the audience of these community newspapers through a survey or through interviews with the newspaper editors and the refugees. Along with questions about refugee depictions, the question of whether these resettled refugees are part of the community newspapers’ audience is an important research consideration. As this is currently beyond the scope of the study, I would recommend this for future research. Moreover, the new finding presented in Chapter 4 about the discourse of Canadians being grateful for being born in Canada, can also be
further explored. It would be interesting to look at other regional and community newspapers across Canada to see if a similar discourse is present. Lastly, a more comparative analysis of the news media discourse about Syrian refugees can be done by analyzing the coverage of major metropolitan and community newspapers about refugees during former Prime Minister Stephen Harper’s Conservative leadership (2006-2015). Extending the scope of the research can provide further contextualization and insights into the trends and changes in the issue of refugee resettlement and integration in Canada.

The study also recognizes the richness of refugee experiences that are not fully represented in these media texts. As Molnar (2016) explains, the politicization of immigration tends to oversimplify the complex narrative of refugee migration. Moreover, circulating a single “refugee story” story in the media also tends to homogenize their very diverse experiences. This was a realization that struck me as a researcher while I conducted this research study. While community newspapers are more humanizing with their depictions of Syrian refugees, some tend to re-circulate a “refugee story” of violence, torture, death, loss, upheaval and new beginnings. Following Kyriakides et al.'s (2018) study, this silences the pre-conflict identities and social roles of these refugees, as if their existence only began during the Syrian civil war. Their identities are then tied to the image of the refugee and the Syrian conflict.

According to Molnar (2016), the politicization of the Syrian refugee resettlement then constructs refugee migration as a privilege, and not a universal human right (p. 71). As such, these refugees must embody the image of the “poor refugee”, so they may be deserving enough to be resettled by host countries such as Canada. By embodying this image of a “poor refugee”, Olsen et al. (2016) argue that their identities and personal experiences are shunned. Thus, this thesis recognizes the news media’s potential in highlighting the complexity of refugee migration by giving a stronger voice to a more diverse group of refugees and putting faces on their personal stories. According to Molnar (2016), it is also important that the Canadian public seek out individual experiences in the production and sharing of information and knowledge about Syrian refugees, in addition to critically engaging in discussions about the issue.
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Browne, A. Folk and flamenco mix in fundraiser, May 27th, 2016

# Appendix A.

## Themes and Keywords for Content Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frames or Themes</th>
<th>Keywords</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Citizenship and Resettlement</td>
<td>arrive, arrived, citizenship, immigration, integration, newcomers, officials, plan, private, privately, process, program, resettlement, sponsor, sponsored, sponsorship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict</td>
<td>conflict, fear, ISIL, ISIS, Islamic, military, mission, region, terror, terrorism, terrorist, war</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>children, families, family, home, kids, parents, young, child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>Christian, Islam, Islamic, Muslim, Muslims, religion, religious, church, mosque</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services and Programs</td>
<td>care, child, education, English, family, French, health, healthcare, housing, immigrant, job, language, money, schools, services, settlement, social, society, support, work, working</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Themes and Keywords Adopted from Wallace’s Study (2018)
## Appendix B.

### News Values and Linguistic Resources for CDA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>News Values</th>
<th>Linguistic Resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consonance</td>
<td>References to stereotypical attributes or preconceptions; assessments of expectedness/typicality (typical, famed for); similarity with the past (yet another, once again); explicit references to general knowledge/traditions, and so on (well-known)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eliteness (of high status or fame)</td>
<td>Various status markers, including role labels (Professor Roger Stone, experts); status-indicating adjectives (the prestigious Man Booker prize, top diplomats); recognized names (Hillary Clinton); descriptions of achievement/fame (were selling millions of records a year); use by news actors/sources of specialized/technical terminology, high-status accent or sociolect (especially in broadcast news)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact (having significant effects or consequences)</td>
<td>Assessment of significance (momentous, historic, crucial); representation of actual or non-actual significant/relevant consequences, including abstract, material or mental effects (note that will stun the world, Australia could be left with no policy, leaving scenes of destruction)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negativity/Positivity (negative/positive)</td>
<td>References to negative/positive emotion and attitude (distraught, condemn, joy, celebrate); negative/positive evaluative language (terrible/brilliant); negative/positive lexis (conflict, damage, death, success, win, help); descriptions of negative (e.g. norm-breaking) or positive behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personalization (having a personal/human face)</td>
<td>References to ‘ordinary’ people, their emotions, experiences; use by news actors/sources of ‘everyday’ spoken language, accent, sociolect (especially in broadcast news)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proximity (geographically or culturally near)</td>
<td>Explicit references to place or nationality near the target community (Australia, Canberra woman); references to the nation/community via deictics, generic place for references, adjectives (here, the nation’s capital, home-grown); inclusive first person plural pronouns (our nation’s leaders); use by news actors/sources of (geographical) accent/dialect (especially in broadcast news); cultural references</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superlativeness (of high intensity/large scope)</td>
<td>Intensifiers (severe, dramatically); quantifiers (thousands, huge); intensified lexis (panic, smash); metaphor and simile (a tsunami of crime, like a World War II battle); comparison; repetition; lexis of growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timeliness (recent, ongoing, about to happen, new, current, seasonal)</td>
<td>Temporal references (today, yesterday’s, within days, now); present and present perfect; implicit time references through lexis (continues, ongoing, have begun to); reference to current trends, seasonality, change/newness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unexpectedness (unexpected)</td>
<td>Evaluations of unexpectedness (different, astonishing, strange); references to surprise/expectations; comparisons that indicate unusuality (for the first time since 1958); references to unusual happenings</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adopted from Bednarek and Caple’s Study (2017, p. 79)
Appendix C.

Attributes and Values for Coding: Major Newspapers

MAJOR NEWSPAPERS (OUT OF 144 NEWS ARTICLES)

THEMES:
Citizenship and Resettlement: 38
Negativity (Includes Terrorism and Conflict): 44
Family: 13
Religion: 4
Services and Programs: 19
Canadian Values (Additional Information): 6
Politics in Canada and the United States (Additional Information): 36

NEWS VALUES:
Consonance: 1
Eliteness: 77
Impact: 20
Negativity/Positivity: 45
Personalization: 20
Proximity: 16
Superlativeness: 34
Timeliness: 6
Unexpectedness: 4

TONE:
Positive: 24
Negative: 59
Neutral: 44
Mixed: 17

INTERVIEW/SOURCE:
Government: 52
Syrian Refugees: 16
Refugee Sponsors: 4
Organizations/Groups: 25
Other Refugee Groups: 11
Academics/Professionals: 6
Other: 41
Appendix D.

Attributes and Values for Coding: Community Newspapers

COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS (OUT OF 114)

THEMES:
Citizenship and Resettlement: 49
Negativity (Includes Terrorism and Conflict): 34
Family: 25
Religion: 8
Services and Programs: 30
Canadian Values (Additional Information): 24
Politics in Canada and the United States (Additional Information): 9

NEWS VALUES:
Consonance: 1
Eliteness: 48
Impact: 16
Negativity/Positivity: 41
Personalization: 70
Proximity: 23
Superlativeness: 13
Timeliness: 4
Unexpectedness: 2

TONE:
Positive: 73
Negative: 21
Neutral: 114

INTERVIEW/SOURCE:
Government: 7
Syrian Refugees: 10
Refugee Sponsors: 10
Organizations/Groups: 41
Other Refugee Groups: 2
Academics/Professionals: 3
Other Community Members: 53