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Migration, Alterity and Discrimination: Media Discourse and its Implications for Health Outcomes in  
Syrian Newcomers to Canada

A Thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements  
for the degree Master of Arts

in

Anthropology

by

Melina A. Economou

Committee in charge:

Professor Amy Non, Chair  
Professor Hanna Garth  
Professor Saiba Varma

2019

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2019

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The thesis is currently being prepared for submission for publication of the material. The thesis author was the primary investigator and author of this material.

## ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Migration, Alterity and Discrimination: Media Discourse and its Implications for Health Outcomes in Syrian Newcomers to Canada

by

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Master of Arts in Anthropology

University of California San Diego, 2019

Professor Amy Non, Chair

Recent migration from the Middle East and North Africa, Syria in particular, has led to increased media and governmental attention on the effect of migration in Canada. Jointly, the Canadian media and government construct migrant alterity by juxtaposing migrants as inherently different from Canadians. A Media Discourse Analysis of two newspapers in Canada elucidate three modalities through which migrants were Othered and used to justify their exclusion, surveillance, and the biosecuritization of the Canadian border. First, the Canadian state and media employ legal categories to distinguish between legitimate refugees from Syria and illegitimate asylum seekers from the U.S., while still characterizing both as potentially criminal and dangerous. Second, Islamophobic and xenophobic rhetoric categorize



Muslim migrants as threats to Canadian national security and values by associating Islam with terrorism, fanaticism, and backwardness. Third, migrants are portrayed as burdens taking up Canadian space, resources, and finances, and putting Canadian welfare and health by potentially carrying disease. The Canadian state and media portray migrants as threat to Canadian health and its social, political, and economic structures through public health rhetoric to justify its biosecurity. In tandem, these three modalities frame migrants as Other and justify the Canadian government's management of which migrant bodies are eligible to cross the border and socially and politically navigate the Canadian state. The media's negative characterization of migrants creates a context of structural violence leading to discrimination, acculturative, and chronic stress in migrants, which can have implications for poor health outcomes in migrant populations.

## **INTRODUCTION**

European and North American states have increasingly monitored, surveiled, and critiqued migrant movements, behaviours, practices, and health to prevent migrants from reaching their borders. Islamophobia and xenophobia have accompanied processes such as globalization to create migration policies that categorize migrants as “other” legally, culturally, and politically. Migrant alterity is jointly constructed through governmental policies, public health procedures, and public discourse. The intersection of these loci of power create the modalities within which migrants are defined and managed. For instance, the media’s hyper-attention on migration from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region into Europe has made concrete the image of what migrant and refugee “others” look like – in this case primarily Syrian Muslims. Defining those that migrate from MENA as primarily Muslim and refugees create cultural and legal codes within which their movement and behaviours can be controlled as they enter new social and political contexts.

This thesis will outline three modalities from a Media Discourse Analysis (MDA) in which migrants are categorized and their immigration status, behaviour, and livelihoods are regulated. International and domestic law work in tandem to define “the refugee” through a set of characteristics that govern their ability to migrate based on their geographic origin and sociopolitical circumstances. By imposing criteria for attaining refugee status, many migrants are separated into migration categories allowing them to differentially claim asylum and access rights in host states. The Islamophobic and xenophobic context which precedes migrant movement into North America frames migrants as potential threats to national security and Canadian values because of their MENA origin. Drawing from this context, public health is employed as an integral mechanism to maintain national biosecurity by restricting migrant movement and enforcing health standards which migrants are assumed to lack. These three modalities mutually inform each other to construct a dominant caricature of the migrant Other.

International and domestic policies create the refugee category to differentiate and govern which bodies are eligible to move across borders and through which legal means – as immigrants, asylum

seekers, or migrants. Their legal status is dictated by their geographic origin: migrants heralding from MENA are coded as either refugees and/or asylum seekers rather than immigrants. Moreover, by consistently associating migrants from MENA with Islam, the recent xenophobic and Islamophobic public discourse informs national (bio)security, public health, and assimilation policies that govern the daily lives of migrants in Canada. Since “refugee” is used as a legal category with social, political, and economic connotations, I will use migrant as a neutral term to define those that migrate, regardless of their motivations or legal status.

Media representations that categorize migrants as Muslim, unhealthy, and illegal in a xenophobic and Islamophobic context can be used as a tool to analyze the way these broader power structures construct and impose alterity and can create the conditions for poor health outcomes in migrants. Although the media is portrayed as a legitimate state-sanctioned source of authority that objectively reports on migrants, it is embedded within these systems of power that construct migrants as “other” by reinforcing dominant stereotypes and caricatures. Through media and governmental policy, migrants are deemed not to belong because of their legal status and shared cultural practices and beliefs, in this case an overarching sense of “Canadianness.” A hyper-focus on border security, the militarization of national politics, and biopolitical management of migrant health are mechanisms that reinforce perceptions of a cohesive “insider” group in opposition to migrant others. By labelling and creating migrants as others, the Canadian state self-identifies and makes migrants more easily manageable and excludable from the general population of insiders.

I hypothesize that the construction of migrant otherness becomes inscribed within migrant bodies by pathologizing them as unhealthy and labelling them as potential threats to the host society. In an Islamophobic framework, Muslim migrants in particular are considered threats to national security, Canadian values, and the healthiness of the Canadian body politic. In this context, public health governance converges with national security through migration laws and government policies to differentiate migrants from Canadians by framing them as potential dangers to the host society. Media

discourse fuels negative characterizations of migrants by creating narratives of ‘unhealthy’ migrants threatening the safety of Canadians, invoking biosecurity to both exclude migrants from entering and to surveil them through healthcare and policing systems if, and when, they do. Framing migrants as unhealthy due to their cultural and religious dissimilarities distinguishes them from host societies and is used to justify the securitization of the state through migrant exclusion and surveillance. Here, geographic territory and cultural and religious difference are misread as factors leading to disease in migrant bodies rather structural conditions, including poverty and chronic stress. Within this context, migrant health outcomes are racialized and essentialized, which can lead to poorer health outcomes in migrants *because* they are constructed as Other by the state and media. This thesis uses a media discourse analysis to determine the way Muslim migrants in Canada are constructed as foreign and pathologized others, and the implications this construction has on migrant health.

Despite perceptions of media objectivity, media discourse reflects and reinforces public sentiment towards migrants through collocates (or word associations), identifiers, and qualifiers that can maintain and emphasize migrant difference from Canadian “insiders.” For example, Canadian media attention on the Syrian civil war reinforces the image of migrants from MENA as threats to national security and Canadian values, linking Syrian Muslim migration with terrorism and criminality. Within this context, distinctions have been made within the migrant category between perceived “legal” refugees and “illegal” asylum seekers, the latter of whom have been branded as illegitimate because of their immoral (economic) motivations to migrate. In these cases, refugees who are fleeing persecution are championed by the Canadian government to portray Canada as a place of refuge, while asylum seekers crossing outside of legal ports of entry are coded as illegal and thus illegitimate. These themes define the migrant other by attaching negative qualifiers to their migration status, which has led to an upsurge in Islamophobic and xenophobic discrimination in Canada. In this context, the media and public health officials, through academic and governmental reports, have characterized migrants as inherently unhealthy and potential carriers of disease. These negative characteristics by legitimate state authorities

can result in increased marginalization and discrimination, which in turn creates the structural conditions for poor health outcomes in migrants, including elevated rates of depression, anxiety, chronic stress, overweight, cardiovascular disease, and high blood pressure.

This thesis uses a MDA from two Canadian media outlets, the CBC and Toronto Sun, to examine the way migrant alterity is constructed by legally categorizing migrants and invoking public health through the language of biosecurity in an Islamophobic and xenophobic context. The media reinforces migrant otherness to justify nationalist projects that differentiate migrants from the host population and classify them as diseased, backward, and threatening to Canada. Lastly, through a discussion of the essentialization of migrants as diseased, I consider the intersection between sociocultural and political forces that converge to construct alterity and create structurally violent conditions that can influence migrant health outcomes.

## **SYRIAN MIGRATION AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF ALTERITY**

The Syrian civil war began on March 18<sup>th</sup> 2011 in the rural city of Dar'aa with a Sunni Muslim revolt protesting the arrest of 11 children (Ullah, 2014). A distinction was drawn between the urban rich, representing the religious Alawite sect, and the rural poor, composed of Sunnis, Druze, Christians, Shias, and Sufis (Al-Natour, 2013). The rural poor was mostly composed of religious and/or political minorities who experienced economic and resource exclusion, which increased their exposure to violence and displacement, making them the bulk of migrants (Muldoon, Lowe, & Schmid, 2016). Despite the heterogeneity of migrant experiences based on gender, class, and religion, they have been homogenized under the label of 'Syrian refugee.' Since the civil war, more than 14 million Syrians have been displaced: six million are refugees in neighbouring countries, 7.6 million are internally displaced, one million are in Europe, and approximately 52,000 have been resettled in Canada (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2015; Connor, 2018; Esses, Hamilton, & Gaucher, 2017; Ullah, 2014). The established media infrastructure in MENA post-9/11 has resulted in an increased level of international scrutiny cataloguing the after-effects of the Syrian Civil War and its consequences for the West (Chandler, 2015). The images

that were disseminated from these media sources reinforce perceptions of Syrians as poor, fanatical, and potentially violent with links to terrorism, against a backdrop of socioeconomic poverty, political instability, and religious conflict in the region (Ullah, 2014). Media representations formed an image of Syrians weighed down by qualifiers used in media coverage including: refugee, crisis, Muslim, extremist, threat, burden, and boundless numbers of migrants flooding into the West. These figures are largely exaggerated, as approximately 86% of the 51.2 million displaced people worldwide are hosted in neighbouring countries and never make it to Europe or North America (Esses et al., 2017).

The media's use of fear tactics by invoking the image of migrants on the West's doorstep creates a clear boundary between "us" as the homogenous West and "them" as the invading Syrian Muslim refugee. Due to media attention, the migration of Syrians has led to renewed interest in the movement of people across international borders and the impact this may have on receiving host societies. Migration categories, including refugee, asylum seeker, immigrant, and migrant (RASIM), were created after World War II and are part of international humanitarian law that differentiate between valid motivations to migrate and impose responsibility onto host states to provide assistance to migrants. These categories are significant because "...powerful actors establish and use categories, and the labels with which they are associated, to understand and frame a problem," impacting the way policy and discourse is created and reinforced (Crawley & Skleparis, 2018, p. 59). Recently, the differential use of these terms has been employed to varying degrees by states and international organizations to confuse, and in some cases restrict, which types of migrants are accepted into which countries. This has allowed internationally-recognized legal categories to be manipulated to reinforce a nation-state's nationalist, xenophobic, and Islamophobic migration policies. An example of this is the Canadian government's willingness to accept Syrian refugees, who are fleeing violence, as opposed to migrants crossing the U.S.-Canada border (Trudeau, 2017). The Canadian government and media's distinction between categories of migrants is significant because by accepting refugees Canada represents itself as benevolent and a space of refuge,

while the claims of economic migrants are considered illegitimate, absolving Canada's requirement to accept their asylum claims after they are processed.

The media's role in constructing migrant alterity occurs within the framework of the Canadian state's policy of Multiculturalism, which was formalized in 1971 and sought to acknowledge the multiplicity of identities, ethnicities, and minority cultures in Canada. While the goal of multiculturalism was to reformulate Canadian identity to include difference, in practice it created a multi-tiered system with expectations of "a shared citizenship and national identity" (Guo & Guo, 2011; Stathi & Roscini, 2016, p. 56). In this system, French and English Canadianness are prioritized as the unifying cultural framework within which cultural difference is permitted. Migrants accentuate the gap between place and nation-state by being 'out of place,' necessitating an ideological shift within nation-states to externalize migrants, either through surveillance and border security, or integration and assimilation policies (August, 2016; Espiritu, 2014). Migration laws put migrants "back into place" (Espiritu, 2014, p.12) in two main ways. First, legal categorizations label migrants as Other by distinguishing them from the Canadian ingroup. The formalization of migration laws create meaning for a national border in which Canadians belong, and thus creates a mechanism to restrict, surveil, and manage which people deserve to legitimately enter Canada and participate in Canadian society (Dauvergne, 2008). Second, integration, acculturation, and assimilation policies create a formal system in which migrants are expected to adopt Canadian values, identity, behaviours, and practices. While Multiculturalism acknowledges the existence of distinct and varied cultural groups within Canada, it assumes that there is a unifying "Canadian" identity through which the nation is created.

Labelling concepts such as 'nation,' 'society,' 'culture,' or even 'migrant,' 'refugee,' and 'illegal,' transform names into things and into groups, making them appear homogenous, bounded, and separate, rather than bundles of relationships interacting with each other (Gupta & Ferguson, 1992; Wolf, 1982). While borders themselves do not create demarcations between here and there, they are required in order to construct an imagined nation-state within a geographic space, marking a dialectical distinction

between the inside and outside. Rajaram and Grundy-Warr (2007) describe this as “*borderscapes*,” or distinguishing between belonging and nonbelonging through physical and ideological borders. Ideological borders exist even within the Canadian state’s physical borders – this is true of the biopolitical care enacted on indigenous groups in Canada (Stevenson, 2014) and even the cultural and immigration policies that exclude and surveil Muslim Canadians (Patel, 2012). However, geographic borders play a significant role in delineating a hierarchy between those considered legitimate Canadians, who are coded as white settler-colonial descendants or European immigrants, and migrant Others who are racialized based on their geographic origins (Frederiks, 2014; Paik, 2013). By dividing the world into distinct and discrete spaces and linking those geographic territories to ideas of nationhood, *borderscapes* can exclude those from the outside as Other and legitimize the securitization of the border by conceiving the Other as a threat to national unity.

Assimilation and integration policies impose Canadianness onto migrants by enforcing a performance of belonging within the Canadian *borderscape* (Rajaram & Grundy-Warr, 2007). In fact, migration success is measured by “Canadianness,” or the adoption of Canadian values and practices, such as language proficiency and celebrating Canadian holidays (Beiser, 2009). In this way, belonging is determined through cultural practices – the way people are expected to behave, dress, and socialize is coded within society. By constructing Canada within borders and *borderscapes* under the umbrella of a collective national identity, migrants crossing these borders have been portrayed as threatening a sense of Canadian boundedness. One of the ways the media depicts this is by using metonyms, which portrays a concept as being part of, or standing in for, a whole (Santa Anna, 1999). By framing migrants as *outsiders*, it creates the scaffolding necessary for Canadians to treat migrants as if they are un-Canadian and thus undeserving of the rights and protections that are afforded to “real” Canadians. If migrants are others, they are treated as such, and this context of structural violence can impact their health outcomes through discrimination and acculturative stress. Canada’s borders, then, are “invested with a certain



aesthetic or moral value,” that demarcate the in-group as belonging and actively keep the other “outside” in a state of *nonbelonging* (Rajaram & Grundy-Warr, 2007, p. xxxiii).

## **MEDIA DISCOURSE**

News media is one of the first ways the public engages with current events, and thus it can be an important source to examine how governmental policies and local and global events are translated to citizen publics (Fotopoulos & Kaimaklioti, 2016). Media can be seen as a medium through which legitimate authorities, such as elites, politicians, and academics disseminate ideas and influence public perceptions or pressure policy-making (Pope, 2017; Van Dijk, 2000). In addition, there is a feedback loop between media and the public, in which media discourse can affect public perception, and public discourse can affect what is reported and how it is framed in the media (Khosravini, 2010). Although media discourse is subjectively created, the public engages with “‘news’ as the ‘truth’ of our society by discussing news stories as ‘facts’” (Patel, 2014, p. 202). In fact, 78% of Canadians believe that news reporting is accurate and 73% believe it is fair, reinforcing the perception of objectivity in news media (Pew Research Center, 2018). However, media is not created in a vacuum, it operates as a response to sociopolitical circumstances and creates meaning within those contexts. For example, media discourse can shape assumptions about Syrians by exclusively reporting about them as migrants or focusing on negative migrant experiences, which can limit public exposure to alternative accounts of migration and Syrians. The media is complicit in creating a discourse that juxtaposes migrants with Canadian “insiders” as a reflection of established public and governmental beliefs that collaborate to construct migrants as Others. The Canadian public’s understanding of the media as objective, constructs a dialectic between the insider and the outsider, us versus them, the Self and the Other; and calls into question the legitimacy of refugee and asylum claims.

According to psycholinguistics, news readers do not store verbatim information about an article, but are left with a lasting impression based on their interpretation of the text, collocations, and prosodies found within it (Gabrielatos & Baker, 2008). News media and policy reports leave a lasting impression on

readers by mirroring narrative forms. They include a cast of characters: migrants and Canadians, within a plot: migration and its *effects* on Canadian society; and particular themes: portrayals of migrants as burdens, threats, and illegal (Pope, 2017). This narrative-style presents migrants as a problem, taking “advantage of the human condition that commonly uses stories and narratives as a means of cognition” (Pope, 2017, p. 56). A media discourse analytical approach links the content of media reports and their mechanisms of translation to the wider social context by enumerating the collocates, or descriptors, that are associated with key words, in this case RASIM (Van Dijk, 2000). Collocates are sticky: when the words “illegal” and “immigrant” are frequently associated “we may be primed to think of one concept even when the other is not present” (Stubbs, 1996 in Gabrielatos & Baker, 2008, p. 10-11). Prosodies are patterns of stress and intonation in a language and, like collocates, they “act as triggers, suggesting unconscious associations” between concepts in media articles (Baker, 2006, p. 114).

The media’s use of consistent collocates (co-collocates) and prosodies can shape the way migrants are characterized and understood by the Canadian public. For example, collocates have a particularly salient effect in headlines because the key words and implied meaning stick with the reader (Van Dijk, 2000). Headlines such as: ‘No space in Windsor’s temporary shelters for Toronto refugees’ (CBC News, 2018 July 6); the sarcastic ‘They’re not “illegal queue-jumpers,” they’re “irregular border crossers”’ (Bonokoski, 2018); ‘Immigration and the case for disease screening’ (Williams, 2018), ‘The B.C. murder and Trudeau’s rushed refugee vetting’ (Malcolm, 2018 September 13), can have lasting effects on the way migrants are perceived by the general public. In these headlines, several themes are apparent: there is no space for migrants in Canada, they are jumping the queue by entering Canada illegally, they are carriers of disease, and they are dangerous. Not only do word associations leave a lasting impression, but the grouping of these words also creates new meaning within their association, called *topoi* (Gabrielatos & Baker, 2008). The combination of word associations and the employment of *topoi* has important ramifications on the way migrants are perceived. By consistently associating migrants with illegality or with causing a “refugee crisis,” news readers can be left with the lingering impression

that migrants are criminals and burdens. I use media discourse as a tool to understand the way collocates are used to produce meaning in news articles. I predict that the negative qualifiers used by Canadian media and the state distinguishes migrants as a separate and homogenous group from the Canadian self, which can produce and reinforce structures of violence that impact the daily lives and health outcomes of migrants.

## **METHODS**

In order to analyze the intersection between media discourse, discrimination, and health in a migration context, I conducted a corpus linguistic and media discourse analysis. These two methods in combination analyze the frequency of word associations with RASIM and the overall tone and meaning of news stories. Corpus Linguistics (CL), enumerates the words, or collocates, that appear before or after specific keywords – in this case RASIM. By doing so, relative frequencies of the collocates can be analyzed to determine lexical patterns associated with key words, which I manually-coded to create a table of word-associations. Collocates are significant because they contribute to the meaning of the RASIM keywords and are also retained in the memory of the reader long after the details of the news article fade (Gabrielatos & Baker, 2008). By tallying and examining the information encoded within media stories, themes and patterns begin to emerge that elucidate the underlying messages and tone of the media's representation of migrants. This analysis has been replicated in different periods and geographical locations world-wide (Fotopoulos & Kaimaklioti, 2016; Gabrielatos & Baker, 2008; Khosravini, 2010; Kibria, Watson, & Selod, 2017; Leudar, Hayes, Nekvapil, & Baker, 2008; Van Dijk, 2000; Wallace, 2018) and are useful to track how media representations of RASIM change.

While CL analysis can be conducted using software, and thus can analyze larger amounts of data, it has also been critiqued as lacking analytical weight without accounting for the contextual literature and sociopolitical setting (Fotopoulos & Kaimaklioti, 2016; Gabrielatos & Baker, 2008). The alternative and/or supplemental method of in-depth Discourse Analysis (DA) allows for a richer understanding of the context of word associations within news articles and Canadian society. Engaging in a *critical DA*

acknowledges the power inherent within the process of knowledge production: media discourse is not created in a vacuum but is informed by sociopolitical contexts (Khosravini, 2010). By manually reading the articles, a discourse analytical approach can assess the structures and strategies of articles within the wider social context to measure their interpretation and reproduction of social and political rhetoric (Khosravini, 2010; Van Dijk, 2000). While collocates can be tallied using software analysis, their meaning is determined through the contextual *tone* of the article itself. DA provides a rich analysis of the way collocates or *topoi* are employed within news articles.

I used a combination of Corpus Linguistics and Discourse Analysis to examine in-depth the underlying narrative constructed by the media in their representation of migrants. My analysis reviews all published news articles (n=155) from two Canadian media outlets over a three-month period (July – September 2018). By manually coding CL and simultaneously conducting a DA, I integrate both methods to create collocate tallies that were contextualized within the news articles themselves, identifying general trends of media representations and public perceptions about migrants. I surveyed two online Canadian media outlets: the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), a national news source, and a local news source the Toronto Sun. Because 59% of Canadians receive news daily from the internet, and 88% follow national news closely while 82% follow local news closely, they were ideal sources to study media discourse (Pew Research Center, 2018). In a survey that asked readers about the political leanings of news organizations, the CBC was determined to be centre/left-leaning in their reporting while the Toronto Sun was conceived of as a right/populist news source (Anderson & Coletto, 2017; Pew Research Center, 2018). I chose two media outlets on either end of the political spectrum to analyze the influence of political-leaning on media discourse, especially because research has shown that ideological conservatives have more negative views of migrants (Esses et al., 2017). Table 1 summarizes the number of articles reviewed each month and for each news source.

For each news source, I used google's site-specific search feature (e.g. site:cbc.ca refugee; asylum seeker; immigrant; migrant), to search each online newspaper with the RASIM terms and read

through all articles, only eliminating repetitions. I conducted this analysis daily for three months in order to analyze overall patterns of collocate frequencies. This time-period was chosen because it shortly followed the election of Conservative Premier Doug Ford in June 2018 in the province of Ontario, who has been outspoken about ‘controlling’ migration and has made xenophobic comments about migrants (Canadian Press, 2018; Tutton, 2018). It is also a follow-up to the final year of the Liberal Trudeau government, which sponsored 25,000 Syrian migrants and has recently faced criticism on their immigration policies, particularly because of the increase in migrants crossing the U.S.-Canada border (Anglin, 2018; Bonokoski, 2018; Canadian Press, 2018; Harris, 2018; Malcolm, 2018 September 13; Malcolm 2018, September 14; Postmedia News, 2018; Tutton, 2018). Thus, this period represents a transition period between leadership of opposite political leanings.

As part of my analysis, I read each article and manually coded the first-collocates, words immediately to the left or right of the keywords RASIM, for example: refugee claim, 1000 asylum seekers, illegal immigrants; and the consistent-collocates (co-collocates), or words that appeared within ten words to the right or the left of the RASIM keywords. The range of ten words in either direction was chosen because it is enough words to provide sentence-context to the collocates (Fotopoulos & Kaimaklioti, 2016) and aided the DA approach by increasing the range of word-associations to better understand contextual sentence and article meaning. These collocates were recorded in excel tables and tabulated according to the frequency of their use in each news article, for each month, and for each media outlet (Tables 2 and 3). In addition to reading and coding the news articles, I also tallied the collocates in the online comment sections of each of the articles using the same protocol to determine readership reactions and whether the rhetoric of the news articles was repeated by readers (Table 4). I categorized the collocates according to related themes in these tables, such as number (i.e. all associations that referenced the number of migrants), legality, (il)legitimacy (synonyms: genuine, fake, bogus), and financial (syn. cost, burden). By manually reading each news article and simultaneously conducting a DA, I gained a

better understanding of the way specific collocates were used, such as the sometimes-mocking use of “irregular migrants” in the Toronto Sun, and thus was able to categorize the collocates into major themes.

## **RESULTS**

The combination of a Corpus Linguistic and Discourse Analysis allowed me to tabulate collocate frequency with RASIM keywords to understand the contextual meaning of the articles and the collocate use within them. Through this analysis, I identified several themes in the media discourse that I categorized into three main modalities in which the state and media construct migrants as Other. The first theme was the media’s use of legal terminology to categorize migrants into groups with varied motivations to migrate and their associated qualifiers. For example, refugees were deemed more legitimate than asylum seekers crossing the U.S.-Canada border, who were economic migrants and potentially criminal. In the second modality, refugees and asylum seekers were both considered dangerous to the integrity of Canadian national security and value-system, due to the Islamophobic and xenophobic rhetoric of the news articles. Lastly, migrant unhealthiness was invoked in discussions of the biosecurity of Canada: the Canadian media, government, politicians, and academics used public health as a tool to manage, exclude, and surveil migrants based on the various legal and cultural categories that differentiate them from the Canadian population. While most articles used negative qualifiers to describe migrants, 18 out of 106 articles in the CBC used the term ‘newcomer’ rather than refugee or migrant, reducing the legal connotations of those migrant categories. Furthermore, two CBC articles discussed improving the immigration system to help and welcome migrants and emphasized the importance of refugee sponsorship in supporting migrants as they seek employment in Canada. Table 2 shows the collocates in the Toronto Sun, Table 3 shows them for the CBC, and Table 4 shows the collocates for the online comment sections on news articles for both the CBC and Toronto Sun. These tables are organized in descending order, from the most common collocates to the least.

## **(A) LEGAL CATEGORIES**

The Canadian media uses legal migrant categorizations in their articles to ascribe legitimacy to legal migrants compared to illegitimate or “fake” asylum seekers. References to migrant illegality in the Toronto Sun accounted for 14% of the first collocates, 20.4% of the co-collocates, and was most frequent in the comments at 28.1%. In contrast, the CBC used “irregular migrants” rather than illegal, accounting for 2.8% of the first collocates and 4.2% of the co-collocates, with the comments section again showing it most frequently at 22.4%. Migrants, especially from Syria, were considered legal and legitimate because they fled persecution and came from refugee camps. Both news sites reflect this perception, with refugee being the only keyword associated with ‘legitimate’ (3.9% in the Toronto Sun first collocates and 2% in the CBC). On the other hand, the most common keyword associated with illegal was migrant (14% in the Toronto Sun first collocates and 20.4% in the co-collocates; 4.2% in CBC’s co-collocates), because those that crossed unofficial border points were perceived as migrating for economic reasons, which were considered comparatively invalid to refugees fleeing violence and persecution. As a result, migrants were often referred to as queue jumpers in the Toronto Sun (1.8% of first collocates and 2.9% of co-collocates) compared to the CBC (1.1% of co-collocates). Another common first collocate was claim and claimants (20.6% in the Toronto Sun; 11.5% in the CBC;), which often described the lack of legitimacy of migrants until their claims of asylum were deemed to be either legitimate or false by the government. These debates were linked to the questionable morality of economic migrants, which was sometimes linked to their Islamic background.

Importantly, the comments accompanying articles reiterated the rhetoric that was used in the articles themselves. When the Toronto Sun satirized the Liberal government’s use of “irregular migrant” compared to “illegal migrant,” and called migrants queue-jumpers (Anglin, 2018), the commenters afterwards began to use similar rhetoric (‘illegal’ 28.1% in Toronto Sun and 22.4% in CBC; ‘queue jumpers’ 1.5% in Toronto Sun and 3.6% in CBC). Very few commenters contradicted this rhetoric and used the migrant legal discourse found in the Toronto Sun in both media’s comment sections. In these

cases, both the articles and the commenters adopted a “Canadians First” attitude, which described migrants as burdens taking away resources and money from vulnerable Canadians, including the homeless, veterans, and indigenous people. These collocates were found in the comments sections, accounting for 9.1% in the Toronto Sun and 4.1% in the CBC and were apparent in the discourse analysis with media articles juxtaposing migrant and Canadian access to resources as mutually exclusive. By pitting migrants against Canadians, news media aided in constructing and defining of the migrant Other and raised fears about the problems they could cause in Canadian society.

## **(B) ISLAMOPHOBIA**

Islamophobia and xenophobia were embedded within several of the articles and comments identifying Muslim migrants in particular as (bio)security threats to Canadians by implying they are criminals, terrorists, and ideological threats to Canadian values and safety. The synonyms associated with threat included: security, violence, ISIS, terrorism, jihadists, dangerous, extremism, crime, and disease (2.5% of co-collocates in Toronto Sun and 6.1% in CBC). Portrayals of migrants as threats were consistently linked to their geographic origin in MENA based on the assumption that all Syrians are Muslim and refugees (7.1% of first collocates in Toronto Sun, 10.8% in CBC). The Toronto Sun referenced Islam in 1.3% of the co-collocates, Syrians in 7.1% of the first collocates and 2.8% in the co-collocates, with the CBC referencing Syrians 10.8% in the first collocates and 10.1% in the co-collocates. In some cases, migrants were referred to as potential terrorists (2.5% of co-collocates in Toronto Sun) and criminals that were invading, or attempting to invade, Canada (1.1% in Toronto Sun comments). Furthermore, migrants were represented as ideological threats to Canadian values and customs and were deemed unable to integrate. Comments in the Toronto Sun emphasized high birth rate in migrant families (1.2% in Toronto Sun comments) as a signal of Muslim backwardness that would reduce their ability to assimilate and increase the risk of extremism. Although Canadian values were rarely defined, Muslims (here synonymous with migrants) were considered to lack them because they were backward, barbaric, fanatical, and repressive (2.4% of the collocates in the CBC). The xenophobic and Islamophobic



discourse surrounding Muslim migrants became infused with legal categories used to distinguish between moral motivations to migrate and arguments that Muslim migrants endangered Canadian public health.

### **(C) PUBLIC HEALTH**

Public health was invoked as a product of Islamophobic and xenophobic discourse to justify increases in national and bio-security. The Canadian media used climatic metaphors to exaggerate the number of migrants entering Canada, portraying them as burdens, and potential carriers of disease. The most common collocate was references to numbers in association with all RASIM keywords, accounting for 32 out of 49 Toronto Sun articles (65.3%) and 65 of 106 CBC articles (61.3%). These numbers accentuated the supposed increase in the number of migrants claiming asylum in Canada and referenced a lack of space, resources, and time to process these claims. The media's focus on numbers incited a statistical panic resulting in commenters expressing anxiety over migrants overwhelming the Canadian system (3.4% in Toronto Sun and 5.5% in CBC) and causing a crisis (1.7% in Toronto Sun and 7.9% of CBC). Climatic metaphors (7% of first collocates and 3% of the co-collocates in the Toronto Sun and CBC) described migrants and their movement as "flows, streams, floods and influx," to accentuate the staggering after-effects that migrants, as if they are natural disasters, have on Canada. In combination with references to the lack of resources, space (such as housing), and time, climatic metaphors highlighted a sense of urgency with which Canada needed to respond to the "refugee crisis." The notion that there was a crisis was referenced between 2.7% and 7.4% in the Toronto Sun (exclusively as a 'refugee' crisis) and between 2.4% and 4.7% in the CBC.

Migrants were also described as financial burdens to the Canadian governments and taxpayers, taking advantage of the welfare and healthcare systems being paid for by Canadian citizens (20.4% of co-collocates in the Toronto Sun; 19.5% in the CBC). Politicians were heavily quoted discussing the financial burdens caused by migrants. In both news sites, comments were concerned with taxpayer costs, which was the most frequent co-collocate at 19.9% in the Toronto Sun and the second most frequent the CBC at 16.2%, indicating that the commenters shared the financial concerns cited in the news articles

themselves. Furthermore, migrants were described as dirty and ill, with the fear that they were carriers of disease and a threat to Canadians (1.8% of co-collocates in the Toronto Sun), a claim over-represented in the comments section. One article in the Toronto Sun (Williams, 2018) highlighted the threat of migrants carrying disease into Canada and threatening the immunity of Canadians. These collocates were not as frequent in the Corpus Linguistic study (accounting for 1.8% of the collocates in Toronto Sun and 1% of the comments) because of the varied terminology used to describe them. By engaging in a Discourse Analysis, I was able to highlight the references in additional Toronto Sun articles and comment sections that portrayed migrants as dangers to Canadians by describing them as dirty, diseased, virus-carriers, swarms of insects (that bring disease), and infested. In these cases, unhealthiness was seen as embedded within migrant bodies, invoking the fear that migration would bring disease into Canada.

Although political leaning seemed to shape the media discourse, with the Toronto Sun using more Islamophobic and xenophobic rhetoric, the collocate analysis showed a similar frequency of negative qualifiers between the CBC and Toronto Sun. Because collocates are “sticky,” the use of terminology in both media sources such as illegal, numbers, terrorist, criminal, or references to financial and healthcare burdens can leave a lasting impression on readers and the way migrants are perceived as outsiders within the Canadian nation-state. Negative qualifiers associate migrants with behaviours, practices, and cultures that make them distinctly Others and create the conditions to justify their exclusion and surveillance.

## **DISCUSSION**

By combining Corpus Linguistic and Discourse Analysis methods, I was able to identify and categorize the Canadian media’s discourse on migrants in three main themes: governmentality and legality, Islamophobia and xenophobia, and public health and biosecurity. These themes represent different avenues through which the Canadian public (the media, government, academia, and the Canadian public’s engagement with them) construct migrants as Other. First, migrants are defined through international and domestic law into categories that differentiate legal status based on differing migration motivations. The Canadian media employ these legal categories to differentiate between

supposed legitimate and legal refugees, primarily those coming from Syria, and illegitimate asylum seekers or economic migrants. The media infused these categories with character traits that refugees and asylum seekers supposedly inhabit – the former are vulnerable and helpless, while the latter are potentially criminal by entering Canada irregularly at unofficial ports of entry. The state and media’s distinction between these legal categories frame Canada as benevolent and welcoming by specifically accepting refugees and excluding other migrants through the bureaucratic process of asylum screening.

Second, Islamophobia and xenophobia are infused within the media’s legal category discourse: Muslim migrants entering Canada from the Middle East and the southern U.S. border are portrayed as potential threats to national security and Canadian values. While legal categorizations differentiate between asylum seekers and refugees, Islamophobic rhetoric homogenizes Muslim migrant experiences and portrays them as dangerous. This occurs because of the media and politician’s conflation of migrants and refugees with Muslims, in part due the Islamophobic and xenophobic rhetoric that categorizes migrants as refugees from MENA, even when they are crossing the southern Canadian border. Lastly, public health has been used to justify increases in Canadian national and bio-security through the media’s emphasis on the number of migrants entering Canada, portraying them as financial burdens and potential disease carriers. In these reports, migrants are assumed to be inherently unhealthy and burdensome. By conducting a MDA, I used the media as a tool to analyze the varying processes through which migrants are othered, and thereafter surveiled, controlled, and/or excluded, throughout the migration and integration process in Canada. Through this lens, I conclude by considering how these processes of alterity, the history of population management in public health, and negative rhetoric in public discourse can create the conditions for unhealthy outcomes in migrants.

## **GOVERNMENTALITY AND LEGALITY**

The government and media portray migrants as potential threats to Canada by distinguishing between certain migrants as legal and legitimate, and as a result more deserving of Canadian benevolence. In both instances, migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers are positioned as Other and external to the

Canadian public. However, the state's stance on whether migrants are legal and therefore legitimately able to migrate to Canada shape the media's rhetoric. The media and governmental policies use legal categories to aestheticize migrants in two ways. First, migrants that the media deem illegitimate and illegal (those crossing the U.S.-Canada border) are portrayed as immoral, potentially criminal, and disrupting Canadian values. On the other hand, while refugees from Syria are portrayed as vulnerable because they come from refugee camps, they were also associated with terrorism. The aesthetic of the legitimate refugee has been contrasted to illegal and illegitimate migrants to create a dialectic power structure: the illegal and illegitimate cannot exist without the legal and legitimate (August, 2016; Crawley & Skleparis, 2018; CBC Radio, 2018; Derluyn, Watters, Mels et al., 2012). The media co-opts legal categories by transforming 'illegal' into an adjective, so that irregular migratory acts become a moral condemnation: migrants are 'illegals' (Dauvergne, 2008). In this way, "the 'bad' immigrant always shadows the 'good' immigrant," through sanctioned state exclusion of particular kinds of migrants (Nyers, 2003, p. 1077). In constructing this juxtaposition, the Canadian state justifies the exclusion and management of migrants based on legality rather than cultural difference. By allowing some meticulously chosen migrants to claim refuge in Canada, such as Syrians fleeing violence and Rahaf Mohammad fleeing Saudi Arabian oppression, Canada represents itself as altruistic. Furthermore, intertwining legal and colloquial categories makes them appear objective and fixed within society, enforcing a sense of normalcy onto otherness because of its entrenchment within the state and Canadian public (Crawley & Skleparis, 2018).

Groups of migrants from the United States have been entering Canada at unofficial border points due to anti-immigrant policies and rhetoric, such as the Muslim travel ban, since the 2016 election (Vendeville, 2018). As a result, illegal and irregular migration has been a common theme in both the CBC and the Toronto Sun, appearing in 22 out of 106 articles in the CBC (20.8%) and 42 out of 49 articles in the Toronto Sun (85.7%). In January of 2017, the Prime Minister of Canada Justin Trudeau tweeted: "To those fleeing persecution, terror & war, Canadians will welcome you, regardless of your faith. Diversity is

our strength #WelcomeToCanada” (Trudeau, 2017). This announcement of welcome plays two important roles. First, it frames Canada as a benevolent country willing to accept migrants fleeing violence regardless of religious affiliation, even amidst Islamophobic and xenophobic rhetoric in Canada. Secondly, Trudeau distinguishes between refugees as legitimate asylum seekers fleeing war and violence compared to those fleeing the U.S. due to the anti-migrant rhetoric and threats of deportation. The Canadian state has sought to legally restrict asylum seekers crossing the border by adding a provision to Bill C-97, the budget bill of 2019, to prevent migrants from claiming asylum in Canada if they previously sought asylum in the U.S. (Curry, 2019). The media uses Canada’s acceptance of 25,000 government-sponsored Syrian migrants (Government of Ontario, 2016) to distinguish between Syrians as legitimate migrants and the illegitimacy of those crossing at unofficial border points. In fact, the only keyword associated with legitimate was refugee (3.9% in the Toronto Sun and 2% in the CBC). In the Toronto Sun, illegal was the first collocate 14% of the time and was a co-collocate 20.4% of the time, while in the CBC illegal was only a co-collocate 4.2% of the time, preferring to label these migrants as irregular. Despite this, both comment sections referring to migrant illegality were the most common collocate at 28.1% in the Toronto Sun and 22.4% in the CBC.

According to the 1951 Convention by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (2011, p.3), a refugee is defined as “a person who is outside his or her country of nationality or habitual residence; has a well-founded fear of being persecuted...” Under this definition, migrants must cross an international border for their claim to be considered for refugee status. Within this transitory period, they are considered asylum seekers or claimants, and only become refugees if they are deemed to fit within the UNHCR definition (Shrivastava, 2018; Tuitt, 2013). If their claim is rejected, they are considered failed asylum seekers and can be categorized as illegal or economic migrants, and are then stripped of their rights for protection by host nations (Crawley & Skleparis, 2018; Dauvergne, 2008; Esses et al., 2017). The media often conflates refugees and migrants by branding their motivations to migrate as ‘economic,’ absolving nation-states of the international responsibility to grant protective status because of a limitation

in international human rights law (Crawley & Skleparis, 2018; Shrivastava, 2018). The Canadian government also makes a distinction between migrants crossing the U.S.-Canada border and migrants from MENA, the latter of whom are categorized as *prima facie* refugees, meaning they are granted refugee status without requiring the burden of proof (Government of Canada, 2018b). For asylum seekers crossing the border U.S. border, refugee status is not automatically given, in some cases limiting the types of services they receive in Canada. For example, as asylum seekers wait for their claims to be decided, they are unable to access early childhood education centres in Quebec and are then limited in their ability to secure employment (Shingler, 2018).

In the media articles and comments, asylum seekers crossing the U.S. border became “illegals” (CBC comments 5.1%), criminals (Toronto Sun co-collocates 1.8% and comments 3.5%), and queue-jumpers (Toronto Sun first collocates 1.8%, co-collocates 2.8%, and comments 1.5%; CBC co-collocates 1.1% and comments 3.6%). The media makes a morality judgement by portraying migrants as cheats who are gaming the system (Anglin, 2018; Bonokoski, 2018; Harris, 2018; Tutton, 2018), so that the designation of illegality supersedes the rights of migrants to claim asylum. Migrants are portrayed as taking advantage (Toronto Sun first collocate 1.3%) of the Canadian immigration system by illegally crossing the border and “forcing their asylum claims ahead of the millions of people in United Nations refugee camps...” (Anglin, 2018). The media’s exaggeration is in complete contradiction to both Canadian and international immigration policy: not only are asylum claims processed separately from immigration claims and thus are not pushed to the front of the queue, asylum seekers are well within their international rights under the 1951 Refugee Convention to cross an international border in order to claim asylum (Immigration Refugees and Citizenship Canada, 2018; Tutton, 2018; Ullah, 2014).

While the term refugee is intended to afford those fleeing persecution with civil and economic rights, it is based on racial profiling: refugees are coded as brown and destitute, while immigrants are white and skilled, leading to the assumption that refugees are burdens on host societies (Dauvergne, 2008; Tuitt, 2013). The qualifiers associated with these categories are intimately associated with geographic

origin so that Europeans are considered immigrants while those coded as Arab, Muslim, or African are refugees, asylum seekers, and illegal or economic migrants (Paik, 2013). These categories are imposed onto migrant bodies: “when Dhungana [a refugee from Bhutan] was in camps, he never thought of himself as a refugee. ‘Once I came here it’s like I have a ‘refugee’ tag all over my body,’ he said” (Al-Hakin, 2018). Labelling “someone as a ‘refugee’ is a powerful, and deeply political, process...” (Crawley & Skleparis, 2018, p. 52), on the one hand conferring legitimacy onto migrants to seek asylum, and on the other hand pigeonholing them into the role of a vulnerable refugee fleeing war and violence. Dhungana contradicted this narrative by describing his experience in a refugee camp as: “a hard life, but I was having fun. I have beautiful memories with my childhood friends and my experience wasn’t all dark” (Al-Hakin, 2018). Furthermore, by delegitimizing and criminalizing economic migrants, their right to protection is invalidated by the state, which is used as a mechanism to “distinguish, divide and discriminate between those on the move” (Crawley & Skleparis, 2018, p. 52). These categories create clear boundaries between a homogenous Western “us” and Muslim “them,” which is reinforced by the use of *deixis*, or the use of “them, those, that, and this” in Canadian media reports (Santa Anna, 1999).

Although most news articles in the CBC and Toronto Sun portrayed migrants as an out-group separate from Canadians, 18 of 106 articles in the CBC avoided these representations compared to only one article in the Toronto Sun. In these articles, the CBC used the term ‘newcomer’ instead of ‘refugee’ or ‘migrant,’ and emphasized that newcomers “bring new ways of doing things, new ideas, new businesses” (Dubinski, 2018). By using newcomer as an inclusive term, migrants became active members within Canadian society, featuring the names of migrants and their individual stories, resisting the homogenization of migrant experience as a group external to Canada. The CBC’s change in terminology has power to alter the negative qualifiers that are more commonplace in the Toronto Sun, which used the terms “illegal,” “irregular,” “criminal,” “queue-jumpers,” and “opportunists” to describe migrants. The Toronto Sun’s use of these terms weaponize legal terminology to create a narrative that migrants entering

Canada at unofficial border crossings are potentially dangerous and are taking up the space and resources that should be dedicated to Canadians.

The use of ‘newcomer’ provides an avenue to portray migrants in a more nuanced way, however its use usually appears in reports focusing on migrants that have positively adapted to Canadian society, behaviourally and economically, and are thus displayed as performing “Canadianness” correctly. In other words, these stories showcase ideal migrants who have assimilated into the Canadian economy, at the very least. For example, in the articles where the CBC used ‘newcomer,’ they reported on Syrian migrants living successfully in Canada by opening a pizza shop (Jones, 2018), a chocolate store (Ray, 2018), or a barber shop (Bird, 2018), and becoming a pilot (CBC News, 2018 July 1), or a soccer player (Derworiz, 2018). These articles measure migrant success through their economic contribution to Canadian society and portrays Canada as benevolent for providing a place of refuge for migrants to succeed against all odds. Migrants are deemed useful in Canada if they are able to fill the economic niche that Canadians are looking for, often in rural and marginal communities: “Chatham-Kent employers are looking to expand their operations, but have little access to people with the skills they need,” and have “space for the asylum seekers who are overwhelming Toronto’s shelter system” (CBC News, 2018 July 13). While these stories present a more positive representation of Syrians, they are still described as refugees “fleeing a war-torn country, moving to Canada” and integrating by contributing to society and accomplishing goals that would have otherwise been impossible elsewhere (CBC News, 2018, July 1). These articles acknowledge migrant difference by emphasizing their “newness,” and at the same time the value they bring to Canadian society. In this way, migrants are not all simply excluded by the Canadian state but are urged, in part through these articles and acculturation policies, to perform in Canada in very specific ways to be deemed successful.

## **ISLAMOPHOBIA AND XENOPHOBIA**

The rise in migration following the Syrian Civil War has caused Western governments and media to associate migrants from MENA with Islam. As a result, Islamophobic media rhetoric is used to incite



anxiety about the threat of Islamist terrorism, criminal activities, and so-called barbaric cultural practices by linking Muslim migrants with extremism, fanaticism, and backwardness (Allsopp, 2017; Esses et al., 2017; Kibria et al., 2017; Nasser-Eddin, 2017; Tyyskä, Blower, Deboer, Kawai, & Walcott, 2017; Wallace, 2018). Muslim practices are portrayed in the media and through governmental policies as contradictory to a national Canadian morality and values. As a result, Muslim migrants are seen “as potential corrupters of morals, carriers of disease and ‘sleepers’ for terror against whom fortress-like barriers must be erected...” (Perera, 2002, par. 25). The Canadian media reinforces a sense of moral panic and fear about Muslims and Muslim migrants by distinguishing them from the Canadian public and attaching negative qualifiers to them in news articles. In another way, the Canadian government also reinforces fears about Muslim migrants by setting up a system to manage them through assimilation and surveillance policies. Islamophobic and xenophobic rhetoric and policies in Canada collapsed Muslim migrants into a homogenous group to emphasize their danger to the Canadian public as national security threats, and second as threats to Canadian values.

#### NATIONAL SECURITY

Media focus on the Syrian civil war in a post-9/11 security era associates Muslim migrants from MENA with potentially violent, fanatical, and terrorist acts and behaviours. The media has inscribed these characteristics onto Syrian migrants themselves who are seen as heralding “from the most violent corner of the world – where a despotic government continues to wage war against civilians and numerous terrorist insurgency groups” (Malcolm, 2018 September 13). These statements make it seem as though Syrian migrants will bring to Canada the violence they fled. In the Toronto Sun, 5% of the co-collocates implicated migrants with terrorism and as threats, with 1.8% labeled migrants as criminals, and the CBC associated migrants with threats of terrorism in 6.1% of the co-collocates, which were mirrored in the comments section at 5.8% and 3.5% respectively.

By embedding the violence of war within migrant bodies, media discourse creates a sense of fear and anxiety about Muslim migrants, dehumanizing them to justify the securitization of Canadian borders

(Pope, 2017). For example, a study of media reception conducted by Esses et al. (2017) found that Canadian participants associated refugees more with animals than Canadians, using dehumanization as a tactic to justify their marginalization. The media dehumanizes migrants by portraying them as a homogenous group and describing Muslim migrants as threats to Canada. Moreover, Islamophobic and xenophobic rhetoric have manifested within Canadian Immigration policy, which has increased the securitization of Canadian borders and surveillance of Muslims and migrants. These policies have seen a resurgence post-9/11 with Syrian migrants and Muslim Canadians seen as “the ‘enemy within’ the physical borders,” resulting in the introduction of the Anti-Terrorism Act, which formalized the government’s ability to racially profile, target, and surveil Muslims in Canada (Patel, 2012, p. 273). Jason Kenney, the Minister for Citizenship, Immigration, and Multiculturalism linked homegrown terrorism with the Canadian-Muslim community, and refocused immigration policy towards integration “in hopes of depoliticizing dangerous diversities and diffusing ethno-religious radicalism,” (Fleras, 2011, p. 32). This is embroiled within domestic and international categories of legality, with migrants crossing the border considered criminals while those that are officially resettled are deemed dangerous because, according to a Toronto Sun columnist, there is a lack of “records about a migrant’s criminal backgrounds or affiliations with terrorist groups,” necessitating scrutiny of Muslim migrants (Malcolm, 2018 September 13).

Because the media directly links terrorism with Muslim otherness, integration and acculturation policies can supplant what are considered dangerous Islamic practices and beliefs with Canadian values, providing the conditions for Muslim migrants to successfully participate in Canadian society. The fear and anxiety surrounding Muslim-Canadians has resulted in increased scrutiny of Syrian migrants. Nyers (2003, p. 1070) refers to the profiling techniques used by the state of surveillance and securitization as a *ban-opticon*, where migrant exclusion creates an “‘abject class’ of global migrants” by exploiting fears and anxieties about the Other, particularly those coded as Muslim (Nyers, 2003; Patel, 2012; CBC News, 2018 July 24). While the Canadian government sponsored 25,000 Syrians, with an additional 27,000

privately sponsored, the government has excluded Muslim migrants crossing from the U.S. border, and has surveiled Syrians and Muslim asylum seekers. The acceptance of Syrians can be seen as a performance of Canadian benevolence, reinforcing its position as a ‘peacekeeping nation’ under international law by accepting refugees. Furthermore, even if migrants are not outright excluded from entering Canada at all, they are systematically excluded in their attempt to participate in Canadian society. For example, the CBC reported on a Quebec daycare which prevented migrants awaiting asylum hearings from enrolling their children, hindering their ability to seek employment outside of governmental welfare and bolstering the image that migrants are a burden on the Canadian system (Shingler, 2018).

Islamophobic rhetoric and laws have been employed in recent news media, particularly in the Toronto Sun, which emphasized the dire need to fix “leaky border policies” and increase border security “to ensure criminals and terrorists are not hiding among the helpless” (Anglin, 2018; Postmedia News, 2018). In this case, Canada is metonymically characterized as a body or house which migrants are invading (Toronto Sun comments 1.1%) or afflicting (Santa Anna, 1999). Canadians have employed these policies and rhetoric to organize anti-Islam rallies, holding signs with phrases such as “Ban Islam,” “Islam is Evil,” and “Say No to Islam,” in front of mosques (Canadian Press & News Staff, 2018; Farber & Sucharov, 2018). As visible minorities, Muslims are targets of discrimination in their daily lives: accused of being terrorists, having their *hijabs* pulled off, and are targets of violence: in 2017 six people were killed in a Quebec mosque while 58 people prayed (Farber & Sucharov, 2018; Vendeville, 2018). In fact, in 2017 police-reported hate crimes against Muslims have increased by 151%, 207% in Ontario and 50% in Quebec, the two provinces that have accepted most Syrian refugees (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2015; Statistics Canada, 2018). By invoking “the mythical figure of the *Muslim terrorist*, a folk devil in the Western public imagination” (Kibria et al., 2017, p. 193), news media, as a source of authority that disseminates information to the public, reinforces the association between migrants and Muslims thereby justifying the surveillance, securitization, and exclusion of migrants.

## CANADIAN VALUES

In addition to Muslims embodying a national security threat, media and integration policies have juxtaposed Canadian values with Arab and Islamic practices, the latter of which are portrayed as potentially dangerous. Islamophobic rhetoric was explicit in several Toronto Sun articles (Williams, 2018; Malcolm, 2018 September 13; Malcolm, 2018 September 14) and appear in the collocates labelling migrants as threats (2.5% of TS co-collocates) in reference to Islam (1.3% of TS co-collocates) and contradicting Canadian values (2.4% of CBC co-collocates). In these portrayals, Muslims were described as upholding backward and oppressive values, such as spousal abuse, which “many Islamic countries permit, and some even encourage” (Malcolm, 2018 September 13) and allegedly wanting to kill homosexuals, which Maxime Bernier considers part of the “diversity of values” in Islam (CBC Radio, 2018). Bernier, a politician who campaigned for leadership of the Conservative Party in 2018, contended that migrants with diverse values bring “distrust, social conflict, potentially violence,” to Canada because they do not share Canadian values (CBC Radio, 2018).

Negative portrayals of Islam as oppressive create the assumption that the West and Canada are places of refuge against oppression towards women and homosexuals, while denying the structural violence that continues to be inflicted on these communities. An example of this is Canada’s acceptance of Rahaf Mohammad, in which Canada portrayed itself as saving the Saudi Arabian teen from the backward and oppressive Islamist forces in the MENA region. Although there has been hesitance in accepting Muslim migrants because Islam is assumed to be backward and threatening Canadian values, in order for Canada to perform as a benevolent provider of refuge on the world stage, the government needs to accept Muslim migrants under specific conditions. These conditions have been set out clearly by the Canadian government: Prime Minister Trudeau tweeted that Canada is accepting “those fleeing persecution, terror & war,” which is to say migrants from Syria and MENA rather than those crossing the border from the U.S. (Trudeau, 2018). This showcases one of the ways the extension of anti-Islamic

policies and rhetoric can enter the public sphere and influence the way Muslims are othered and excluded from mainstream participation in Canadian society.

Western public discourse has characterized Muslims as emotional, unstable, antimodern, and inherently violent, traits that make them particularly susceptible to fanaticism and radicalization (Kibria et al., 2017; Patel, 2014). By painting Muslims as inherently different, and Muslim men as militarized and violent (Allsopp, 2017), the media sets up Islam in opposition to Canadian values, constructing a violent type of alterity to justify their surveillance (Kibria et al., 2017). Migrants from MENA are portrayed as a threat to Canada because Arab and Islamic culture supposedly “reject basic Western values such as freedom, equality, tolerance and openness” (CBC Radio, 2018). Using Islamophobic rhetoric, the media, and the politicians it quotes, reinforce a link between geographic territories and culture-areas as inherently backwards and dangerous (Malcolm, 2018 September 13; Malcolm, 2018 September 14; Williams, 2018;). “Cultural difference is automatically interpreted as a deficiency legitimizing discrimination” (Gotsbachner, 2001, p. 741). In fact, studies have shown that negative qualifiers about migrants in media can promote a sense of moral panic and national security concerns, resulting in hostility towards migrants (Fotopoulos & Kaimaklioti, 2016). Yellow jacket protesters in Red Deer, mirroring similar protests in France, made posters accusing the Liberal government’s agenda of supporting “terrorism, ‘mass Muslim immigration’ and starting the ‘process of Sharia law’ in Canada, with worries that “‘Canadian values and morals’ [are] being undermined” by Muslim migrants (Huncar, 2019). Moreover, several commenters on Toronto Sun articles described their anxiety about high birthrates in Muslim migrants as a threat to Canadian unity and cohesiveness (1.2%). This rhetoric is associated with an increase in hate crimes against Muslims (Statistics Canada, 2018).

Anti-Islamic protests implicate migration with a breakdown of Canadian morals and values, impacting the way Muslim-Canadians and Muslim migrants inhabit space in their everyday lives in Canada (Canadian Press & News Staff, 2018; Farber & Sucharov, 2018; Vendeville, 2018). Muslim-Canadians, such as Alia Youssef, referenced these one-dimensional portrayals of Muslim women, as

oppressed and silent, in her decision to hide her faith in public while she was growing up (Malik, 2018). At the same time, Muslim Canadians and Muslim migrants have resisted attempts to homogenize and militarize Muslim bodies as fanatical and terrorist by engaging in a dialogue with mainstream portrayals of Muslims. A Muslim Canadian herself, Alia Youssef created a photography series entitled “The Sisters Project” to showcase the faces and stories of Muslim women in Canada. “I wanted to counter the idea that Muslim women can be painted with one brush, by instead humanizing Muslim women and diversifying the narratives of their everyday lives, and shining a light on Muslim women who make up the fabric of contemporary Canadian society” (Malik, 2018). Furthermore, TV shows like *Degrassi: Next Class* in Canada have provided representations of Muslim migrant besides their one-dimensional portrayals of oppression. The character Rasha is a refugee from Syria that decides to stop wearing her *hijab* and is coming to terms with her queer identity within her daily life resettling in Canada. Another is the multiple resettlement groups and NGOs spearheaded by Muslim communities to assist migrants resettling in Canada, including: Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations – Cultural Exchange and Support Initiative (NMC-CESI), Lifeline Syria, Syrian Active Volunteers, The Arab Community Centre of Toronto, and the Together Project, which focus on integration and cultural exchange among and between Canadians and migrants. While these community efforts are mostly left out of the media, they are forms of resistance that challenge homogenized portrayals of Muslims and migrants as coming from the outside and roots their experiences within Canadian culture and society.

## **PUBLIC HEALTH AND BIOSECURITY**

Public health policies are mechanized by the state and media under the guise of improving migrant health and national security to mitigate potential future risks of Canadian immunity or burdens on the healthcare system. The nature of state emigration policy and the media’s construction of alterity in health contexts has resulted in migrants “increasingly cast as the objects of securitized fears and anxieties,” so that governmental and media focus on health has ensured the increased othering of migrants (Nyers, 2003, p. 1070). Merging national security policies with public health is an example of biopolitics:

the state's desire to maintain health is embroiled with its need for security (Collier, Lakoff, & Rabinow, 2004). Categorizing migrants as Other and negatively characterizing them as dangerous and burdensome on Canada is used to justify their management, exclusion, and the securitization of the Canadian border. The Canadian media invoke public health within a larger conversation of biosecurity in two ways. First, numbers and climatic metaphors are used to describe migrants as an overwhelming burden on Canada by taking up space and financial resources that could be allocated to Canadians. Second, state, media, and academic assumptions of migrants as unhealth necessitate biosecurity measures to either exclude or manage migrants to prevent contamination of the Canadian population. In tandem, these portrayals invoke public health to position the migrant as Other, justified using the imperative of maintaining Canada's biosecurity.

Out of 155 articles reviewed, 97 (or 62.6%) referenced migrants in relation to numbers. By doing so, the media could "signal subjectivity and hence credibility," and "imply the size of the threat" (Van Dijk, 2000, p. 45), inciting a statistical panic that migrants will overrun the Canadian system. Furthermore, the excessive use of numbers and climatic metaphors created the impression that migrants are expending finite Canadian resources: there are "too many newcomers and no place to put them..." (CBC News, 2018 July 26). Migrants have been associated with terms such as crisis, problem, burden, and disease, implying that they are drains on resources and problems that must be solved (Ullah, 2014). Problem-oriented rhetoric is repeated both in media and in academic articles that consistently emphasize "the burdens and costs of the Syrian refugee crisis," on Canadian welfare and healthcare systems (Ostrand, 2015, p. 255). In both news sources, climatic metaphors described migrant movement as 'flow, surge, wave, and flood' accounting for approximately 7% of the first collocates and 3% of the co-collocates, dehumanizing migrants by likening them to natural disasters that could create a crisis by invading and threatening Canadian unity and health.

Although the media has uses exaggerated numbers and climatic references to incite xenophobia, data collected from the Government of Canada tracking the numbers of migrants crossing the border has

not shown an increase in migration. Table 5 shows the number of asylum cases between 2011 and 2018 in Canada, with a maximum of 8,550 cases in 2017, only 295 more than in 2011, and 130 less in 2018 than in 2011 (Government of Canada, 2018a). Despite these facts, the Toronto Sun reported vast numbers of so-called “illegal border crossers” and economic migrants entering Canada in ‘flows, influxes, and surges’ (Anglin, 2018; Bonokoski, 2018; Canadian Press, 2018; Harris, 2018; Tutton, 2018). The use of numbering, climatic metaphors, and inciting fear about migrant diseases in the media is correlated with an increase in anti-migrant sentiment in Canada, with 49% of Canadians believing that too many migrants have been allowed to enter the country (CBC Radio, 2018). Canadian media has capitalized on these fears by emphasizing the lack of space and resources, particularly housing, in Canada for migrants and their financial cost for the Canadian government, taxpayers, and welfare and healthcare systems (Canadian Press, 2018; CBC News, 2018 July 26; Bonokoski, 2018; Postmedia News, 2018).

These fears draw on Malthus’ demographic principal inciting panic about population increases with finite resources (Lock & Nguyen, 2018), where images of “hundreds of thousands of poor, desperate, black people ready to cross [the] borders” (Paik, 2013, p. 153) create a sense of siege and anxiety (Pope, 2017). Here, the sheer number of migrants entering Canada represent, for the media and politicians, a public health concern. Furthermore, references to financial cost was the most common collocate in the Toronto Sun (20.4%) and the second most in the CBC (19.5%): “the federal government recently pledged...\$50 million to help offset some of the costs incurred due to the influx of asylum seekers illegally crossing the Canada-U.S. border” (Canadian Press, 2018). The media’s focus on statistics and finite resources create a public panic about migration by conceiving of Canada as a bounded and unified space in which migrants are invading and circumventing domestic law as criminals (1.8% in Toronto Sun co-collocates) in order to take advantage (1.3% first collocates Toronto Sun) of Canadian benevolence. The Canadian media uses metonymy to frame migrants as invading Canada, and expending resources and space to the detriment of Canadians.



The media employs a ‘Canadians First’ rhetoric to differentiate between groups that can legitimately access state resources, in this case Canadians and legitimate migrants. Media articles use *deixis* to signal migrants as separate from the ingroup of Canadians (Santa Anna, 1999), appearing in most articles in both newspapers. In using deictic terminology, the media helped create a “fictitious we-group...to achieve a positive identification by the journalists and readership” (Erjavec, 2001, p. 703), juxtaposing Canadian welfare with that of migrants. For instance, Jelena Payne, a community developer and health commissioner, noted that the city of “Windsor does not have the capacity through our temporary shelters to assist,” which are typically taken up by homeless people in the community (Canadian Press, 2018). In these cases, Canadian rights to access social and governmental services were more legitimate than migrants as the outgroup, who are portrayed as literally taking away beds from homeless Canadians. The Ontario Premier Doug Ford called refugees “threats to services Ontario families depend on,” juxtaposing the well-being of migrants to Canadians (Tutton, 2018). By emphasizing the lack of space and support for Canadians at the expense of supporting migrants, the Canadian media, and the politicians they quote, invoke legal and cultural categorizations to delegitimize migrant rights to state resources. In this light, migrants are described as taking advantage of Canadian benevolence (Toronto Sun first collocate 1.3%) and as opportunists and leaches on the Canadian system (Toronto Sun Comments, 2.3%) (CBC News, 2018 July 6; Wright, 2018). In the Toronto Sun comments section, ‘Canadians First’ was the third-highest collocate at 9.1%, invoking the media’s deictic rhetoric and emphasizing the importance of governmental focus on Canadians rather than migrants. By juxtaposing the welfare of groups of vulnerable Canadians with migrants, the media created a dialectic between ‘us’ and ‘them,’ homogenizing and bounding migrants and Canadians to pit them against each other. These arguments justify xenophobia by invoking public health concern over the number of migrants entering Canada and their use of state resources.

In addition to rhetoric about space and resources, the media referenced unhealthy migrants to invoke public health concerns. Migrant health is an important focus in academic and political discourse

because of concerns that migrant bodies carry disease as they travel, which can have ramifications on Canadian immunity and its health system. These concerns stem from a biopolitical colonial history and the foundation of public health, epidemiology, and biomedical systems that monitor and seek to control behaviours to prevent and reduce negative health outcomes (Lock & Nguyen, 2018). These systems map disease onto geographic territories and their associated culture-areas. During European colonization, Africa was referred to “as ‘the White Man’s grave’ associating the colonies with images of pestilence and death,” intricately linking health with whiteness and disease with blackness (Lock & Nguyen, 2018, p. 81). Within migration policy, biopolitical governmentality includes a network of quarantine and health inspections meant to exclude and surveil migrants with diseases (Shah, 2001). Canada’s “Immigration Medical Examination,” surveils and excludes migrant bodies that are potentially diseased or will be burdensome on the Canadian welfare system (Hoskins, 2015; Pottie et al., 2011). Public fear of migratory diseases stimulated these policies because fear of contamination became intricately weaved with a wider narrative about the threat of migrants, leading to moral panic about minority migrant populations (Perera, 2002; Shah, 2001). This history has persisted, with scrutiny over migrant health and their movements as a threat both to Canadian immunity and as a burden on the Canadian healthcare system (Hoskins, 2015; Pottie et al., 2011).

While disease was a collocate only 1.8% in the Toronto Sun, references to the burden of migrants on the Canadian healthcare system happened six times more frequently in reference to financial and taxpayer burdens and the lack of resources in Canada to accommodate migrants. Furthermore, academic and governmental health reports that collect “facts” about migrant health (Pottie et al., 2011) are an integral part of Foucault’s biopolitics and biosecuritization: these measurements become central in maintaining “wellness” in society through processes of governmentality that monitor, regulate, and exclude migrants (Collier et al., 2004). Stevenson (2014) describes this in her account of the Canadian government’s biopolitical management of tuberculosis in indigenous people in Nunavut and the contemporary “suicide epidemic” of indigenous youth. These medical screenings impose external, and

often exclusively biomedical, measurements of health onto migrants without considering the ways that migrants themselves define their health experiences, such as through cultural idioms of distress (Sancilio, Eggerman, & Panter-Brick, 2017). The fear of migrants infecting Canadians justifies governmental attempts to control migrant bodies through surveillance and biomedical public health measures that ignore the sociopolitical context by misattributing disease to groups or cultures. These policies are employed by the media who highlight the threat of “illegal crossers” bringing communicable diseases into Canada (Williams, 2018). Academic profiles of migrant health also employ this rhetoric by focusing on migrants carrying infectious diseases rather their worsening health outcomes and increased risk of chronic disease after they migrate to North America (Pottie et al., 2011). Migrants, governments, politicians, and media homogenize migrants by pathologizing them and positioning them as potential threats to host societies, burdens on health systems and taxpayers, and ultimately emphasizing their otherness from the in-group (Mewes, Reich, Skoluda, Seele, & Nater, 2017).

Because health is defined as the absence of disease, it provides justification for governments to monitor individual bodies, or particular groups of bodies, to ensure that public health is maintained (Lock & Nguyen, 2018; Shah, 2001). While these public health and biosecurity measures are meant to mitigate the risks of disease and provide care for migrant populations, they can also create potentially damaging perceptions by pathologizing migrants and framing them as unhealthy and potential threats. Williams (2018) asserts this in a Toronto Sun article by emphasizing the necessity for disease screening *before* migrants enter the host country to prevent the various infectious diseases (which he lists dutifully) he assumes migrants carry. These reviews are common in academic and governmental articles, such as in public health community guidelines, which summarize the gamut of diseases migrants could potentially bring to Canada (Pottie et al., 2011). Williams (2018) further emphasizes the danger of migrants crossing the border who may not have been medically inspected and could “harm everyone” and “endanger American [and Canadian] children.” Migrants coming from MENA continue to be coded as carriers of disease threatening the health security of Western host societies. By turning segments of the population

into Others, including visible Muslim minorities, and equating these minorities with refugees, it justifies scrutiny of Muslim and migrant others to ensure they do not become threats to Canada (Tuitt, 2013).

The Toronto Sun in particular associates Muslim migrants with being dirty, carrying diseases, as viruses infecting Canadians, swarms of insects, and infected (1.8%). While cultural beliefs, practices, and behaviours have been implicated in health outcomes, the majority of studies linking culture to health have not shown the mechanisms or pathways in which culture is either a barrier or a protective factor for health outcomes (Hruschka, 2009). Despite this, culture is used as a determinant of health in media articles and in academic reports about migrants. The use of xenophobic and Islamophobic rhetoric when discussing health creates a causal relationship between culture and health: migrants are unhealthy *because* of their cultural background and practices, making them potential threats to the immunity and well-being of Canadians. Moreover, academic (Pottie et al., 2011) and media (Williams, 2018) articles pathologizing migrants creates perceptions of migrants inherently having, or inevitably at risk for, developing illness or disease, particularly Syrian migrants fleeing conflict and violence. In this case “conditions of *dis-* “place”ment are themselves a *disorder*” (Rajaram & Grundy-Warr, 2007, p. xxviii): to be a migrant is equated with being ill. Research has shown the opposite is true: migrants are healthier than Canadian-born populations, and have a greater risk of chronic health issues *after* migrating to North America (Pottie et al., 2011). Linking migrants with unhealthiness frames them as a problem, burden, and threat to Canada, resulting in an increase in academic and political research on health to implement preventative and ameliorative measures during the migrant resettlement process.

## **HEALTH, DISCRIMINATION, AND ALTERITY**

An alternative to the problematic methodology that essentializes migrants as unhealthy would be to engage in a Critical Refugee *Health Studies*. Rather than assuming that migrants are inherently unhealthy, this methodology tracks the way intersecting power structures construct alterity and manage migrant health via public health policies to create the conditions for poor migrant health outcomes. One way this is accomplished is by framing biological data within its historical and sociopolitical context – the

scaffolding built by international bodies and governments that make people illegal, create categories of otherness, and enforce security and surveillance regimes. The government mechanizes public health to surveil, manage, and exclude migrants in the name of national security to maintain distinct lines between the “in-group” of Canadians and those that are considered Other, including indigenous people and migrants. By acknowledging that these power structures enact violence onto migrants and their experiences of migration, rather than linking migrants to disease, the discussion changes to the way illness can develop as a result of sociopolitical stressors and structural violence that occur throughout the migration process.

Critical Refugee Studies “conceptualizes ‘the refugee’ not as an object of investigation but rather as a *paradigm*...as a critical idea but also as a social actor whose life, when traced illuminates the interconnections of colonization, war, and global social change” (Espiritu, 2014, p. 11). A Critical Refugee *Health* Studies follows this framework to illuminate the sociopolitical context associated with poor health outcomes in migrants. Furthermore, Lock and Nguyen’s (2018, p. 319) concept of Local Biologies connects the physical dimensions of illness and well-being within the body and its context, including “evolutionary, environmental, historical variables...sociopolitical factors and medical interventions...language, family, and community knowledge, practices and expectations.” By emphasizing the entanglement of these factors within conceptions of health and wellbeing, Lock and Nguyen hope to undo some of the problem-oriented approaches used in health studies. As a result, rather than assuming migrants are diseased, emphasizing the structures of violence leading to their displacement, the stressors of migration and resettlement, and governmental care through public health, can reduce the essentialist and deterministic conception of migrants and their experiences. By using a Critical Refugee Studies framework, health studies can avoid a problem-oriented approach by centering migrants and their experiences of illness within the context of migration.

The media’s repeated use of collocates with negative connotations associated with migrant legality, Islamophobia and xenophobia, and public health burdens results in an alterity that can increase

rates of discrimination and have implications for migrant health outcomes (Canadian Press & News Staff, 2018; CBC News, 2018 September 6; Farber & Sucharov, 2018; Statistics Canada, 2018; Vendeville, 2018). Discrimination is defined as the “unequal treatment on the basis of one’s group membership” (Çelebi, Verkuyten, & Bagci, 2017), in this case migrants who are Othered because of their legal status and their assumed Islamic religion. The increase in rates of discrimination against Arab populations, including harassment, violence, and workplace discrimination, particularly after 9/11, are correlated with governmental policies that surveil, securitize, and profile Arabs and Muslims are linked to poorer health outcomes (El-Sayed & Galea, 2009; Lauderdale, 2006; Patel, 2012). In fact, incidents of discrimination “trigger a psychological and physiological stress response that can deleteriously affect health” (Lauderdale, 2006). Six months following 9/11, hate crimes against Arabs in the U.S. increased by 354.8%, and women that were identified as having Arabic-sounding names were more likely to have a low birth-weight infants that could result in deleterious health effects (Lauderdale, 2006). The association between discrimination and negative health outcomes is concerning because of the increase in negative rhetoric surrounding migrants in the media and by politicians, as well as the increase in harassment, discrimination, and hate crimes against Muslims in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2018). Migrant populations with limited English proficiency, or who speak accented English, experienced higher rates of discrimination, increasing their chances of developing anxiety and depression (Esses et al., 2017). Islamophobic and xenophobic rhetoric in the news has been correlated with increases in hate-crimes towards Arabs and Muslims and is an element of alterity that can impact their health outcomes.

Migrants experiencing discrimination in host countries have diminished capacity to cope with acculturation stressors, such as learning a new language and finding employment. Moreover, discrimination and racial profiling are linked to poorer health outcomes in migrants, resulting in depression, memory deficits, overweight, high blood glucose, high blood pressure, preterm birth, chronic stress (through hyper-cortisol production) and cardiovascular disease (Dajani, Hadfield, van Uum, Greff, & Panter-Brick, 2018; Lauderdale, 2006; Matheson, Jorden, & Anisman, 2008; Panter-Brick et al., 2018;

Sancilio et al., 2017). The association between trauma, acculturation, discrimination, and poor health outcomes are largely ignored by Pottie et al. (2011), who focus their report of migrant health on infectious disease as recommendation for Canadian health clinicians to monitor in migrants.

In contrast, several studies consider the intersection between health and sociopolitical context, finding that migrants at risk for, or diagnosed with, PTSD have high risk of poorer health outcomes (Kinzie et al., 2008). Discrimination experiences, and even the perception of discrimination, are associated with reduced psychological well-being and increased prevalence for illness, including depression, anger, lack of self-esteem, elevated blood pressure, and cardiovascular disease (Çelebi et al., 2017; Jasinskaja-Lahti, Liebkind, Jaakkola, & Reuter, 2006; Williams, Neighbors, & Jackson, 2003). Chronic stress, like that caused from acculturative pressures, discrimination, and mental illness (PTSD), is associated with cardiovascular disease risks and chronic low-level inflammation (high blood pressure and arterial stiffness), regulated through the central and autonomic nervous system, the neuroendocrine system, immune system, and vascular and hematologic systems (Minas, 2016). Furthermore, stress biomarkers like cortisol can analyze the impact of adversity on migrants, providing a link between social contexts and biological outcomes (Dajani et al., 2018). In a study with Syrian migrants in Jordan, Dajani et al. (2018) found that migrants with higher levels of insecurity and trauma had hypercortisolism and greater cortisol dysregulation, associated with negative health outcomes including depression, memory and learning deficits, overweight, high blood glucose, and high blood pressure. Matheson et al. (2008) found similar results in an analysis of hair cortisol concentration in Somali refugees in Canada, where cortisol levels remained high, resulting in blunted cortisol response because of high levels of chronic stress. Because of the stressful nature of migration, including diminished social support, loss of status, learning a new language and culture, and being targets of discrimination, Matheson et al. (2008) hypothesize that a blunted cortisol response is an adaptive coping method.

The stressors of migration, including loss of home, trauma, violence, and acculturation are exacerbated by the construction of alterity, which creates the conditions for marginalization,

stigmatization, and discrimination of migrants. This is particularly true given that many migrants currently entering Canada are from MENA and are visible minorities. In conjunction with the stressors of migration, daily instances of acute and chronic discrimination can compound and reinforce the hierarchical order created by migration policy in host societies that frame migrants as Others. Media discourse, as a legitimate pillar of governmentality, can act as one of the sources that disseminates negative conceptions of migrants as burdens and threats to host societies, reinforcing the sociopolitical framework in which migrants are discriminated against. The Canadian media does this in three main ways: the use of legal terminology to make moral judgements on migration motivations, Islamophobic and xenophobic rhetoric that frame Muslim migrants as dangerous, and the use of public health to portray migrants as unhealthy and overwhelming the Canadian system. Islamophobic and xenophobic discourse becomes habitualized and normalized through the media and can permeate into the public sphere leading to discrimination against migrants (Gotsbachner, 2001). By considering the context of structural violence in analyzing migrant health outcomes, Critical Refugee *Health Studies* can implicate the role of alterity in creating the conditions for poor health outcomes.

Although much academic research use discrimination to study negative health outcomes, several studies instead use resilience factors as mechanisms to improve or buffer poor health. Rather than essentializing migrants as inherently unhealthy, this approach focuses on positive interventions that can improve migrant health outcomes. Group belonging and social identity within communities has been shown to be an important buffer to discrimination and negative health outcomes associated with it (Çelebi et al., 2017; Smeekes, Verkuyten, Çelebi, Acartürk, & Onkun, 2017). Stress-attunement intervention has been associated with a decrease and regularization of cortisol levels and improved psychosocial wellbeing (Dajani et al., 2018). Furthermore, group belonging and ethno-social and religious organizations assist with the integration and acculturation process and ease the stress of displacement by replicating familiar cultural environments (Çelebi et al., 2017; Guo & Guo, 2011; Kinzie et al., 2008; Noh & Kaspar, 2003; Smeekes et al., 2017; Williams et al., 2003). These results can be used to create spaces of resilience for



migrants experiencing marginalization and discrimination due to the state and media's construction of alterity. Groups such as the Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations – Cultural Exchange and Support Initiative (NMC-CESI) facilitate a cultural exchange between Canadians and Syrians, where instead of a one-way integration of Syrians into Canadian culture, Canadians too can learn to speak Arabic and practice Syrian customs.

Lastly, during the Federal election in 2015, the Liberal government campaigned to accept 25,000 migrants, which was surrounded by positive rhetoric about migrants and Syrians alike, a framework adopted by the media at the time (Esses et al., 2017). The shift in attitude by the government and media resulted in an increase in support for migrants entering Canada, from 42% to 52% (Esses et al., 2017). Although this attitude shift was not universal, and has not been studied in migrants themselves, it is important to acknowledge the difference that government-sanctioned support for migrants can make and emphasizes the extent to which negative rhetoric in the media can affect perceptions of migrants. This is particularly salient considering the government's hesitance to accept migrants crossing the U.S. border, which has been correlated with an increase in xenophobic rhetoric in the media through debates of asylum seeker illegality. In tandem, the media's use of negative qualifiers and their juxtaposition between 'good' and 'bad' migrants elucidate the intricate link between discourse, alterity, and health outcomes.

## **CONCLUSION**

This thesis has uses media articles to highlight patterns in media discourse and governmental policy that create, maintain, and emphasize alterity to justify and legitimize the surveillance, management, and exclusion of migrants and the way this context can influence their health outcomes. Although the media plays one part in constructing the migrant as Other, this is accomplished in joint production with political elites and academics that can shape public sentiment towards migrants and potentially reinforce negative characterisations of migrants as not belonging in Canada. The Canadian media and government construct migrant otherness through three main modalities: legal categorizations, Islamophobic and xenophobic rhetoric, and public health as a biosecurity measure. In the media, migrants

are portrayed as burdens, threats, and illegal, which is deeply interconnected to the racialization of migrant bodies as dirty, unhealthy, illegitimate, and morally nefarious. The media emphasizes cultural differences between Muslim migrants and Canadian values by associating Islam with fanaticism, backwardness, and terrorism. The ensuing Islamophobic and xenophobic rallies have shown the way public sentiment towards migrants can become aggravated through negative representations of Muslims and migrants. By highlighting the structural forces that shape migrant experiences as they navigate the sometimes-violent terrain of alterity in Canadian society, I hope to have attributed health outcomes to wider sociopolitical structures rather than inherently within migrant bodies. An integral part of a successful Critical Refugee *Health Studies* would be to continue the analysis of the structural forces impacting experiences of migration from the points of views of migrants. Looking forward, I hope to integrate the experience of migrants *from* migrants themselves as they navigate these structural conditions rather than relying on privileged voices telling the story *for* migrants *about* migrant experiences.

## APPENDIX

Table 1: Number of articles per month with RASIM keywords according to each news source.

News Source	Number of Articles			
	July	August	September	Total
<b>CBC</b>	33	40	33	106
<b>Toronto Sun</b>	28	14	10	49

RASIM Search Terms and Table Key:

<b>R</b>	Refugee	<b>M</b>	Migrant
<b>AS</b>	Asylum Seeker	<b>IM</b>	Immigrant

Table 2: Toronto Sun Collocates

1 <sup>st</sup> Collocate	Tally (%)	RASIM	Co-Collocate	Tally (%)
Claim(s/ed/ants)	46 (20.6)	A;R	Financial	91 (20.4)
Number	41 (18.4)	AS;R;IM	Illegal(ly)	91 (20.4)
Illegal(ly)	30 (14)	M;AS	Number	40 (9)
Syrian	16 (7.1)	R	Crisis	33 (7.4)
Climatic Metaphors	16 (7.1)	AS;IM	Border	21 (4.7)
Irregular	9 (3.9)	M	Resources (lack)	21 (4.7)
Legitimate	9 (3.9)	R	Irregular	18 (4)
House(ed/ing)	8 (2.7)	AS;R	Climatic Metaphors	15 (3.4)
Crisis	6 (2.7)	R	Queue jumpers	13 (2.9)
Increase(d)	6 (2.7)	AS;R	Taxpayer	13 (2.9)
Cross(ed/ing)	4 (1.8)	IM;AS	Syrian	12 (2.8)
Help	4 (1.8)	R	Terrorist(s)	11 (2.5)
System	4 (1.8)	AS;IM;R	Threat	11 (2.5)
Undocumented	4 (1.8)	IM	Crossers	10 (2.2)
Financial	4 (1.8)	AS	House(d/ing)	10 (2.2)
Border Jumpers/ Crossers	4 (1.8)	AS	Criminals	8 (1.8)
Camp	3 (1.3)	R	Time	8 (1.8)
Family(ies)	3 (1.3)	R	Diseased	8 (1.8)
Take Advantage	3 (1.3)	M	Fake/Bogus	7 (1.6)
Welcome	3 (1.3)	AS;R	Islam	6 (1.3)

Table 3: CBC News Collocates

<b>1<sup>st</sup> Collocate</b>	<b>Tally (%)</b>	<b>RASIM</b>	<b>Co-Collocate</b>	<b>Tally (%)</b>
Number	86 (17.3)	R;AS;M	Number	164 (24.4)
Claim(s/ed/ing)	57 (11.5)	A;R;M	Financial	131 (19.5)
Syrian	54 (10.8)	R	Syria(n)	68 (10.1)
Claimant(s)	44 (8.9)	R;AS	Threat	41 (6.1)
Climatic Metaphors	35 (7.1)	AS;R	Crisis	31 (4.7)
Status	35 (7.1)	R	Illegal(ly)	28 (4.2)
Camp	34 (6.9)	R	Flee(d/ing)	27 (4)
Sponsor(s/ed/ship)	33 (6.7)	R	Newcomer	24 (3.6)
House(ing)	16 (3.2)	R;AS	Resources (lack)	24 (3.6)
Irregular	14 (2.8)	M	Climatic Metaphor	20 (2.9)
Rohingya	14 (2.8)	R	Space	16 (2.4)
Crisis	12 (2.4)	R;M;AS	Canadian Values	16 (2.4)
Legitimate	10 (2)	R	Temporary	15 (2.2)
Support(ing)	9 (1.8)	AS;R	Integrate(s/tion)	12 (1.8)
Cross(ed/ing)	8 (1.6)	AS;R	Skilled	12 (1.8)
Help(s/ing)	8 (1.6)	R; AS	Irregular	10 (1.5)
Seek(ing)	8 (1.6)	R	Time (long)	10 (1.5)
Financial	7 (1.5)	AS;R	House(ing)	9 (1.2)
Fled(eeing)	6 (1.2)	R	Queue Jumpers	8 (1.1)
Resettle(ment)	6 (1.2)	R	Claim	7 (1)

Table 4: Collocates for Comments on News Articles

Toronto Sun Comments			CBC Comments		
Co-Collocate	Tally (%)	RASIM	Co-Collocate	Tally (%)	RASIM
Illegal(ly)	231 (28.1)	R;AS;M	Illegal(ly)	119 (22.4)	IM;R
Taxpayer	163 (19.9)		Taxpayer	86 (16.2)	
Canadians First	75 (9.1)		Financial	49 (9.2)	
Financial	70 (8.5)		Legitimate	45 (8.5)	R;AS
Legal/Legitimate	30 (3.6)		Crisis	42 (7.9)	
Criminal	29 (3.5)	M	Number	29 (5.5)	AS
Number	28 (3.4)	R;AS	Illegals	27 (5.1)	
Syrian	23 (2.8)	R	Canadians First	22 (4.1)	
Illegitimate	23 (2.8)	AS;R	Queue Jumpers	19 (3.6)	
Terrorists	19 (2.3)		Threat/ Terrorism	17 (3.2)	
Opportunists/ Leaches	19 (2.3)		Canadian Values	16 (3)	
Irregular	16 (1.9)	M	Climatic Metaphor	11 (2.1)	
Backward	14 (1.7)		Claimants	8 (1.5)	R
Crisis	14 (1.7)		Irregular	8 (1.5)	
Canadian Customs/ Integration	13 (1.6)		Syrian	7 (1.3)	R
Invasion (ded/ing)	12 (1.5)	M	Return/Deport	7 (1.3)	
Muslim(s)	12 (1.5)	IM	Burden	6 (1.1)	
Queue Jumpers	12 (1.5)		Resources	6 (1.1)	
Birth Rate	10 (1.2)		Economic	4 (0.7)	M;R
Invaders	9 (1.1)		Federal Responsibility	4 (0.7)	

Table 5: Asylum Claims in Ontario from 2011-2018 (air, land, marine) (Government of Canada, 2018).

\*Note: these figures are subject to change, retrieved: February 2019.

2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Total
8,255	5,500	2,715	4,055	4,725	7,375	8,550	8,125	49,435

The thesis is currently being prepared for submission for publication of the material. The thesis author was the primary investigator and author of this material.

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