# The Canadian Contradiction: Perspectives of Multiculturalism, Immigration, and Discourses of Othering in Canada

by

Laura Vega Murillo

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Department of Educational Policy Studies
University of Alberta

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#### **Abstract**

Social learning and the construction of a shared culture and worldview are crucial aspects that shape people's individual and collective identities, determine their sense of 'belonging' to society, and establish difference from others. While adult education can be a self-motivated and self-directed process, assumptions and identities learned socially can influence adult learning experiences (formal or informal) and interactions with others.

The Canadian identity is the construction of a national collective 'self' under principles of nationalism, enforced by the nation-state. As other identities, it is validated through exclusion, and even domination, of the 'other.' A review of Canadian history shows a national identity created to reflect and exalt that of the British colonizer, utilizing racism as a form of exclusion rather than the nation-state borders. This idea of the Canadian 'self' and rejection of others has been socialized over centuries through formal and informal channels, including mass media. With the technological options for immediacy of communication and information, questions arise about how much knowledge people receive from the media as a form of social learning and how much it affects how Canadians see themselves and others.

Between 2015 and 2016, the mass resettlement of Syrian refugees in Canada occupied news headlines daily, eliciting diverse opinions and reactions on traditional and social media channels. The constant representation and discussion of Syrian refugees in the news, as well as heated arguments about them on public channels, inspired the research questions for my study:

What are the discourses being disseminated publicly on the topic of the mass migration of Syrian

refugees to Canada? How do these discourses and perceptions relate to national identity, 'othering' and systemic power relations in Canada? Taking Norman Fairclough's dialectical-relational approach to critical discourse analysis (CDA) as a methodology, I conduct a review of more than 800 news and opinion articles from three Canadian nationwide news media outlets, including textual and visual discourses, over the span of 15 months. This analysis looks at the marginalization of newcomers as a broad social wrong from a semiotic aspect and identifies the dialectics between semiosis and other elements, including social practice, as well as the instances of recontextualization and reconfiguration of existing discourses.

My CDA shows six recurring discourses from journalists, politicians, and Canadian citizens related to the Syrian refugees' identity and their position in relation to the Canadian identity, often emphasizing differences between both and reproducing local and imported historical discourses of racism and arabophobia. Many present a stark contradiction with Canada's official multicultural identity as well. I conclude that the dissemination of these discourses is neither necessarily conscious nor unique to certain political ideologies or affiliations, but should lead us to reflect on media and journalists in a role of potential facilitators of knowledge and the implications of mass-disseminated identity discourses that uphold oppression and unequal power relations between groups.

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#### Chapter 1

#### Welcome To Canada?

Mohammad El Hindawi is a Syrian refugee running for his life. His oppressive government wanted to kill him for being a rebel activist, according to a story published online on The Guardian called *What is Canada like for a refugee?* (Mouallem, 2018). In 2014, after a wait of 18 months while hiding and receiving some help from the United Nations, El Hindawi was told that he, his wife and their six children would be flying to Canada, a country about which he had not learned anything in school, but was described to him as a safe place. They did not speak English. Looking to ensure his family's survival, he accepted the offer to move to an unknown country.

The article describes how El Hindawi struggled financially soon after his arrival, and his ability to keep a job in Edmonton, Alberta, was difficult because of the language difference and health conditions he suffered. He and his family were able to obtain subsidized housing, but eventually suffered from a persistent bedbug infestation, despite inspections and actions from the landlord to address the problem. Soon, a news story published about the El Hindawi family in Metro News placed them and their bedbugs in the public eye (Mouallem, 2018). Online responses from readers were full of comments towards the family judging them as ungrateful and troublesome, and including words such as "queue-jumpers" and "GO HOME!!!" Mohammad El Hindawi remembered crying when he asked someone to read these comments for him. The news story had such an impact, that rumours began to spread in his neighbourhood about how he

might have his children taken away by Social Services because of the bedbug situation. As the article states, "This was not the fair and tolerant Canada the settlement agents told him he was bringing his family to" (Mouallem, 2018, para. 14).

The dissonance between the warm reception the El Hindawis were told they would encounter and the harsh response they received from the broader Canadian community after they migrated is not an isolated case. In Toronto, the Alsoufi family, who had arrived in 2015, were forced to close the restaurant they owned after receiving repeated death threats and emails calling them terrorists from whom Canada had to be defended (Armus, 2019). Young refugees in New Brunswick have been the target of racist comments from adults, particularly their own teachers (CBC News, 2018). Canada has maintained a long-standing reputation as a particularly diverse and welcoming nation. However, a contradiction emerges when Canada's history of multiculturalism is examined in relation to policies and popular racist and xenophobic discourses surrounding migration, providing a different picture of the lived reality of other cultures in Canada.

In 1971, the government of Canada introduced the concept of multiculturalism as an inherent quality of the nation, recognizing Canada was built on a foundation of many ethnic and cultural backgrounds. When the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act* became law in 1985, Canada developed a state-endorsed identity as a nation not only accepting, but welcoming of diversity:

It is hereby declared to be the policy of the Government of Canada to (...) recognize and promote the understanding that multiculturalism is a fundamental characteristic of the

Canadian heritage and identity and that it provides an invaluable resource in the shaping of Canada's future (Government of Canada, 1985a).

The landscape presented by the establishment of an official multiculturalism depicted Canada's social fabric as harmoniously created through the contributions of many different populations, resulting in a unique, rich, and vibrant cultural mosaic. Canada's proclaimed pride in its diversity as an essential part of the country was reinforced with the formal inclusion of refugees in its immigration policy in 1978 (Gogia & Slade, 2011). This decision was instrumental in building the idea of humanitarian values as an essential part of national identity. As the nation stepped up to open its borders to refugees during political conflicts, media stories helped develop the idea of a compassionate Canada, willing to provide help and support to victims from the rest of the world (Bauder, 2008). The perception of humanitarianism as a Canadian national value was solidified globally, for example, with the validation and praise from the United Nations, awarding the Nansen Medal to Canada for their efforts to aid refugees in 1986 (Reuters, 1986) and acknowledging Canada's efforts to welcome Vietnamese refugees fleeing a repressive dictatorship during the 1980s (Gogia & Slade, 2011). This event is now remembered as a time when Canadian citizens came together to help the Vietnamese refugees in need (CBC, 2017).

The mass migration and resettlement of Vietnamese refugees was one among many other similar cases. Political conflicts have displaced millions of people around the world for decades, and the count of refugees and asylum seekers continues to rise. According to a report commissioned by the World Bank in 2017, it is estimated that there were more than 65 million

people displaced worldwide by 2015, due to political conflicts, persecution, and violations of human rights (Sarzin, 2017). Canada has constantly appeared at the forefront of the efforts to welcome refugees. From the arrival of more than 30,000 Hungarians in 1956, to approximately 7,000 Asians from Uganda and more than 1,000 Chileans during the 1970s, Canada has welcomed large groups of refugees for resettlement throughout history, even before a formal refugee protection and relocation policy was in place (Gogia & Slade, 2011). Despite these policies and the 'open doors' of seemingly willing Canadian governments, newcomers continue to face challenges that contradict the warm welcome they expect. A 2012 study conducted by the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI) indicates that immigrants and refugees struggled with their processes of starting a new life and integrating to society, emphasizing challenges including a lack of social support networks (20 %) and social isolation (26.5 %), to limited English language skills (32.7 %) and finding employment (61.8 %) (p. 34).

Prior to the recent invasion of Ukraine, the most prominent case of mass displacement of people is the ongoing civil war in Syria. Since 2011, a political armed conflict between government and rebel opposition groups in Syria has caused more than six million people to be displaced internally, and more than five million have fled to other countries looking for asylum (UNHCR, 2018). The conflict has produced the largest refugee population since the Second World War (Khouri & Mourani, 2014) and it has been defined worldwide as the 'Syrian refugee crisis.'

Building on the previously mentioned reputation of Canada as a humanitarian nation, in October of 2015 newly elected Prime Minister Justin Trudeau implemented his political

campaign promise of welcoming tens of thousands of Syrian refugees into Canada. Since November 4, 2015, at least 44,620 Syrian refugees have arrived in Canada and have been distributed among 350 communities from all provinces (Government of Canada, 2020d). To help newcomers have a seamless process of resettlement and integration, several programs have been established to provide income support during the first year after the refugees' arrival, through federal funding, private funding or a mix of both, in addition to language training and employment-related services (Government of Canada, 2016).

The refugee crisis has occupied numerous news headlines and political discussions in Canada. The topic of the arrival and naturalization of Syrian refugees in Canada, as well as the role of the federal government in this process, has been present in many mass media outlets, disseminating information to their local (provincial) and national audiences. There has been information disseminated from the Prime Minister's social media accounts, including photos of newly arrived Syrian refugees with the caption "Welcome to Canada" (JustinTrudeau, 2015), as well as stories published by a variety of mass media sources describing the current situation and what it means to Canada as a host nation. Some of the news stories include updates on where the refugees have settled in Canada and what they have experienced since arriving (Gajewski, 2016; Luck, 2017). Other media publications expose xenophobic positions from Canadians, presenting the welcoming of refugees as a failure from the federal government to protect its own people from possible terrorist threats, and questioning the authenticity of the newcomers' identity and refugee status (Solomon, 2015). The disparity on the approaches to report the news or include opinion pieces on the matter exposes a series of contradictions in the produced knowledge

regarding the arrival of Syrian refugees and their experience in Canada, leaving an unclear context to learn about this ongoing situation.

## **Understanding the Contradiction**

These clashing discourses surrounding the Syrian migration and the implications they may have in the social processes of knowledge production and distribution are the topic of my research project. I am motivated to explore this research topic through my graduate work in adult education as well as my previous academic background and experience as a professional in mass media and communication. Additionally, the circulation of discourses in mass media as sources of informal education are of special interest to me in the context of my own experiences as a recent immigrant to Canada.

Over the past six years, I have been part of a large group of immigrants from around the world who have arrived as workers or students and are looking to secure their permanence in Canada. This experience has allowed me to learn much about the migration process, including: law, policy, and procedures for newcomers; options available for support; and rules and limitations to apply to another permit or status. The process for an individual to learn their way around the different stages of each procedure and transition their status from immigrant to permanent resident can cause significant emotional and financial burden and stress without the right guidance or support system.

In my own journey as a newcomer settling into Canada, I lived the consequences of the contradiction between the discourse on the Express Entry Program government website inviting people from other countries to come to Canada to work, and the seemingly intentional hurdles in

place to discourage these people from pursuing the immigration and permanent residence processes. I also witnessed comments in public realms from people who disseminate misconceptions and inaccurate information about the process of immigration, most of the time coming from those opposed to it. Comments I have found in day-to-day interactions on social media sites present complaints about how immigrants obtain money and a great deal of government benefits, or have unearned access to social welfare programs. A news story posted on Global Edmonton's Facebook page about Canada welcoming one million immigrants over the next three years sparked comments such as "A million more that are going to be a hindrance to this country instead of contributing to this country, costing us canadians (sic) more in tax dollars to support them. Such bs (sic)," (Johnson, 2019). These claims are incorrect, since immigrants who arrive for work or study purposes do not qualify to receive any kind of financial support from the government. In addition to these complaints, I perceive that some Canadian-born citizens generally expect immigrants to express special and constant gratitude to the nation and its citizens for the 'kindness' of allowing them to remain within Canadian borders, as if it were the recognition of a charitable action.

The feelings of rejection that can be experienced by those who move to Canada to work are not only caused by the contrast between the official welcoming discourse and the public complaints; immigrants frequently find themselves struggling to be hired in their fields of study or expertise, or to have their professional credentials recognized in Canada (Gogia & Slade, 2011; Guo, 2009). In the news, the federal government maintains that Canada wants to lure in a younger workforce of immigrants to inject growth and productivity, claiming newcomers "play a

vital role in our society" (Harris et al., 2017, para. 5). The statement that Canada not only welcomes people from other countries, but needs them in order to thrive economically is echoed around the world (Akhila, n.d.). For such purpose Canada invites skilled workers with an extensive educational background to immigrate. However, there is a glaring contradiction between the dire need for young skilled immigrants Canada has —according to the government— and the scarcity of skilled jobs Canadian employers are willing to offer to those immigrants. Because the histories of migration and conceptions around skills are interrelated, a more detailed description of the immigrant skilled worker experience can be found in chapter 3.

I have experienced the contradiction explained above firsthand with my own struggle to find employment and change jobs in the province of Alberta, where the unstable economy acts as a catalyst for employers to dismiss immigrants as competitive candidates regardless of their qualifications. Companies often include disclaimers on their job postings specifying their preference for hiring local citizens as a priority, and warning that other resumes might be reviewed only if employers are completely unable to find a Canadian citizen candidate. Even though I was able to eventually find a professional job and my story has been mostly positive with a few obstacles along the way, I am aware that my case is not what all immigrants experience. The way I have made sense of processes of immigration and resettlement, and what it means to be a newcomer in Canada may differ greatly from the experience of others, especially those who arrive in need of asylum rather than as the result of a voluntary decision to start a life in a different country, and who are not always able to choose to which country they wish to relocate. Their previous knowledge about Canada and their idea of what to expect upon their

arrival may be entirely distinct from my own assumptions. Coming from a war-torn country,

Syrian refugees have a background that is fundamentally different from mine, and their process

may be shaped by the emotional implications of moving under these pressing circumstances.

Looking at news websites and their social media pages, I found negative sentiments around the welcoming of thousands of Syrian refugees and it was difficult to avoid relating them to the comments I had seen regarding immigrants in general, and the feelings of confusion and helplessness produced by that rejection. More expectations of assimilation and stronger feelings of rejection seem to appear because Syrian refugees' language, culture, and previous experiences differ greatly from Canadian society, and their particular situation places them in need of temporary financial support. A post on the Toronto Star's Facebook page in November, 2018, describing the story of a Syrian refugee three years after arriving in Canada, who obtained a job and sees his experience as positive, was met with responses like "DEPORT HIM NOW!!" (Gordon, 2018), "Wow!one (sic) of them got a job! How bout (sic) the other freeloaders?" (Waye, 2018) and "They are not here to assimilate...only to rape and pillage and destroy this country" (Patterson, 2018). While there are some similarities with my personal experience as an immigrant, I notice growing prejudice and fear towards Syrian refugees, as well as people from other countries of widespread Muslim faith. This phenomenon of hyper-phobia in North America has been documented, particularly after the terrorist attack that destroyed the World Trade Center's "Twin Towers" in New York in September 2001 (Kleinfield, 2001)—an event popularly known today as "9/11"—ascribed to militant Islamist organization al-Qaeda. The event increased the fear of Islam exponentially in the United States and contributed to develop a perception of

Arabs and people of Arab heritage as "Muslim first" (Selod, 2018) and an increased visibility of Muslims (or people with Arabic names who have been assumed to be Muslim), set apart from other minorities and considered as suspicious, extremists and enemies (Selod, 2018; Abdo, 2006; Jamal & Naber, 2008; Cainkar, 2009), a trend that has slowly bled into Canada, where hate crimes against Muslims almost tripled from 2012 to 2015 (Minsky, 2017). These reactions of cultural rejection have motivated me to take a deeper look into what leads to assumptions of this kind towards refugees, as well as the causes of racist comments and negative opinions around a Syrian newcomer's presence in Canada.

Through this research project, I found an opportunity to pursue this topic from an interdisciplinary perspective. As a professional in communication and mass media, I am interested in the subject of discourse analysis and the impact of media discourse in society, particularly on social and political topics. In the realm of adult education, I am particularly motivated to explore instances of informal learning and how people come to understand their own identity and the world around them. I expand in the next chapter how we learn through socializing with others in our community, and how this leads to discourse as a way to represent ourselves, interact with others, and transform our language into tangible actions and circumstances (Blommaert, 2005). Mass media play a critical role in amplifying these discourses and turning them into day-to-day messages that circulate within society. The link between media and informal learning motivates me to research this topic further.

## Research Problem and Questions: Multiplicity of Discourses During a Mass Resettlement

In this research project I intended to answer the following questions: What are the discourses being disseminated publicly on the topic of the mass migration of Syrian refugees to Canada? How do these discourses and perceptions relate to national identity, 'othering' and systemic power relations in Canada?

These questions come at a time when immigration policies in Canada and those who are admitted to relocate seem to be under severe scrutiny despite the institutional message of optimism. Canadian government websites proudly display the country's "history of refuge," recounting the history of different groups, from the Quakers in the late 1700s to the Syrian refugees in 2015, who have migrated from other countries to be warmly welcomed in Canada and now make up a percentage of Canadian population (Government of Canada, 2020a). The Immigration and Refugee Protection Act of Canada emphasizes its purpose "to grant, as a fundamental expression of Canada's humanitarian ideals, fair consideration to those who come to Canada claiming persecution" (Government of Canada, 2001), and this sentiment was reflected in Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's message on Twitter in 2017: "To those fleeing persecution, terror & war, Canadians will welcome you, regardless of your faith. Diversity is our strength" (Justin Trudeau, 2017). Nevertheless, some media outlets and opinion pieces state Canada's refugee system is failing when it comes to poorer refugees, such as Haitians who have been deported from Canada in large numbers or left without a clear answer on their refugee status (Markusoff, 2018), and Central American refugees who find themselves unable to claim asylum

in Canada due to its Safe Third Country Agreement with the United States (Wilson-Forsberg & Parra, 2018).

The criticism that Canada is not 'doing its part' in the humanitarian effort of receiving refugees in light of a 'global refugee crisis' is met with the contrast of groups that declare there is not enough room for all of them and "Canada has enough problems" (News Staff City News, 2015). Polarized opinions from Canadian citizens regarding immigration have been documented extensively. A Focus Canada 2018 survey of Canadian public opinion from the Environics Institute in partnership with the Canadian Race Relations Foundation (Environics Institute, 2018) about immigration and citizenship reveals that, although overall opinions from Canadian-born citizens about immigrants seem to be favourable, negative opinions are prevalent in focused areas, particularly the Prairie provinces. Countrywide, 38% of surveyed Canadians consider refugees asking for asylum to not be 'real' refugees, and more than half (51 %) think too many immigrants are not adopting "Canadian values." Forty-five percent of respondents think that Muslim immigrants in particular want to be distinct and not integrate to the larger society. In Alberta, for example, numerous responses considered the number of immigrants received in Canada is "too many" (42 %), a high number agreed with the statement that immigrants are not adopting Canadian values (63 %), and their negative impressions about Islam outweighed the positive ones (only 35 % positive impressions). Despite these statistics, the report argues Canada remains within the top spots of the Migrant Acceptance Index in relation to other countries (Environics Institute, 2018, pp. 2-9); this statement contradicts the results of other polls (Connolly, 2018) showing that 58 % of surveyed Canadians thought Canada is "too generous"

with border crossers (para. 7), and 40 % say they are not genuine asylum seekers, but rather "economic opportunists" (para. 8).

These numbers provide a general idea of a few assumptions Canadian-born citizens have internalized about immigrants and refugees, and how those assumptions may affect their acceptance or rejection of new inhabitants arriving from other countries. Minister of Border Security and Organized Crime Reduction Bill Blair stated in August 2018 that the concerns reflected in popular polls show that many people do not really understand the issue, due to misperceptions of the number of people coming to Canada as refugees and the circumstances in which they come (Connolly, 2018).

Lack of understanding and misperceptions from an audience are only expected with so many discourses available to the public; they are all used as sources of knowledge to form a political opinion on the subject, regardless of their accuracy. I intend to look at both the historical and discursive construction of newcomers and how this construction is reflected in the case of Syrian refugees. Utilizing Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), I identified a variety of discourses regarding the Syrian refugee migration to Canada in three nationwide digital sources of news during a period between 2015 and 2016; this included discourses produced by official government messages and disseminated by the media, as well as discourses from news created by each source itself. I approached each of them as sources of informal learning for Canadian adults, and critically analyzed the power relations presented in these discourses in relation to those created and perpetuated throughout Canadian history. I explored their role in guiding

discussions and informal knowledge dissemination on the topic, and their potential impact on further social interactions in an officially multicultural Canada.

#### Overview

To understand how discourses about Syrian refugees are learned and disseminated, it is necessary to establish a context that influences how people receive them. Chapter 2 focuses on socialization and learning, the construction of individual and collective identities (versus 'others'), and how media play a role in shaping and prioritizing these discourses for the public. In chapter 3, I conduct a historical review of Canadian history as a nation-state, the ideologies that contributed to its national identity, and the diverse discourses of 'othering' created about newcomers from different regions of the world. Chapter 4 explores the legitimization of these historical discourses through formal education and official messaging, as well as the birth of Arabophobic discourses that impact Muslim and Arab communities, including Syrian refugees.

After the pertinent context is developed in these chapters, I explain the relevance of critical discourse analysis as my chosen methodology, and provide details about my data collection and research design in chapter 5. Chapter 6 outlines the findings of my research and the analysis of the discourses found. I provide my conclusions and recommendations in chapter 7.

#### Chapter 2

#### **Learning to Belong**

Negative reactions towards immigration are not a recent phenomenon in Canada and are not limited to Syrian newcomers. This reality begs the questions as to how individuals create antagonisms against other people they may not know. Why is rejection of newcomers a repeated behaviour not only in Canada, but in other regions as well? While some research suggests that human tendencies in social groups towards discrimination, xenophobia, and racism could be explained by neuroscience (Kubota et al., 2012; Queen's University, 2015), or even tribalism and evolutionary psychology (Culotta, 2012), I consider the social learning aspect to be crucial in the development of these perceptions and behaviours. Social psychology highlights the impacts of intergroup behaviour and the tendency of individuals to favour their in-group (the social group where they think they belong) over out-groups. Discriminatory, competitive, or even aggressive behaviours are commonly manifested against other groups without specific reasons or a difference of group interests; the presence of another group could be sufficient to trigger these reactions (Tajfel & Turner, 2004). The perception and self-categorization that leads an individual to develop a social identity that corresponds to their in-group is critical for these behaviours to occur. If this theory sustains that all knowledge, including our knowledge about the world, comes from social comparisons and people solidify their views through the reassurement of consensus (Hogg & Abrams, 1988), then we cannot separate it from the learning process that produces those comparisons and knowledge. Below I argue that how people define their in-group (a

collective identity in addition to their individual 'self'), and how they define out-groups in contrast (the 'others'), is mostly learned informally through socialization.

In my initial research, I have found that negative categorizations placed on groups like refugees and immigrants usually come with a set of assumptions and statements about them that have been deeply internalized as a reality, and utilized to explain why some groups are not considered desirable or welcome. Seeing that assumptions are frequently shared between people who are close to each other or are part of the same community, I see them as pieces of knowledge transmitted to people within society, to create a counterpart to their unified perception of 'kinship' and community. How do we learn to see others in relation to ourselves and 'our people'? How do we categorize who belongs to the same group and who does not, and how do we decide if 'not belonging' means something negative?

Before my analysis, I will note that the field of education has not reached absolute consensus on the concepts of adult education and adult learning. Does adult *education* occur if it is not intentional and facilitated? Can adult *learning* occur outside of the concept of education? Learning has been defined both as a process and an outcome or change in behaviour and disposition (Merriam & Bierema, 2014). Education has been both defined as a process of people's search for their own improvement of skill, knowledge, or sensitivity, and a process through which people help others improve in these ways (Houle, 1996). While there is not necessarily an agreement in the distinctions between learning and education, my perspective as developed in this section is that all processes of learning happen within social and discursive contexts that affect them.

In this chapter, I will explain how the interrelated processes of social learning and knowledge creation within social groups are at the core of interactions and social issues we know today, particularly discrimination and oppression of others, and the creation and solidification of power relations. I will analyze how reactions produced around complex situations such as the Syrian refugee crisis might reflect an equally complex collection of knowledge, opinions and even prejudices Canadians may have developed over time, a collection that is created and shaped by different sources of knowledge, both formal and informal. I intend to find answers to the questions posed above, focusing particularly on the processes and perceptions of adults and their informal sources of knowledge. My analysis will include the role of representation and discourse in the formation of one's consciousness, how discourse relates to power, and the presence of mass media as an informal source of knowledge and political discourse in the lives of adults.

## "One of Us": Adult Learning, Socialization, and 'Self' Versus 'Others'

To discuss the effects of discrimination in society, it is important that we first understand the important role of learning in the development of discourses, and how they lead to practices of discrimination. We must consider how humans come to build their concepts of reality and how they create perceptions of themselves and society, a learning process that continues in adulthood. When an individual forms a specific image or judgment about other people, this process does not happen in a vacuum.

From childhood and throughout our lives, human learning is a largely social endeavour, whether it is by formal instruction, imitation of a model, our own experiences with a subsequent reflection on their consequences, or by asking questions to the people closest to them. We do not

only learn socially, but we are *socialized* through learning. Socialization, defined by Brown (1976) as the "processes through which the individual becomes a member of his society" (p. 9), is a significant part of human learning; we receive knowledge from others, but the dissemination of a common knowledge means that we are also learning how to fit in as part of a specific group. We are receiving other people's understanding of the world as our reference, and this creates a sense of homogeneity between us and other people around us.

Formal education systems socialize us by imparting knowledge that has been predetermined as necessary for us to learn, and establishing a selection of courses we have to complete. They also provide instruction on cultural standards to follow—the expectation to do what is required or 'correct,' and comply with authority figures (Grusec & Hastings, 2015). We learn about important celebrations and holidays to observe, our customs as a community, rituals, and beliefs. As we age, our agency increases to choose what, when, and how to learn from formal institutions, but we cannot forget the lifelong informal learning, sometimes subconscious, that occurs in adulthood through interactions and influence of friends, family, colleagues, and other mass sources of knowledge. These interactions continue to inform individuals about how people, events and situations are perceived, and how to react to certain situations. Knowles' concept of andragogy places an interesting starting point for analysis with the assumptions of adult learners as individuals with a growing 'reservoir' of knowledge from previous experiences (how we understand what we learn will almost always be permeated by our previous knowledge), and a readiness to learn that is associated with the developmental tasks related to social roles (Knowles, 1980). However, Knowles' assumptions of an adult learner presented an

approach that applies mostly to individual learning experiences, when adults make a conscious decision to learn information and skills they need or wish to have for their personal developmental objectives. Authors like Schugurensky (2000) argue that socialization belongs to a separate category of informal learning in which the learner is mostly unaware of the learning experience that is occurring (as referenced in Park et al., 2011). If we consider the weight of socialization in adult knowledge acquisition and how a significant part of someone's 'essential' knowledge is gained incidentally as part of regular interactions rather than a self-directed objective, we can challenge other assumptions of andragogy—for example, that adults need to know why they need to learn something, and that the biggest motivations for adult learning are internal rather than external (Knowles, 1980). One could say that the objective to successfully become a welcomed or 'approved' member of our society could be an internal motivation to learn, but I would argue that the understanding of our roles and 'place' in society as something internalized gradually and largely informally, through the socialization experiences that influence our consciousness, is neglected in the concept of andragogy. Much research is focused on adult intentional learning, leaving experiences, tacit learning, and day-to-day learning aside (like learning to use certain technologies to facilitate a social role to perform, or just to be at the same level of other peers) largely because people do not tend to recognize these activities or part of their lives as learning experiences (Rogers, 2014).

Authors like Jarvis and Illeris have developed adult learning models that place a larger emphasis on the importance of the social context and the interactive nature of learning (Merriam et al., 2007). Illeris (2002) simplified the interactive component by establishing three dimensions

of learning—cognition, emotion, and society. The social or environmental dimension addresses personal integration in communities, interactions that happen during learning, or the contributions of others to our learning (Merriam et al., 2007).

I will clarify that, by placing a crucial emphasis on socialization as part of adult learning, I am not arguing that adults do not have any control of their own informal learning processes. As indicated by Bandura (1971), social learning does not mean that an individual is helplessly controlled by their environment; there is a constant balance between the external stimuli and the inner forces that drive a person's cognitive processes. Adults have control of the outcomes of the experiences that produce new knowledge, particularly the posterior reflective process about such knowledge and what it means in relation to their previous knowledge and assumptions. Their personal interests or preferences might limit or expand the type or frequency of social stimuli as well. I will emphasize, however, that socialization is at the core of adult learning when we consider that much of the self-directed learning that occurs, and many of the adults' motivations to engage in the search for new knowledge, are responses to social expectations or roles that an adult is supposed to take on in a particular stage of their lives. Because of the constant presence of socialization in people's lives, adult learning cannot always be a completely individual and self-initiated process outlined in terms of personal assumptions and desires.

Approaches such as Illeris' inclusion of the socialization factor and the stimuli of an external environment to initiate learning experiences capture a more accurate description of how human learning occurs informally and continues to provide, modify, or broaden knowledge in

adults. Social learning contributes to create representations of reality that can eventually feed practices of discrimination, such as perceptions of identity and 'othering.'

## **Defining the Self and the Others**

Social behaviourist George Herbert Mead explained the concept of the self as the result of a social process, an adaptation to the environment and people around (as cited in Jarvis et al., 2003). The process for a person to create their individual identity is closely linked to a series of attributes they will use to describe themselves and present themselves to other people. For Mead's argument of identity as part of social adaptation to be possible, there needs to be a specific representation of that identity in an individual's social structure that gives it a shared meaning. To explain how that shared meaning is created, Hall (1997) argues that systems of representation are how humans create links from concepts to 'reality' and give meaning to things, people, or events. We utilize these systems of representation regardless of whether we are giving meaning to something or someone tangible or abstract, or even something fictional.

Representation is key to social learning; it provides the foundation of shared knowledge that allows our conversations to be understood by others. Both systems of representation proposed by Hall (1997)—mental representations and language—define how we understand our reality by constructing meaning out of words, images, sounds and experiences, combining the 'known' with the 'lived.' For example, our personal representation of a family, and what it means to interact with family, has a specific meaning that has been constructed through our own family members and our family's experiences—how they act, what traditions they follow. While other families could make up a similar representation when they think about the word 'family,'

their meaning of concepts and situations such as 'family gathering.' Representations that are learned socially exist from social circles as small as families, to broader social groups such as neighborhoods, countries, ethnic groups and whole geographic regions. Common understandings of language, representations of meaningful events, beliefs and history contribute to creating what we know as culture in those social groups.

Daily interactions with people from the same social group have an influence on the formation of one's concept of self, as well as the creation of a collective identity (Orgad, 2012). Identities, being categories to distinguish someone or some people from others, are the products of systems of representation as well; returning to the statement above about the crucial role of socialization in adult learning, we can argue that the way identities are reproduced or 'performed' are strongly influenced by social situations or expectations—a woman may want to identify as Canadian during an international trip in conversation with other tourists, while back in Canada she may highlight her identity as a mother during a party, or as conservative in a political town hall. While she may belong to all those categories at all times, she will place an emphasis on specific parts of that identity depending on the environment, what social role she is prioritizing and what she wants others to know in a particular moment. It is important to note that identity or self as a fundamental piece of knowledge created by an individual does not mean it is a static concept; it is the product of constant shaping and learning; it is a mix of roles that are assumed and a cultural identity (a collective identity)—context, ethnic background, spiritual

beliefs, history, traditions, location, and other constructed markers that acquire relevance in social interactions such as race, which I will address in depth in chapter 3.

By creating an identity, understood as an individual and collective self, we are defining ourselves in relation to society and context; when we establish who we are, we are also establishing who—or what—we are *not*. Blommaert (2005) affirms that in order for an identity to exist, it must be recognized by other people; there must be a shared understanding of the representation of such identity to be validated in a social context, and the thoughts others have about a person also feed this person's identity. This statement has been echoed by Hall (1995) with the assertion that "Without the others there is no self, there is no self-recognition" (as cited in Carby, 2011, p. 173). Identities are subjected to the awareness of difference; an identity is 'real' in society when there are other categories of identity from which we can separate it. Both at the individual and collective levels, this established difference is known as 'othering' (Blommaert, 2005). Human groups tend to look at their 'others' as a completely separate category of people, sometimes using these ideas of separate identities as a basis for separation and discrimination.

## From Identity, to Discourse, to Power

When applying identity and othering to the topic of immigration, it is possible to infer that a person's previous concept of self and their level of socialization may be subjected to changes once they move into a different social structure. The disparity in the systems of representation, symbolisms and idea of reality from two different places and cultures will affect

how the new co-habitants will perceive the identity of a newcomer, or even how they will contribute to reconstruct it.

Since some markers of identities, or categories of identities, may be visible before an interaction happens between one person and the other, they can influence the nature of the interaction (Blommaert, 2005). Under these assumptions, an immigrant may experience a shift in their own idea of what they are in the new social structure—what their new role is or where they stand in relation to others—while the local citizens may use their own ideas of that immigrant's identity in relation to them, to inform possible conversations or interactions. Their ideas about an external identity will depend on how they have received and processed knowledge about this category of 'other' in their context. Mezirow (2002) calls these ideas "points of view" made up of "meaning schemes," which are compilations of specific beliefs, judgments and feelings, among other sentiments (in Merriam et al., 2007). While it's stated that points of view may be changed more easily than the meaning schemes (which are basically the products of socially learned systems of representation), these points of view are reflections of a worldview from a specific identity, the core of the self, which individuals might be more resistant to question or challenge. Points of view that are informed by sentiments and beliefs of othering may lead to harmful assumptions and biased treatment of other groups. To analyze how a certain point of view is created, we have to introduce the concept of discourse and its importance in social environments.

Language is one of the main systems of representation that shape our culture; words have a powerful effect in defining our world and ourselves. However, words and the mental

representations they define can develop different meanings in different cultural and social environments; while several groups may use the same language, they have variations in how they use it and what implications they have. I will provide a simple example to illustrate this on a smaller scale. In Latin America, most countries speak Spanish and people are able to have fluent conversations with travelers from other Latin American countries; nonetheless, the same word can have a radically different effect in two countries depending on their own cultural meanings. The word 'güila' is a popular, sometimes affectionate way to refer to a child in Costa Rica; however, the same word in Mexico is an informal way to refer to a prostitute. It would be easy for a Costa Rican visitor to be singled out as disruptive and rude in Mexican society after the first conflict arises for unintentionally offending a child and their family. Both cultures have a specific reaction to the term and the representation that has been constructed around it.

When we take differences of meaning beyond a simple misunderstanding of words like the one described above, and approach them from a broader perspective of how language can reflect fundamental beliefs such as identities and othering, we encounter discourses capable of establishing, normalizing and reproducing power relations and oppression in society. As I have argued above, learned representations about self and others inform future interactions; the meaning tied to these representations is brought into reality, which makes "language-into-action" a very appropriate definition for discourse (Hanks, as cited in Blommaert, 2005, p. 2). I will note, however, the importance of remembering that semiotics do not confine discourse to just a definition of "environments of text and talk" (Van Dijk, 2008a, p. 118); the use of systems of

representation as explained above supports that discourse, seen as a way in which something is talked about and represented (Hall, 1996), also includes a variety of visual representations.

Foucault (1990) made one of the most prominent arguments regarding power and discourse. He presented it as something that is not property of a specific group or institution, but rather becomes a complex set of strategies and interactions of different force relations, inequalities, and divisions that are exercised from numerous points in society, and eventually solidify institutionally into the 'state apparatus.' He placed a special emphasis in binding discourse and power together as an inevitable binomial; not only are they related, but one is seen as a product of the other. Power, in his view, is not necessarily created by physical force and repression anymore, but by the production of valid knowledge (Foucault, 1977; Surber, 1998), it creates discourse, or what Foucault calls 'discursive formations'—collections of discourses that complement each other or interact with each other. Discourse may not be owned unilaterally by one specific group to project to the rest; even though a particular discourse may be utilized by different groups or 'forces' in different situations, it does not mean that this discourse is neutral or free of power (Hall, 1996). In the context of a diverse society, with several subgroups and cultures coexisting under a larger umbrella that unifies them (like a nation), discourses might be understood and utilized differently by each smaller community, making interactions more complex and enabling hierarchies of power beyond the state structure.

What Foucault (1977) identified as pouvoir-savoir (defined as power-knowledge, but maybe more accurately describing the 'ability to know'), reflects the real-life impact of power producing knowledge (discourses) and solidifying it as valuable and accepted. In his view, power

struggles determine forms and domains of knowledge. This value placed in discourse, determined by the exercise of power, can be summarized in the concept of 'regime of truth,' (as cited in Hall, 1996, p. 205) also defined by Foucault as "regime of truth and error" (Foucault et al., 2003, p. 164). Existing power relations in society give discourse that status of 'true' knowledge, something that is usually transmitted to others through formal or informal education and is less subject to questioning.

Discourse and knowledge are especially relevant when discourse pertains to identity and othering. Foucault explains that practices by which the subject is defined and transformed are associated with types of knowledge that, especially in Western culture, acquire a somewhat 'scientific' quality (Foucault et al., 1997). Van Dijk (2008b) refers to this special value as the way in which dominant groups conceal their ideologies and interests, aiming to make them into something accepted as 'general' or even 'natural.' When we are socialized through certain pieces of knowledge—for example, how to perceive the 'others,' how the representation we build around them separates them from our collective self—and we reproduce them in our interpersonal interactions, we are giving such knowledge an almost uncontested quality in our social environment; we are, indeed, giving power to knowledge by acting on it as truth.

Is our own identity also our own truth? If, as Hall suggested, there is no self-recognition without the element of recognition from others (Carby, 2011), much of someone's self-perception would be shaped by external discourses that have been learned and internalized by many. This could range from aspects such as a common history, traditions, culture that feels like their own, to perceptions of superiority of a collective self in relation to the others, or a perception of this

collective identity as threatened by the identity of the others. Consciousness of identity could be very susceptible to the value given to a specific regime of truth.

By the statement above I am not suggesting that there is no diversity of thought in consciousness, given that even people in one same social environment will have different pieces of 'essential knowledge' and representations of their reality to make sense of those discourses of identity, and perform their understanding of their identity in a different manner. However, while there could be an argument over what power we reproduce through our discourses, how our own perception of identity reflects power that may or may not be 'ours,' or whether or not we are always validating the same power relations if we are part of the same society for years, I would agree with the statement that our knowledge and worldview are never completely neutral or free of someone else's perspective. Both formal and informal learning imply receiving knowledge from an external source. In the case of experiential learning, even when it is our personal experience that informs us, the cognitive processes and preexisting knowledge we use to make sense of the outcomes of that experience are permeated with socialization and 'truth' statements learned up to that point. I find Foucault's arguments relevant to understand how current interactions between different collective identities are not exempt of the influence of discourses that were created, sometimes in a distant past, as a reflection of specific historical power relations that some believe to be absent from society today, including discourses of racialization and classism.

When we look into large institutionalized social communities like the nation-state (the 'state apparatus'), we can find regimes of truth influencing the perception of the national self and

what is understood as the collective identity, including how these discourses acquire a 'scientific' status of knowledge in the formal education system. I will expand this statement with the Canadian example in chapters 3 and 4. However, not all 'truth' comes from a school. It can be delivered informally to many people at once, sometimes even in the guise of 'entertainment,' thanks to mass media and their own establishment as sources of power and knowledge.

## Learning and Socialization Through Media

Discourse, and the power imbalances it entrenches, expand through wider levels of social groups to be internalized and utilized with real, tangible consequences for different sectors of the population. While history shows that Canadian formal education has been deeply related to learning 'regimes of truth' and power relations—which will be addressed in chapter 4—it is important to consider other means of informal learning and socialization that reproduce discourses at a wider scale. In our globalized world, knowledge now travels at speeds and distances that were once unimaginable.

Mass media have played a paramount role in echoing and validating discourses, because of their ties to technological innovation and the capacity to reach many people much faster. However, the role of media in both education and 'miseducation' in informal or incidental ways has not been a constant focus of adult education or media research (Tisdell, 2008). Mass communication technologies and products have been often utilized within the field of education as a means to aid formal or non-formal instruction for children and adults. In Canada, television has been utilized in closed environments for demonstrations of medical, dental, or surgical procedures. It has also been used in open broadcasting with lectures, language programmes, and

non-credit course materials, through the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) in agreement with several Canadian universities in the 1960s (Miller, 1966). Computer-mediated communication (CMC) has permitted the creation of websites to facilitate collective dissemination of knowledge, as well as forums to discuss different topics and submit assignments. The immediacy offered by digital media allows for innovative approaches such as language teaching by *teletandem* (pairing up two people with different mother tongues), using web messaging platforms like Skype (Moreira et al., 2013). However, mass media have been present for decades as sources of knowledge rather than just 'vehicles' to transmit the knowledge, and as platforms for learning outside of classrooms and structured curricula.

In Canada, radio was one of the first successful means for real-time remote learning outside of the formal education system with broadcastings like the *National Farm Radio Forum* or *Citizens' Forum* (Miller, 1966). Toward the late 1960s, radio gradually lost significant appeal against the novelty of television; even though the latter offered a more unilateral dissemination of knowledge and lacked the opportunity for broadcasted discussion among groups from the audience that the former had provided, viewers were drawn to the variety of topics and visual representations. The CBC offered content considered 'cultural' like art and science shows, panel discussions, and music appreciation, with the objective of disseminating education (Miller, 1966). Still, these programmes would eventually compete for attention and loyalty from audiences against fiction and dramas, variety shows, news, and musical presentations, among others.

Even though television has been largely promoted as a platform primarily for entertainment, that myriad television shows are not officially labeled as 'educational' or created with that objective, and that audiences may not be purposely looking to learn something when they watch it, evidence suggests that it can be utilized as a source of knowledge and social behaviour. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has investigated and recognized, since the creation and popularization of television, the power of this medium for learning, particularly in adults, and its ability to socialize people (Groombridge, 1966). Studies conducted in the second half of the twentieth century showed that television-mediated learning can provide symbolic models from which viewers learn behaviours, and it can be "usually as effective as that achieved by actual tutors" (Chu & Schramm, as cited in Bandura, 1973, p. 101). Reflecting that point, recent research shows that a popular television fiction series about the experiences of medical residents portrays social practices, culture, and identities within the hospital environment with the potential to create curiosity and expectations in health-care students about postgraduate medical learning (Jubas, 2013; Jubas & Knutson, 2013).

Theories present socialization through media in young adults, particularly television, as the possible product of different models—passive ("what do media do to people?") and active ("what do people do with media?"), noting that entertainment television may offer psychological rewards or punishments to regulate adults' behaviours (Edgar & Edgar, as cited in Jackson, 2009, pp. 30-31). Entertainment media consumption may produce different perspectives about what a show communicates, depending on the viewer's own identity, context, and cultural

background—they can highlight the political aspects or moral aspects of the show's characters, or use them as ideological or social models (Jackson, 2009). With the development of online media, new opportunities have proliferated toward the twenty-first century with high potential for sharing information that can be both consumed and created by internet users, such as blogging (Park et al., 2011) and social media platforms that feature audiovisual components.

The potential influence of media in North America is not surprising when reviewing the general population's media consumption habits. According to a 2016 census, the average U.S. citizen spent 3,700 hours per year using mass media (Dill-Shackleford, 2016). In the case of Canada, a report released in 2017 revealed that Canadian adults spent almost 10 hours per day using media, including newspapers, magazines, TV, radio, cinema, internet, and outdoor in 2016 (News Media Canada, 2017). It is important to note that Canada shows more consumption and popularity of TV shows and films from the United States than local productions (Jackson, 2009). Meanwhile, data from Statistics Canada shows the proportion of the population that utilizes media to follow news and current affairs was reported at 60 % in 2013, and 81 % of Canadians aged 55 years and older followed the news daily. Television use has declined considerably from the past decade, but younger generations utilize the internet to find out about the latest news (Statistics Canada, 2016). Stimuli from the media are so frequent, so available, and so overwhelming, that they call for a conscientious analysis of the effect they have in those voluntary, incidental, and constructivist processes of social learning.

#### Politicization of Media Platforms and Messaging: Political Discourse and Socialization

The widespread consumption of mass media, particularly of products that are meant to inform rather than solely entertain—such as news—makes them relevant to question the processes of creation and dissemination of discourses: Who is responsible for these decisions, and how they may influence identity and socialization in political topics. Context is essential in the creation of discourses for audiences to receive them and understand them effectively.

Journalists and news reporters are tasked with assuming the preexisting 'basic' knowledge their audiences will have as a starting point for new information; the general references that will be understood by viewers or readers; and how any new information relates to this 'general context' in a community. It is often assumed that the public will share a sociocultural context (Van Dijk, 2008a), which could lead to the conclusion that the media aim to represent their target audience and the 'regime of truth' under which it functions. The assumptions of essential knowledge and the values or collective identity expected and encouraged by a specific medium will be reflected in what we see (depictions or video footage), what we hear (the tone, who is chosen to speak), and what we read (what content takes priority) from that medium.

People interact with news throughout their lives, normalizing the influx of discourses they receive both inadvertently and voluntarily. An individual's first encounter with political content during childhood usually happens through what they have watched on television, and high consumption of news and public affairs content through TV and print media is associated with higher levels of political knowledge among youth and into adulthood (Chaffee & Yang, 1990). We can consider political understanding and participation—their political 'self'—as a

new role or expectation from adults that requires them to voluntarily seek learning opportunities for development. However, through continuous exposure to news and discourses from mass media, adults receive and analyze information on topics they may not have considered to research by themselves or did not see as a priority before. At the same time, media contribute to reinforce and solidify representations of identity, perceptions of self, and othering as part of an individual's core beliefs by trying to reflect a representation of the social structure and the 'values' accepted by its dominant groups (Muzzatti, 2014). The inclusion of 'officially validated' assumptions about the collective 'self' in the context of relevant events and information about policy, economic, and social issues, feed the cognitive processes of formation of a person's political identity. The audience may make sense of the content of the news taking these perceptions and regimes of truth as a reference. News stories and broadcasts are not only telling viewers what happens in their environment, but also provide a context that suggests how these events might affect them, or how it affects the 'others' in comparison. Even though family and interpersonal communication have an influence in political socialization, the combination of direct communication and mediated knowledge produce varied results in the political direction of a person (Chaffee & Yang, 1990).

Towards the end of the twentieth century, television was declining as a significant source of political knowledge or political identity in comparison to newspapers in adults (Chaffee & Yang, 1990), but the recent popularity of online news sites and social media have created a merge of printed press (credibility) and TV news (visual appeal and immediacy). The possibilities of higher availability, frequent updates, and online comments sections, have changed

news consumption habits significantly and have allowed for permanently-open interactive channels for people to discuss their view—a virtual 'public sphere.'

# Media, Communicators, and the Public Sphere

Jürgen Habermas (2006) conceived the public sphere in the institutional design of modern democracies as an independent, intermediary system between state and society; that is, a space for citizens to develop knowledge, discussion, and criticism of actions taken by the political groups in power. This public sphere is sustained in networks revolving around reports, news, images, and all published opinions that originate from influential persons, selected and shaped by the media. Habermas argued:

There are two types of actors without whom no political public sphere could be put to work: professionals of the media system—especially journalists who edit news, reports, and commentaries—and politicians who occupy the centre of the political system and are both the coauthors and addressees of public opinions (p. 416).

Media exercise political knowledge control by selecting and prioritizing topics that will be considered important news—known as "agenda setting" (Franklin et al., 2005, p. 13)—and through their reconstruction of political and social realities (Van Dijk, 2008b). Media outlets create a 'brand' or an identity to gain the public's attention and aim to stand out by that identity. Each outlet has editorial guides with instructions on how they must approach different topics or events, and hold specific ideological inclinations that underpin their news productions, directly or indirectly. At the same time, communicators in these media bring their own preexisting knowledge into their process of crafting a message for the masses, while staying compliant with

the identity of the outlet and locating their messages within a presupposed 'common ground' with the audience. By tuning into a specific channel or clicking on a news story from a website, we are receiving a complex discursive formation about social and political identities. We receive a loud on-brand discourse that is subtly lined with other people's prejudices, priorities, concerns, interests, and beliefs. Every time we see a visual representation of a person or a group, we are receiving discourses from a journalist or editor's points of view, turned into reality through the decision to choose that specific representation among many others. Media fill the public sphere with targeted messages that appeal to our own perceptions of individual identity, and the promotion of a larger 'us' coming together to find political solutions for the future of our society.

Habermas' argument suggests to an extent that those who work in media could be considered as powerful in creating and maintaining discourses in the public sphere as the state itself, or may at least have a close association with politicians and people keeping specific power structures in society who create such discourses. Multiple voices influence the public under the umbrella of 'reporting;' there are power forces at play in the priority and the space some voices will receive over others. Since politics involves negotiation and conflict resolution, many political media discussions tend to be argumentative (Bergien, 2005). Many news outlets take this opportunity to attract more attention from the public by complementing their reporting with opinion segments, panel discussions, debates, or shows with guest 'experts' in different topics. Returning to Foucault's argument of power as a producer of knowledge and discourse, we see power is being exercised when a few groups are in charge of deciding what topic is relevant, who is validated as an expert to speak about the matter, what qualifies as knowledge worth

broadcasting, and how much time the chosen speakers will be alloted to share their views with the audiences in comparison to individuals that represent other sectors of society.

The 'scientific' quality of the truth is important in news stories, but sometimes power lies in the representation created around the speaker rather than their words—the validation obtained by their presence and ability to speak through massive outlets. Although news and opinion statements are meant to be separate communicative products, regimes of truth and personal discourses interact frequently in media that tend to blur the dividing lines between both products. In many cases, news commentators or people interviewed share their own views without the need to support their discourses with proof or 'objective' data, claiming the identity of a concerned citizen rather than the expert while still exercising the power of influence and a massive platform to be heard. "If no expert identity is being claimed, then no claim need (sic) to be defended" (Bergien, 2005, p. 41). Commentators and writers of opinion pieces may be addressing an audience with a specific discourse that automatically acquires a superior social value and priority over any other discourse that has not been shared equally. This validation opens the possibility for ideologies, power relations, and representations of a desired hegemonic community to be reproduced without question under the concept of 'freedom of speech.' These discourses may include racism, prejudice, xenophobia, and othering, although not always explicitly (Van Dijk, 2008b).

When the public sphere is filled virtually and face-to-face with conversations on the latest news, we are discussing the curated political discourses that communicators have designed for the masses. The discourses are often illustrated with the nuances of particular choices in layout

designs, photo, and video. Much of everyday conversations about minorities is inspired or promoted by mass media; audiences depend on news for information about immigration, for example, and interlocutors frequently reference media as the source or sometimes as an 'authority' to validate statements (Van Dijk, 2008b). Topics related to difference and othering in many Western countries include cultural differences, crime or unemployment, ethnic relations, and reception of newcomers, among others (Van Dijk, 2008b). People may agree or disagree with the content of the discourses they see, but they are nonetheless giving power to the discourse by discussing it as a topic of great importance for citizens.

It is important to remember that, in North America and in many parts of the globe, there is a significant number of private broadcasting and media companies driving their efforts to compete with each other for higher impact, ratings, and profits. Even though cable news companies have experienced an increase in their audience numbers by 2018, a vast majority of adults in the United States currently get at least some news online via computers or mobile devices. This generates growing viewership and revenue to both technology companies, outlets which have expanded their platforms from TV or print, and online-born media. (Pew Research Center, 2019). In a capitalist system where property and wealth determine power, we must look at media ownership and how it overlaps with political forces and groups in power, as well as the implications that monopolization of knowledge production has in the lives of people oppressed as a consequence of those mediated 'truths.'

#### Conclusion: The Lifelong Learning of 'Truth'

This chapter explored the weight of socialization in adults' processes of informal learning; our social environment matters for understanding the self, the others, and finding our place in our community. There is a recognition that part of our worldview is coming from external influences, and much of what we normalize as 'general knowledge' has been learned without self-direction, motivation, or complete awareness. By analyzing Foucault's theories, we can establish a relation between the possibility of creating knowledge, and how it affects power relations in society. We also acknowledged that mass media acts as a producer of knowledge and a facilitator of a public sphere to discuss this knowledge. As members of society, we participate in its representations of 'truth' and we take that knowledge as a starting point to analyze the discourses we have created about us and others. It is essential to recognize the influence of this acquired knowledge in our daily interactions and our deepest beliefs.

With audiences overwhelmingly taking news media as a source of 'truth,' the creators and disseminators of political messages through media can be, whether it is purposely or inadvertently, seen as facilitating informal learning in politics. However, journalists and communicators are not always viewed as educators and their professional training generally does not emphasize the action of disseminating knowledge from an educational perspective. This situation invites a debate on the need for revisiting this professional field and its links to education, as well as the possible advantages of creating awareness of this role. What pedagogical approaches could benefit the professions of journalism, video production, web and graphic design, or public relations? As a communicator, I believe in the need for reflection on

how we see ourselves, our field, and the real-life impact of our work. Even though journalism has been a highly respected profession for a long time, it often leaves out all the communicators who contribute to the crafting of a message and the representations we see. The assumption of mass media as a means of entertainment has led to a tacit acceptance of communicators as entertainers, or 'sales agents' of discourse rather than facilitators of knowledge that will be subsequently utilized and enacted in social circles.

The connection between media ownership and affiliations with specific groups, power, and control over discourse are as relevant as the discourses themselves for this research project. I will later expand on the use of critical discourse analysis (CDA) to explore the representations of Syrian refugees in Canadian media and their connections to existing power relations. However, it is necessary to establish which power relations are present in Canadian society and how they came to be, as well as the role of formal education in disseminating them. It is also necessary to understand Canada's current state of media consumption, and the influence it receives from global events and political actors. I develop these topics further in chapters 3 and 4.

# Chapter 3

#### **Building the Canadian Nation**

Now that I have discussed the importance of experience and socialization in the formation of individual and collective identities, the representations of self-versus-other, and the power relations that can be contained in discourse, I will analyze how they have applied to Canada as a nation. I intend to explain how Canada's long history of immigration and the shifting, complicated relationships between different ethnic and racial groups set a precedent of institutionalized national discourses of exclusion that challenge the previously mentioned worldwide reputation as a 'happily multicultural' country. These discourses are directly related to efforts made to conceive of the nation of Canada in a particular way. The historical process of British settler-colonialism and its subsequent construction of the abstract concept of nation in Canadian territory has produced discourses of both inclusion and exclusion capable of conferring power and privilege to certain groups.

In this chapter, I will explore the history of Canada as a nation-state and the power relations that were ingrained in the development of its national identity and nationalist discourses. I will explain how processes of racialization and colonialism have been at the core of the narratives that define 'Canadianness.' I will also discuss how Canada has utilized immigration and nationalism to construct a discursive framework of entitlement based on race, immigration status, and belonging. This historical review includes policies enforced regarding different groups, both local (Indigenous and settlers) and newcomers, in order to discuss how

these power structures have become embedded in Canada's public culture, and have eventually led to issues like the clashing discourses we see today around the Syrian refugee crisis.

#### **Imagining the Nation of Canada**

In the twenty-first century, it is almost impossible to conceive a world without nations. Since our school years, we are taught about our country and its national symbols. We grow up looking at maps that have been carefully outlined to show every country with its corresponding borders—the fine lines where the 'domestic' ends and the 'foreign' begins. The lines of Canadian boundaries were drawn and redrawn through a complicated process of defining what and *who* could be considered Canada.

First, it is necessary to define what counts as a nation and a nation-state and how these concepts relate to the processes of socialization and identity discussed in the previous chapter. Having found common points from theories and arguments posed by several authors, I will define the nation as an imagined, sovereign and limited political community or human group, where even though the totality of its members would probably never get to meet each other, they are assumed to share certain qualities, a common past, or a desired future (Anderson, 1991; Guibernau, 1996; Smith, 2010). I will utilize this definition as the starting point to understand and analyze the role of the nation in how its citizens understand their own reality, mostly because it entails the act of *imagining*, therefore collectively creating an abstract knowledge that will later be reified, learned, and taught to other people. Following the definition gathered from the previously mentioned authors, a middle-aged farmer in Alberta may live a life that is dramatically different from that of a young woman in Ontario, but they are nonetheless

connected by the imagined commonality of being Canadian. How did this idea become an uncontested assumption?

The concept of the modern nation-state gave life to the previously proposed idea of a sovereign state from the Peace Treaties of Westphalia in the 1600s (Grotenhuis, 2016), merging it with the demarcation of the national community that will be ruled by such state. Without a nation, the state and its citizens would have a contractual, juridical relationship only. If the state is not producing or inspiring loyalty by itself, what influences citizens so strongly to voluntarily adhere to a particular state's rules and defend them, instead of simply leaving, especially during times of crisis, invasion, or war? The response seems to be that the nation is a part of people's consciousness and identity.

Following the analysis from the previous chapter on the development of identity and consciousness in societies, we can consider that, since the conception of the nation-states, individuals have come to understand the nation as the community where they belong, therefore the rules of its state apply to them, and they identify to some extent with the system that has been established for this community. This sense of belonging is what we will call national identity and, as it will be argued later, the state plays a crucial role in defining and perpetuating the traditions, values, commonalities, history and beliefs that make up the shared or public culture and the national identity discourse, taught through different means of formal and informal education to disseminate this information.

For many people, national identity goes beyond simple awareness of the fact that they are contained within the borders of a specific nation. The statement "I am Canadian," for example, is

often used not only to provide a reference of geographical location or place of birth *per se*, but as a descriptor of a person, and even to explain personality traits of that individual that have become ingrained in the collective consciousness as an inherent part of their national identity. For a nation to develop a collective identity, the imagined community as understood by Anderson (1991) needs to have commonality and a public culture that makes people feel connected both to the national territory and to one another, creating a bond of solidarity (Guibernau, 1996; Jusdanis, 2001; Smith, 2010). These bonds are created through elements like territory, customs, beliefs, traditions, an objective of self-rule (sovereignty) and a common past or, if a nation-state does not have a shared past, then it will look to develop a common project for the future (Anderson, 1991; Guibernau, 1996; Jusdanis, 2001; Kohn & Calhoun, 2005; Smith, 2010; Thobani, 2007).

For this sense of connection to thrive, the state develops and exalts these imagined commonalities between citizens (Thobani, 2007). Several stereotypes of behaviour have been internalized by Canadians as staples of the Canadian identity, such as politeness or an excessively apologetic personality (Keeler, 2017). Even though someone can mimic behaviours as a result of socialization with people that are close to them, it would not be realistic to conclude that millions of inhabitants of the vast Canadian territory share identical behaviours as a result of immediate proximity, and that both a farmer in Alberta and an adult woman in Ontario, who never met each other, are inevitably apologetic because they are contained within the borders of the same nation-state. Despite the unlikeliness of this scenario, the assumption of a "Canadian personality" too prone to apologize has become widely accepted as part of the nation's public

culture, to the point that it has been included in the jurisdictional realm of the state—an *Apology Act* is currently in effect in three provinces to ensure that citizens are protected from their own tendency to say "sorry" as a mindless reflex, and intends to clarify that apologies are not considered in litigation as an immediate admission of guilt (Government of Ontario, 2009; BC Laws, 2006; Nova Scotia Legislature, 2009). In this example, we see how nationhood as a marker of identity transcends a matter of location or jurisdictional designation, and becomes an element of cultural representation. In the social context of living in Canada, this representation of 'Canadianness' is understood and accepted by many of its citizens, regardless of their own personal tendency to apologize in their daily lives.

National belonging and how it is shaped within culture is important because it elicits an emotional response in individuals. Beyond the possibility of feeling amused about imagined 'quirks' or personality traits that are shared among all members of a society, belonging to a nation can become closely linked to feelings like loyalty, pride, love, gratitude, and even self-sacrifice (Anderson, 1991). The exalted sense of belonging that produces such profound feelings for a nation requires some quality that their citizens feel makes them "unique" to represent them and to develop solidarity within their common culture (Guibernau, 1996). Even though we currently know a few peculiarities or stereotypes such as the apology example above, in addition to symbols and sports that have been established as common elements or popular jokes to identify Canadians, a concise list of qualities that make up Canadian national identity has always been blurry and incomplete. What does it mean exactly to be Canadian, in contrast to

being from anywhere else? This question seemed difficult to answer even for the first settlers who came to establish their own society on this land.

It took a long and fractured process to solidify Canada as a nation-state and create an identity around it, partly because both England and France established colonies in a territory already inhabited by groups with their own distinct cultures, customs and values. What began as a series of expeditions for fur and fish trade with the native populations of now-Canadian land around the seventeenth century, became a quest for territory acquisition and expansion for European nations that competed to extend the reach of their political power (Conrad & Finkel, 2007). This has led some authors to believe that Canadian identity was difficult to define because the nation was initially formed mainly around commerce rather than ideology (Creighton, as cited by Jusdanis, 2001). Because of the similar timelines of colonization—eventually dominated by the British—in the United States and Canada, and some commonalities between the two, part of the question of Canadian nationality has included the quest to find a separation between the Canadian identity and the United States, which has had a strong influence in Canadian culture and even Canadian economy for decades (Bashevkin, 1991; Brown, 1996). The harsh Canadian climate seemed to be a resource frequently utilized in literature to define uniqueness, praising Canadians for their abilities to survive, withstand the cruel winter conditions, and prevail as 'the stronger North' (Jusdanis, 2001; Mackey, 1999; Berger, 1966), an admirable resilience that United States settlers in milder climates could not take as a reason of pride.

At this point, we could ask ourselves why the search for a unique identity and profound feelings of love and pride about one's nation could be harmful or negative. While the act of

expressing such feelings about the imagined community of a nation is not 'wrong,' it is necessary to look below the surface of the simple concept of nation, and understand the meaning of these feelings within a nation-state, which implies a political component inherent to the community. It is argued that when a political dimension is added to these assumptions and feelings of identity, the concept of nationalism is born (Jusdanis, 2001). This ideological, but highly devout affiliation that encourages individuals to link their own regard to the nation has led authors to call it a 'secular religion' or 'political religion' (Jusdanis, 2001; Manzo, 1996; Smith, 2010) because of the similarity between the intensity of nationalist 'love' and religious fervor. Others have created a direct connection between these sentiments by deeming nationality as something that is 'part of nature' and as a manifestation of God's will. According to this theory, God himself has assigned such separations within the human race (Schleiermacher, as cited in Guibernau, 1996).

#### From National Identity to Official Nationalism

Following the process of how the ideology of nationalism leads to discourses of oppression and exclusion, it is important to remember that one of the main ideas developed in nationalism is the necessity of maintaining the sovereignty of the nation-state. Anthony Smith (2010) identified the belief that the nation is the only source of political power as one of the basic propositions or core doctrines of nationalism. Foucault (2003) described national sovereignty as the sum of three elements: 1) There must be subjects over which the state can exercise power; 2) a unique source of power—in this case, the state of that nation; 3) a legitimacy or law that has to be respected. This means that the state has an interest and an active role in cultivating knowledge

about national identity or public culture, which binds the subjects together and creates a sense of belonging to remain under the ruling of their nation-state. This action of enforcement is official nationalism, which emerged during the early development of nations in the world as a way for dominant groups (state), who were threatened by the possibility of exclusion with the emergence of other nationally-imagined communities, to consolidate their power and gain recognition by 'owning' the sentiment of national belonging in their citizens and controlling what nationality entailed for them (Anderson, 1991).

It is important to clarify that, while promoting 'patriotic love,' nationalism is not reduced to a passive positive sentiment—it is meant to construct hierarchies and establish dominance. In the European settler-colonialism project, the principles of nationalism were a tool to advance the main aspect of colonization, which was gaining territory (Wolfe, 2006). Authors such as Gregory Jusdanis (2001) have approached the idea of nationalism as a catalyst of loyalty, organization, patriotism, and opportunity of self-rule, leaving aside the power that nationalism intends to exert on the 'others'—a name I will utilize in this chapter to refer to social groups who have been oppressed and marginalized such as Indigenous peoples, African slaves, Asian and southern European immigrants, and even French Canadians to some extent. Nationalism cannot exist without a hierarchy of 'otherness' to antagonize; from its core, it has been constructed in relation to the nation-state's self-perceived superiority over the other 'peoples'—conceptually, the other 'peoples' being those from other nations, but this fallacy will be challenged during the Canadian historical review later in this chapter. The representation of self versus the 'other' implies an

intent of dominance, an extension of Foucault's theory (2003) where the state's 'sovereignty' can be enforced on other subjects beyond its jurisdiction (Michener, 1993).

As mentioned in chapter 2, the concept of self is created in relation to other individuals or groups that would theoretically recognize that identity; what this identity means is dependent on context (Blommaert, 2005). In the case of nationalism, this identity is not only created through processes of categorization and othering in the context of geographical location or political borders, but it is demarcated as superiority over those 'others' because of how these imagined communities are represented in the consciousness of their members. Power relations are formed when the state is able to instill a nationalist sentiment in the members of the nation—the sentiment provides the political justification to power relations that was needed after the 'divinely ordained' hierarchies of the monarchies lost their value. However, as I will be arguing throughout this chapter, the nationalist discourse is not necessarily understood and internalized by these members as a violent need to impose themselves on another community, since it is possible that not all individuals would be emotionally compelled to seek dominance. It is not necessarily presented by the state from that perspective either. The profound self-sacrificing love indicated by Anderson (1991) as present in most nationalist texts, songs or poems, can propagate more effectively throughout a nation as a result of the belief of an external threat that would require such defense and sacrifice (Thobani, 2007). Therefore, the representation of the 'other' is built by a nationalist state as different, but always in a negative way; threatening to the already-established, endearing bond and collective identity its citizens have come to create around their nation.

The following question for me was how Canada, whose uniqueness as a nation did not seem to be so clearly defined and was populated by several groups, developed an idea of difference against potentially threatening 'others' that would lead to some of the oppressive discourses we see today. Like many other developed nation-states, we can encounter a history of exclusion through the blurry and shifting concept of race.

## The Nation as a Form of Exclusion: Outlining Canada Through Colonial Boundaries

The Canadian nation is demarcated by both geographic (jurisdictional), legal (juridical), and cultural (discursive) borders. The nationalist discourse, in theory, seems fairly simple: The difference and exclusion should be defined specifically by the nation's boundaries—protecting and exalting those who live inside of it, thus compliant subjects to the power of the state as part of their society, and at the same time constructing an imagined rivalry against those who live outside of it. However, the Canadian example presents a striking contradiction when it comes to recognizing (discourse), versus enacting (reality) the differentiation of the 'others' against this nation. History shows a complex representation of the 'other,' of who is not 'Canadian.' This representation does not correspond with the conceptual proposal of nationalism, the clear binary of insiders versus outsiders. The British project was not to create a new nation with the existing inhabitants; they were trying to recreate their own British nation 'on top' of an existing community. Wolfe (2006) explains settler colonialism as an inherently eliminatory quest to destroy, and replace. It focused on territorial acquisition, erecting a new society on the expropriated land, which means a physical and a cultural replacement. By not recognizing Indigenous communities as part of the territory because their communities were 'in the way' of

the British mission to expand their power, the colonial nation is excluding their culture as 'foreign' to their national identity as well. A nation-state built on a foundation of colonialism and displacement broke the concept of the 'outsider' by creating a power relation oppressing the first 'insiders' of the land, Indigenous peoples (specifically, First Nations, Inuit, and Métis).

Canada today seems to be a nation internationally praised for its rejection of racism, and even perceived as 'colour-blind' for not segregating its citizens according to the colour of their skin—the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* guarantees protection without discrimination to ethnic and racial minorities (Government of Canada, 1982) and the *Criminal Code* specifically condemns hate speech towards minorities or specific groups (Government of Canada, 1985b). Currently, blatant forms of racism are considered socially unacceptable and object of public scorn (Fleras, 2014). How do we reconcile the formal illegality of racism (i.e., the existence of official multiculturalism) with the reality of continuing discourses of racial othering and demonstrable acts of racism? This question finds an answer when we understand the motivations and discourses that acted as cornerstones for the Canadian nation-state.

Canada has a long precedent of exclusion towards 'outsiders' and racial 'others,' posing them as a threat to an imagined idea of a Canadian 'race.' Historically, race has been an abstract, arbitrary and variable concept that emerged during the colonial times, initially as a system of categorization and later used across Europe as a legitimization of domination (Banton, 1977; Goldberg as cited in Thobani, 2007 and Guibernau, 1996; Manzo, 1996). The definition of someone's race in Canada and the implications of these classifications have been largely dependent on ascribed meaning within a specific context, one that was created by the group

holding the power—a history of racialization under an arbitrary idea of the 'real' Canadian 'white.'

Racialization of the 'others' is more about domination than the colour of a person's skin; people from different categories, defined and classified by the oppressor, are not supposed to be at the same 'level.' Taking Miles' definition of racialization as an external attribution of characteristics (Murji and Solomos, 2005), it is possible to conclude that racialization is a practice originating from the holders of power to assign characteristics to the 'others' that will exalt their own superiority in comparison. Moral qualities or flaws are 'made' racial through this categorization, assigning them to a biological component just as a means to justify subjugation, oppression and antagonisms. Power becomes real by institutionalizing these discourses of racialization through the state (Fleras, 2014), and making them a 'regime of truth.' (Foucault et al., 2003; Hall, 1996, p. 205).

#### **Becoming the Great 'White' North**

Canada was created through a long process of consolidating land, sovereignty and authority under a British project. For centuries, national identity propelled the advancement of imperialism in Europe. Travels that were initially meant for trade evolved into quests for conquest and colonization, intensified from the assumption that "only those nations which would attain the status of world empires would be counted in a future in which only empires would enjoy a substantial say in world affairs" (Michener, 1993, p. 4). With the goal of expanding the power of their original states through the formation of empires, nations such as England and France arrived in North America to reproduce the representation they already had built of their

imagined communities as successful ones. Given the dominance of the British in the colonization of Canadian lands, Canada became a project to reproduce the British national discourse. Settlers envisioned their colony according to the representation of the exalted British identity: People who were depicted as industrious, who followed and enforced Christian principles as their main moral values (Thobani, 2007).

Even though authors such as Anthony Smith (2010) have indicated how the nation *per se* is not the same as an ethnic group, we see how in the case of British colonization, the main nation-state promotes an ethnocentric view of national identity that will be transferred to the newer colonies. Nationalism is built upon a discourse of self versus others and aspires to homogeneity (a reflection of that self). To achieve this, all other ethnic identities are seen as different or unfit with that reflection, therefore as something to be "fixed." Even Jusdanis (2001), whose publication *The Necessary Nation* intended to promote the benefits of a nationalist ideology, admitted that "all nationalism takes on a cultural dimension" (p. 162). The problem with Jusdanis' view, among others, seems to be how he argued this primarily to tout the marvels of a rich development of public culture and tradition stemming from national devotion, while understating the fact that the antagonistic angle of nationalism will necessarily require to eliminate or *overpower* any difference from the state-approved, collectively learned identity in order to maintain the exalted qualities of national culture.

Even though the Christian religion and 'values' are mainly a cultural aspect of individual and collective identities, they are not separate from racialization in the British national discourse.

For this clarification I refer to the work of Stuart Hall (1999, as cited in St. Louis, 2011) on the complex and socially constructed merge of the meanings of race and ethnicity:

The more 'ethnicity' matters, the more its characteristics are represented as relatively fixed, inherent within a group, transmitted from generation to generation, not just by culture and education, but by biological inheritance, stabilized above all by kinship and endogamous marriage rules that ensure that the ethnic group remains genetically, and therefore culturally, 'pure' (p. 106).

Hall's explanation helps bring the historical pieces together to understand the foundation of Canada's example, and how British colonizers saw their own religious and moral values as something inherent to their people, ennobled qualities that would become essential to the community (Thobani, 2007) and that would need to be protected. From this point, it is easy to see how ethnic and racial 'others' were turned into threats to the supposedly genetic 'purity' of these national values and the settlers' ability to pass them on to their future generations.

Although the definition of the exalted 'Canadian race' was not initially defined as 'white,' every effort to justify its values led to imagined connections to the genealogic tree of the British population. As previously mentioned, the harsh Canadian weather conditions were an element commonly used to define uniqueness in its inhabitants' identity (Jusdanis, 2001; Mackey, 1999; Berger, 1966). This was a starting point to create the discourse of a resilient 'northern race' that is "healthy, hardy, virtuous, dominant" (Berger, 1966, p. 6). It was believed that 'northern races' from Europe were attracted to Canada (Berger, 1966). This was an import of a parallel history of othering, hierarchization and racialization happening within Europe, where

the northern, central and southern regions were considered different from one another. The British saw themselves as part of the stronger race because of their historical past—because northern races had conquered the British Isles many years before, thus passing the mythical 'Aryan' qualities on to them (Berger, 1966), the British believed they had transmitted to Anglo-Saxons desirable qualities such as an interest for adventure and a sharp mind for self-government. According to them, these qualities were absent in people from 'southern' races, thought to be weak and inferior because of the milder climatic conditions in the territories where they lived, and incapable of establishing a functioning self-government structure without northern help and tutelage (Berger, 1966, Mackey, 1999). This line of thinking underpinned the quest for domination.

The theory of the British natural dominance as a 'northern race,' based on how they were attracted to Canada's location and thrived in it, was highly inaccurate. Here we must consider the fact that they did not think of the French as equal to them. even though they had both arrived and settled in Canadian land (Berger, 1966). The British conveniently omitted from their discourse the numerous cases of explorers and settlers who had either died of scurvy during harsh winters in previous years, or been saved from death by the Indigenous communities who lived there at the time (Conrad & Finkel, 2007). Despite this fact, Indigenous peoples were not considered as superior and resilient by the British either. These failures to make a solid 'biological' case on racial superiority demonstrate that Canada developed a state and social structure based on discourses of racialization, fueled by a fabricated representation of self from British colonizers.

As mentioned above, the British intended to recreate their nation on a different land; they

essentially 'imported' themselves, building Canada as a mirror of their homeland by taking their notions of the superior British self as a starting point for the state. The racial argument was utilized as a justification for elimination of the existing communities (Wolfe, 2006) and taking over their land.

The British nation-building project created various levels of racialized representations of those who arrived or coexisted in Canada throughout the years. This racialized stratification (Fleras, 2014) promoted by the state itself, where some were more or less 'welcome' and 'valuable' than others, gives a deeper look into Foucault's idea of sovereignty (2003). Even though all citizens of a nation are subjected to the power of the state, not all subjects are equally oppressed by its power or equally sovereign—as the state has been designed to reflect only a portion of the citizens as worthy of all privileges of citizenship—and some subjects are also able to exert power over others of the same nation. This dynamic affected each group differently as 'others' within national borders; taking Thobani's (2007) description of Canadian citizenship as a triangulation between the Aboriginal, the settlers of preferred race, and non-preferred race immigrant, I see a triangulation between the preferred citizens, the external 'others' (immigrants) and internal 'others' (Indigenous peoples and, to some extent, francophone Canadians).

# **Indigenous Peoples: Outsiders in Their Lands**

Following the mission of conquest from the British colonizers, First Nations and Indigenous populations on Canadian land were the first target of their mission of domination.

Centuries before, during the fur trade, it was relatively common for white explorers to marry Native women. With the new conception of racial and ethnic purity developed in the nineteenth

century, this practice became unacceptable. Indigenous populations, who should have been by definition an undeniable part of the nation, were categorized at a lower level than the British idea of civilization, making them 'savages' to their eyes (Mackey, 1999).

The ideal nation imagined by the British was based on the legal negation of Indigenous sovereignty as the original inhabitants of the lands (Thobani, 2007). They were not only rejected for the colour of their skin, but also for their views of life that the British could not understand, like the love for nature, communal life and the idea of collective land ownership. Their culture and spirituality were not accepted as part of the Canadian nation. Trying to fabricate a contrast with the desirable white qualities, Indigenous populations were stereotyped as sexually promiscuous, violent and fond of torture and massacre, and overall incapable of a civilized life, doomed to disappear with the march of societal 'progress' (Trigger, 1986, as cited in Mackey, 1997) but when their attempts to 'civilize' Indigenous people failed, a policy of isolation and extermination came into place (Trattner, 1984). The British discourse of the 'untamed' peoples versus their own peacekeeping, civilized ways ignored the contradiction of their own use of violence and murder to force Indigenous families outside of their own lands. The history of British abuse of the Indigenous populations, if there was such acknowledgment, was portrayed as necessary to build the nation, to give it a morally acceptable structure and help Indigenous peoples understand what was best for them (Thobani, 2007).

Rejection of Indigenous communities as a piece of the Canadian puzzle was always present in the all-white-aspiring state. Interracial marriages were discouraged at the same time that the state incentivized the migration of white women to Canada as prospective wives

(Mackey 1999). The restrictions of the *Indian Act* confined Indigenous peoples to limited space and the worst lands, creating an apartheid system. It also stripped Indigenous women and children from their Native status when marrying non-Indigenous men, a measure that seemed both a punishment for not staying with their own, and a strategy to reduce numbers of Native populations (Thobani, 2007; Trattner, 1984). Indigenous citizens were allowed a very limited—if not absent—voice for representation within the nation. They were placed at a lower level of citizenship than British and French settlers, therefore being basically excluded from political decisions and policies that affected their lives (Dyck, 1985).

Indigenous communities have been so marginalized by Canadian society that their hardships become invisible to the rest of the population, with 49 % of their peoples living in remote reserves in 2015 (Gilmore, 2015). This form of erasure reinforces the lack of political will from the governments to provide enough assistance and resources, yet Indigenous populations are often criticized by conservative populations for 'idling' and living off the state. Their struggles have been both economic and cultural. Confrontations between Indigenous peoples and the Canadian government have continued into the twenty-first century, frequently due to treaties and agreements not being honoured by the state, or Indigenous groups finding themselves unable to exercise sovereignty in their own land against federal or provincial economic projects (Crosby & Monaghan, 2012).

From the 1830s until the 1990s, Indigenous peoples were forced into an oppressive and homogenizing educational system—residential schools, meant to force Indigenous children to assimilate to Christianity while keeping them away from their families. One of the biggest

contradictions of a self-proclaimed diverse state is the fact that the last residential school was closed in the late 1990s, more than a decade after the official inclusion of multiculturalism in Canadian policy. This contradiction also sheds light on the reality lying under current popular discourses that deny such violence, or categorize it as a thing of a distant past, not related to what Canada is today.

#### External 'Others': 'Undesirable' Newcomers

The white settlers built their Canadian identity as an example for the rest of the world, and considered their British Empire moral values to be higher than those of other nations—for example, by abolishing slavery before the United States (McLaren, 2008). The Canadian legal standing when it came to immigrants was more consistent with the racism of the American colonies, and less so with benevolence and tolerance, than the state-endorsed reconstruction of Canadian history intends to suggest (Walker, 1980), something to be expanded in the following chapter. The British settlers needed cheap labour from those groups during times of rapid development and growth, but were not willing to re-think their concept of the desirable, racially 'pure' national citizen in order to consider them an equal part of their society. They resorted to policy to reinforce the racial hierarchy while benefiting from their work.

Some of the most prominent examples of 'undesirable' newcomers and victims of external othering in Canadian history are the African-Canadians—who lived primarily on the east side of the Dominion of Canada; the Chinese immigrants—particularly in British Columbia; and the non-British European immigrants. The documented experiences of these groups present

them as constantly subjected to exclusion and exploitation, accomplished through state policies and law.

Canadian historian James Walker (1980) highlights the contradiction of a mainstream Canadian history that barely glances over the presence and struggle of Black populations and the time of slavery. While there is knowledge of almost 400 years of Black history in Canada, it is frequently reduced to a few stories about the Underground Railroad that helped Black slaves flee the United States into Canada; some Canadian citizens have thought for decades that there was no slavery at all in this nation (Winks, 1971), arguing the Canadian climate and economy made slavery unprofitable (Walker, 1980).

British colonizers imported to North America their fabricated knowledge regarding racial inferiority of non-white, non-northern peoples, as well as their growing hostility and contempt for Black people in particular (Banton, 1977). Even though it is said that much of the struggle in Black history happened as a result of Canada passively accepting these assumptions and letting them happen, but that the nation "never did sit down and formulate the colour line" (Walker, 1980, p. 7), oppression was more than passive acceptance and it was present in Canadian law from the beginning.

The first African-Canadians were legally allowed into the territory as part of settlers' property. An *Imperial Act* of 1790 encouraged white immigration into British North America by permitting the free import of "N\*\*\*\*\*, household furniture, utensils of husbandry or cloathing" (Winks, 2008, p. 28)<sup>1</sup>. Government officials encouraged the migration of young African women

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Pejorative terms toward Black populations from the original quotes were suppressed.

(as slaves) to marry the Black slaves already living in Canada, with the hope that they would reproduce and bring new generations of Black labour who, the British thought, would adapt to the harsh winters better than those who were brought directly from the much different African weather (Winks, 2008). Free Black people were not considered desirable.

Even in the context of slavery, when it actually gets to be recognized as part of the nation's past, Canada is often portrayed as compassionate and humanitarian. It is possible to find discourses related to Canadian history suggesting that its time of slavery was 'milder' and much more 'humane,' given that French Canada kept slaves mostly for domestic tasks rather than hard labour, and the whole nation lacked the well-known violence from the United States plantations (Walker, 1980). These discourses made invisible recorded incidents of beatings and whippings to Canadian slaves, sometimes resulting in death (Winks, 1971).

The end of the eighteenth century brought Black Loyalists from the United States attracted by the idea of being granted land for farming and the same benefits as their white counterparts, as well as the formal abolition of slavery in Canada. Nevertheless, in the Canadian white-dominated nation-state, the concept of freedom for people of colour did not mean citizenship in equal terms. The poor acknowledgment of slavery contributed to an imaginary idea in the collective consciousness that Black people, once free, were able to make a life just like white people, and if they faced struggles, it would be because of their own inability to work industriously. Black Canadians were granted much smaller pieces of land to work or no land at all, were not allowed to vote, had deficient resources for education compared to white students—therefore unable to get better employment than very low-paid, dirty and hard

labour—and remained economically dependent on white citizens. Many decided to emigrate to the colony of Sierra Leone with the British promise of better opportunities, only to find that they were not obtaining the promised allotted lands either, were still subjects to a white British government instead of making their own, and had additional payments to make for their life there (Walker, 1980; Winks, 1971). Others were unable to migrate freely because white settlers, unwilling to lose the cheap labour of these Black workers, produced false documents of debts or indenture to keep them from leaving Canada, knowing that existing laws would prevent those servants from leaving (Walker, 1980).

The hurdles to crawl out of poverty, both for those leaving and those who were fighting to stay, fueled the already-existing discourses against Black people as an inferior 'race.' British settlers often criticized Black people as weak for cold climates; white Canadians expressed fears of Black children as a threat and a bad influence on their own children due to their 'African barbarism,' (McLaren, 2008, p. 71) and Black families were blamed for their poverty by being categorized as lazy, unambitious, drunk, idle and unable to be industrious now that they were free from the whip of their master (Walker, 1980; McLaren, 2008; Winks, 1971). They were described by politicians as having "no aim for anything beyond mere animal existence" (Winks, 1971, pp. 77-78) and "slaves by habit and education" (Walker, 1980, p. 42).

Aside from the policies that made Black people unable to become independent farmers in their own land, these assumptions of inferiorness from white Canadians became an excuse to give discrimination an institutional dimension. They led to segregation in education, supporting separate schools in some areas based on race through the *School Act* of 1850, or keeping Black

students on separate benches when they had to attend the same schools (McLaren, 2008). Schools for Black people were often under-resourced and lacked competent teachers because of the assumption that their lower intellectual capacities would not allow them to reach the same level of education; white people also argued that Black communities wanted to separate themselves from the rest for these reasons (McLaren, 2008; Winks, 1971).

In reality, white prejudice drove Black populations to isolation into their own communities, therefore to more poverty and less assistance to improve their conditions (Walker, 1980). The vicious circle of not providing equal rights and opportunities, and then reproducing discourses of rejection because of Black Canadians' inability to thrive without those opportunities, is often excluded from history or thought of as something from a very distant past; however, many of these institutional practices continued until after the mid-1900s in areas such as the Maritimes (Fleras, 2014; Walker, 1980).

In their need to impose their nationalist idea of the "right" citizen, white Canadians created racialized discourses to justify division and under-representation of Black citizens in society, which they intended to perpetuate for future generations through education. In the twentieth century, a school textbook in Nova Scotia made one single reference to Black populations, explaining that they were "perpetually begging and receiving charity" but "neither prosperous nor useful" (Winks, 1971, p. 363).

In the first half of the nineteenth century, a mass influx of Chinese workers arrived to the colony of British Columbia to work in developing industries such as mining, agriculture and

manufacturing. The white population had decreased as many of its residents were seasonal workers, so the boost to local labour given by the Chinese was essential.

The Chinese example reflects the fact that the ethnocentric nationalist discourse of the British settlers, who claimed to strive for a society of 'industrious' citizens, was rather racial. Even though the Chinese were an asset to British Columbia for advancing intense labour efficiently and accepting long shifts—even called "living machines" (Anderson, 2008, p.91) for their frugality and hard work—and played a pivotal role in the development of these industries when labour was scarce, they were categorized as outsiders nonetheless. Since they settled together in their own communities or Chinatowns, they were criticized for not wanting to become part of the community. They were harshly judged for not meeting the moral and cultural expectations of the British citizens, and were also considered diseased and degenerate. At the same time they were fetishized for their culture and celebrations.

There were several proposed attempts to give official character to the outsider status in the 1880s, by heavily restricting immigration from China, setting a pricey 'Chinese tax' for those who wanted to work there, and urging the influx of caucasians to fulfill their wishes of a community built by a "white population alone." Even though most of these efforts to legalize discrimination were not allowed by Parliament and the Supreme Courts, the personal views of then-Prime Minister John A. Macdonald reinforced the othering of these populations and the discourse of northern European superiority when he called them "an alien race in every sense," and said that they "could not be expected to assimilate with our Aryan population" (Anderson, 2008, p. 95). However, he saw them as the necessary burden in order to complete large

infrastructure projects and companies continued to choose the cheaper labour of the Chinese mostly for railway work. While the law seemed to protect the rights of these immigrants (at least before the tax was finally approved), it ran parallel to racist views and a discourse of the Chinese as permanent outsiders and regulated by separate legislation from every other newcomer protected by the *Immigration Act*.

Popular rejection towards the Chinese was also excused by caucasians from an economic standpoint—they were portrayed as undesirable labourers for being sojourners and having frugal habits of spending, thus not contributing to the local economy and working to take their earnings back to China. However, the local government's efforts to discourage immigration expected Chinese men to avoid settling permanently or bringing their wives and children. When building the general perception about the supposed 'problems' of accepting Chinese workers in Canada, there seemed to be much indifference towards a clear institutional contradiction: There would be few reasons for a Chinese worker to spend locally or stay if the state was actively taking away his options to bring his family and give them a better life.

Employers acted under an assumption of Chinese workers' inferiority against white workers; their labour was worth much less, and they could offer them lower pay that they would accept in order to have a job. These assumptions echoed what was happening in the United States, where Chinese labour was deemed servile. The pejorative term 'coolie slave' was often used to refer to Asian immigrant workers (Wong, 2015) and, intersecting with gender issues, they were seen as inferior for seeming like a 'feminine race' compared to the caucasians (Anderson, 2008). The idea of having hard-working employees for a lower pay made them especially

attractive to hire for the employers, which ignited angry attacks from white workers. Ironically, the Chinese were said to be 'stealing' valuable jobs, while it was the local owners' own racist perspectives that created that inequality between workers and left more white people unemployed.

The rejection of Chinese people (also called "Mongolian race") was eventually extended to Japanese immigrants, who were also considered unable to 'assimilate.' The state (represented by the Prime Minister at the beginning of the twentieth century) avoided all responsibility for this antagonism and rejection from white people, and considered the marginality of Orientals as something "even the state needed to respect" (Anderson, 2008, p. 99).

Even though it has been previously discussed in this chapter that racialization in the Canadian nationalist discourse pursued 'whiteness' to reflect the exalted image of the British settlers (Thobani, 2007), it is important to indicate at this point that the arbitrary definition of 'races' according to the British also involved the evolution of who was considered to belong to the 'white' race. Just like it happened initially with the French settlers, not all European immigrants were considered welcome by the British because they were not always considered racially equal to them. The government encouraged immigration from Great Britain, the United States and northern Europe, in that order of preference (Knowles, 2016). Other populations, despite not having darker skin, were still subjected to the British discourse of the northern-southern races binary and seen as inferior 'others.'

Reaching the 1900s, new industries were developed that required hard labour, such as lumbering, mining and construction. Immigration of non-British European workers was

welcomed, since English migrants complained about the conditions of the work camps and work sites. A mass influx of southern Europeans began, particularly from Italy, but Slavic and Scandinavian workers were present as well. Immigration officials campaigned for more British settlers facing the growth of what they considered "non-preferred" immigrants with habits "repugnant to Canadian ideals" (Avery, 1995, p. 31). For example, the Italians were considered 'prone to crime' (Avery, 1995). The nationalist quest for a pure, homogeneous Canada clashed with capitalist labour market interests and the voice of the employers. While these immigrants dealt with exploitation, torture, dangerous conditions, and suffered the loneliness of being in a strange land, the locals complained about their 'social deviance' and the violence of the 'ethnic ghettos' they formed.

With the First World War, German, Austro-Hungarian, Turkish and Bulgarian immigrants were considered as 'alien enemies' in Canada and legislation was passed to force a set of prohibitions on their property, block their communications and subject them to military registration, arrests and internment (Avery, 1995). In 1917, immigration control was transferred over to a newly created Department of Immigration and Colonization, beginning a more complex regulation of immigration with detailed statistical control and specific divisions such as the Women's Division, supervising the settlement of unaccompanied immigrant women (Kelley & Trebilcock, 1998). The inclusion of 'colonization' as part of the name of this department, along with the much stricter rules for accepting immigrants, outlines the perception about 'others' always framed in terms of dominance. In the decade of the 1920s, people of Finnish, Russian or Ukrainian background were targeted as radical aliens and were seen as a threat for their potential

to spread communist ideas. Measures of immediate hostility towards immigrants related to military conflict have been repeated several times throughout Canadian history; for example, during the Second World War with Japanese-Canadians, even those who were born in Canadian lands and, as I will expand later, with immigrants of Arabic descent. In the present, most European caucasians are considered as 'white' and the perception of southern Europeans as 'problematic' has faded, focusing the Canadian racialized discourse on immigrants from other populations of colour in the world.

# Layers of 'Whiteness' and 'Othering'

The importance that Canadian nationalism placed on suppressing prominent representation of other 'races' and cultures for the sake of white British hegemony, meant that the nation-state would oppress groups of Canadians regardless of how long they had been in Canadian territory. The British approach clearly challenged Smith's (2010) argument that the nationalist did not require individual members to be alike, as long as they felt an intense bond of solidarity and uniformity in important national matters. In British Canada, individual members who were not alike would be forced to assimilate to the 'right' ways of life.

History makes it clear that relations between British settlers and 'others,' in Canada and all of North America, have been mostly of dispossession, appropriation and exploitation (Thobani, 2007). However, the British imposition of a homogeneous, culturally 'appropriate' nation not only was assumed and upheld without it ever becoming a reality—thus contributing to the invisibilization of those who did not conform to the white Christian Canadian ideals—but it eventually caused further internal conflict among all the groups that inhabited the Dominion of

Canada. Lowe (1996) discusses Frantz Fanon's analysis of how bourgeois cultural nationalism is a way of colonialism through which subaltern groups are separated and given different levels of privilege. The situation applies the old adage of "divide and conquer": Hoping to claim at least a few of their rights, internal non-British groups internalized the discourse of otherness and reproduced it on each other, creating new hierarchies of oppression. In the midst of chaos, the discourses of racialized stratification (Fleras, 2014) became internalized and reproduced by the already-discriminated groups. British Canadian ethnocentrism found otherness within its own borders in the Indigenous populations and the French Canadians.

Even though Canada is considered bilingual, recognizing and valuing both English and French as part of the nation, historically the French have not been considered equal; the antagonism between Canada's so-called 'founding nations' has been ongoing. The fact that both nations had imperialist ideals, but religious and cultural differences, drew a wedge between them as part of one imagined community. The supposed British-French racial differences, later erased with genealogical research that placed a common scandinavian ancestor between them (Berger, 1966), were part of a constant discursive contradiction when it came to defining Canadian identity—in the quest to differentiate Canada from the United States, sometimes Canada was described as homogeneous, free of the 'southern races' that populated the U.S., while in more recent times the heterogeneity of having a French-speaking population has been utilized as an admirable Canadian quality over a homogeneous United States (Mackey, 1999).

Even though the British assumption was that the French would not represent much of a threat because they would eventually decline as a cultural group and assimilate completely to

their nationalist ideal, the rivalry against United States nationalist dominance presented French and British as a united front at times. The French loyalty to the crown during the American Revolution and the War of 1812 was positively received by the British and brought them together. Even though the British did not consider the French as equal, they thought that together they were still racially better than the United States—which they saw as the reflection of the European 'southern races' (Mackey, 1999; Berger, 1966).

Anglo-Canadians have pushed their dominance for decades, trying to eliminate French Canadianism from their national identity. Violence, francophobia, fewer employment opportunities for those who spoke French were part of Canadian history, even in Québéc (Brunet, 1996). The inclusion of multiculturalism as part of Canadian policy probably had its foundation on an attempt to manage the national identity problems experienced by French Canadians and solidify their status as 'insiders' of the nation. However, the institutional discourse turned into policy did not erase the general preference for an English-speaking Canada almost everywhere in the territory and disparities in political representation. During the 1990s, a surge of Québécois nationalist discourse exalting the French Canadians and offering a fight for sovereignty brought the nation close to a break up (Mackey, 1997; Winter, 2011). While the nation has remained together, French Canada is still the object of an 'inside other' identity; tensions still exist and Québéc has established different legislation from the rest of Canada. However, the second-grade citizen status that the French seemed to have been assigned still placed them in a better position than the rest of racialized 'others,' and allowed them to develop practices of oppression and racism against them as well.

The arrival of new immigrants and ethnic groups changed the dynamics to establish new internal power relations, and Canadian history offers several examples of these complex interactions. These groups had been exposed long enough to discourses of racialization and exclusion and either acquired them as part of their own consciousness (recognizing the identity of other groups as depicted by the British and reproducing this representation), or applied then-socially acceptable behaviours of exclusion hoping to gain more acceptance from the hegemonic nationals.

Walker (2008) indicates that in the late 1700s, Black slave populations were generally considered property, something that was utilized by Indigenous populations as well: "The N\*\*\*\*\* had one advantage over whites taken captive by the Indians, however: if the latter might be slain, N\*\*\*\*\* were kept alive because they could be sold" (p. 31). European populations who had been historically marginalized and grouped with racial minorities, such as the Catholic Irish who arrived in North America around the 1840s, used their position in the new lands to separate themselves from the Black slaves and workers, climb the 'ladder' of the hierarchy and assume a position of superiority over them in order to advance their chances of being treated like white people, gain access to better jobs and business opportunities (Ignatiev, 1995). The end of African slavery and the arrival of other immigrants such as the Asian workers placed Black populations one step above them in the public opinion, and the Asian were considered a replacement for slaves because of the contempt with which they were seen and the low conditions of their work (Wong, 2015). In the 1920s, other internal groups experienced

exclusion based on their "peculiar customs and habits," such as Mennonites, Hutterites and Doukhobors (Avery, 1995, p.84).

All of these internal conflicts, triggered by the British view of the desirable nationals, were the product of many disjointed perceptions of national identities that could not find themselves as part of Canada, but looked at the dominant identity discourse for avenues to experience real citizenship. As more groups of diverse backgrounds immigrated into Canada, those whose ancestry was once considered "non-preferred" (such as descendants of southern European immigrants) have claimed that entitlement of nationality and blended with the white British descendants, now being considered 'white.' The barriers of prejudice and rejection were directed towards those newer immigrants and refugees with darker skin and coming from poorer nations.

### The Canadian 'Deserving Poor': Discourses and Policies of Immigration

Trattner (1984) describes how the British settlers brought many of their practices and policies from their own history into the New World. The concept of aiding the poor was tied to moral principles of Christianity about helping people, and also the result of the idea that the poor were a result of an inevitable fate they could not control. Those in higher places of the socioeconomic ladder were expected to use their superior status to bring help to people in the lower classes, who were inflicted with the misfortunes of misery. Charity and compassion towards the less fortunate were common and produced references such as Queen Elizabeth's *Poor Law* in the 1600s, designed to help those who could not take care of themselves and supported by mandatory taxes to the citizens. However, this law was not free of contradictions

and struggles to find a balance between politico-economic ideals and the moral mandate to help those in need.

The idea of welfare made its way into North American communities as conceived by the colonizers—noting that some of the immigrants were looking for better opportunities in the new lands and escaping the poverty in which they lived in Europe—and they made sure to establish their own versions of the *Poor Law* within the different colonies. With the richness of resources North America presented, the new settlers stopped believing in poverty as an inescapable fate. Christian principles were merged with ideas of work as a virtue and "idleness as a sin" (p. 23) that should be punished with starvation, so all the able-bodied should work. The desire for the citizens to avoid the burden of those taxes, in addition to the dilemmas of needing to supply labour for the different projects that came with the rapid growth of the communities, made governments and inhabitants more selective in defining who was allowed to receive such help. Showing little sympathy for the able-bodied considered to be idling because of 'God's will' was part of the discourse even after the eventual separation of church and state. The thought of the Christian mandate to help other people was the same, but it was supported rather from a capitalist point of view aiming to grant access to property through labour.

Capitalist practices and globalization have slowly driven people in developing nations out of their homes, looking for opportunities of a better quality of life in the developed countries (Cairns & Sears, 2012). It is important to note that this apparent discourse of liberal citizenship in order to fill capitalist needs around the world, and of which Canada also participated, helped represent nations as liberal democracies instead of colonial societies (Thobani, 2007), but did not

really eliminate the racial motives to limit and assign different levels of 'worthiness' to immigrant workers.

There is a contradiction between discourse and practice when it comes to the wealthier, 'predominantly white' nations and their stance on immigration. The Canadian systematic process of welcoming, then intending to revert the influx of, immigrant workers is not unique of North America. In Europe, nations with an aging population and growing market demands find themselves in need to import a young workforce to contribute to the countries' growth. However, the procedures in place look to deter immigration rather than to encourage it. European governments strive to be as uninviting as possible to the immigrants they need. Being in a position of complete vulnerability with the pressure of tough controls in place, economic migrants might see their options limited and be more willing to be exploited, hoping to eventually progress to a better situation (Gupta & Omoniyi, 2007).

The contradiction when it comes to immigrants ties in with racialization of labour, also playing a critical role in the situation of those immigrant workers; governments may not have reasons to reject immigration from specific countries or populations rather than their conceptions of inferiority, and their desire to keep their boundaries free of individuals from these groups who could go on to obtain citizenship in large numbers, raise a family in the new country and then become 'locals.' For this purpose, many of the old discourses highlighting stereotypes of immigrants around lacking the 'right' moral qualities underpin new representations of 'others' as an economic threat to the nation, clashing with the fact that they are also an economic need to said nation.

### The Value of Immigrants in the Post-War Era

After the Second World War, Canada's relationship with immigration takes a different turn. Even though the nationalist depiction of the incoming racialized 'others' as potential threats to the values of the nation remain at the core of the identity discourse, the superficial messaging steers away from mentioning racial hierarchies and manifests itself within the context of the growing national economy. The harsh exclusion of the 'foreign' and limited policies of immigration changed. Due to the new commitments to human rights and the United Nations, Canadians welcomed more than 160,000 European refugees and displaced persons until 1952, but there was considerable self-interest in this action rather than mere altruism (Avery, 1995).

Canada faced similar dilemmas than the United States—the capital imperative presented a contradiction with the imperative of the nation-state (Lowe, 1996). A need for 'extra hands' in advancing Canadian economy became a priority over the purity of a white, Christian nation. However, this 'welcome' did not erase the assumptions of racial inferiority and created a contradiction where newcomers were desired for work in Canada, but were not really desired in Canadian society. These newly arrived displaced people were assigned to agriculture and labour-intensive jobs. Even though some of them were professionals and skilled workers, their abilities were underestimated by many Canadians for not being familiar with the English language (Avery, 1995). As I will expand below, this became just one of many examples of discourses of cultural difference and otherness utilized against immigrants that kept them away from opportunities for a better life and socioeconomic status, intensifying the division also as a problem of class in addition to race.

In the following years, national programs were expanded to include economic immigrants to supply the necessary labour. The tendency of employers to replace white workers with minorities assuming cheaper wages helped maintain antagonism towards the newcomers. Their willingness to work for a meager pay placed them in the public opinion as object of charity, and the antagonism grew when they were not considered 'deserving enough' to be helped. The post-war discourses that created these race and class hierarchies of immigrants, and established who deserved to work and live in Canada, have outlined the current government immigration programs. The lived experiences of immigrants, sometimes faced with failure to make a living, present them with a painful contradiction between discourse and reality.

#### Ranking the 'Deserving Poor' and the Contradiction of the Immigrant Experience

Ivy Zheng, a highly accomplished Asian mechanical engineer in Toronto, was rejected from job applications ranging from engineering to grocery store cashier, with many employers claiming 'Canadian experience' as a requirement she needed for those jobs. Her limited options only allowed her—whose work with technology in her country of origin had once been taken to outer space—to eventually get a job selling cinnamon buns on a Canadian subway station (Gogia & Slade, 2011). Zheng's case, while particularly shocking, is not an isolated example of the economic immigrants' experience in Canada, a nation that tends to both welcome and reject them.

Canada's federal government currently has a system in place that discursively encourages new immigrants to live in Canada—even bring their families—and join the workforce as skilled workers. Through compelling videos on the government's websites, skilled workers are called to

apply because "Canada needs their experience" and are reminded of the marvels of Canadian multiculturalism (Government of Canada, 2017b). Immigrants who want to work and become permanent residents in Canada must enter the Express Entry Program (Government of Canada, 2020b). Through three different streams that classify applicants according to occupation and Canadian experience (if any), applicants are subjected to a 'points system' evaluation that measures their completed academic education, age, language proficiency, accompanying family members and work experience worldwide. The Canadian government has periodic 'invitation rounds,' where a minimum score is established and those whose score is above the minimum receive an invitation to apply for permanent residence.

However, the Express Entry system is full of hurdles, excessive documentation, translation, and certification requirements with limited time to complete them; immigrants require enough money not only to pay for the application fees, certified documents, and medical exams, but to be able to cover their living expenses for at least one year. Their education and professional background is subjected to assessments that often pre-categorize foreign degrees as 'inferior' in comparison to a Canadian university program degree, limiting the employment options available for the newcomers. There are qualifications that can add hundreds of points to an applicant's score and increase their possibilities of being invited to apply sooner, such as a Provincial Nomination, or a positive Labour Market Impact Assessment (LMIA), an assessment where an employer proves there are no Canadian citizens available in the area to do a specific job, therefore stating the need for an immigrant skilled worker.

Since employers rarely decide to undergo an LMIA because of high costs and a cumbersome process (Semotiuk, 2018), many applicants have to wait several rounds, or even indefinitely, for their scores to be above the minimum established at a given point and be invited to apply for permanent residence. Once their application is submitted and approved, skilled workers can travel to Canada (if they applied from another country) and find a job as permanent residents. This seems to be a positive outcome for both Canada and the new immigrants; however, sources outside government reveal immigrant workers facing struggles to find jobs once they have arrived, despite having the required qualifications, and finding their previous professional experience widely dismissed by employers.

Gogia & Slade (2011) prove how, despite earning points for academic degrees obtained abroad, many immigrants come to find their credentials are not deemed equivalent to those that can be obtained in Canada. This means an inability to find a job in their field and costly courses or licensing fees to place themselves at the same level of their Canadian counterparts (Fleras, 2014). The lower value of international credentials and degrees is not always grounded on factual research or proof that these professionals are, indeed, unable to perform the same tasks as Canadian professionals. The argument of "Canadian experience" is often used as a common filter for employers to avoid hiring immigrant workers. This requirement from businesses seems to contradict Canadian regulations such as the Ontario's Human Rights Code, which includes a policy to remove the 'Canadian experience barrier' for immigrants (Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2013). Even though some immigration websites define "Canadian experience" as the ability for an applicant to show knowledge of Canadian culture rather than physically

working in a Canadian site or office (Valentine, 2018), there is no consensus or official definition on what this requirement means and how employers should apply it. The hurdles caused by employers who establish a requirement for Canadian experience that immigrants cannot have, even though it is not essential for the position offered, causes highly-skilled professionals to end up unemployed for a long time, or underemployed as taxi drivers or house cleaners despite their postsecondary—even postgraduate—education. There are documented cases in Canadian news showing the reality of skilled workers finding their international experience completely overlooked without a valid reason or struggling to be assessed at the same level they left off in their home countries (Dharssi, 2016; Dunn, 2016; Habib, 2017). This unveils a problem that affects both workers and the Canadian labour system. Immigrants spend significant amounts of money in application fees, medical examinations, language testing, travel and relocation, only to find they are not as 'wanted' in Canada as the Canadian government said they were. For Canada, nationalism comes at a high cost: According to an RBC Economics report of 2011, if immigrants earned similar incomes to those of Canadian-born citizens, the increase would be around \$30.7 billion and would translate into 42,000 new jobs (Fleras, 2014).

The discursive disconnection between what the Canadian government says it wants (highly skilled immigrant workers that come prepared to contribute to the nation) and what Canadian employers think about economic immigrants (always lower-skilled than a Canadian employee) shows how a change of policy does not change decades, even centuries of stereotypes, ideologies, racialization, and otherness that have been encouraged, learned, and passed on as popular knowledge—ideology evolves from obvious repression, to be embedded and normalized

in the national culture. It is possible to identify a cycle that maintains the discursive construction of (racialized) immigrants as possessing 'inferior' qualities: The lack of recognition of their foreign credentials, or the lack of consistency of national standards to be applied in Canadian credentials assessments, result in the dismissal of an immigrant's previous foreign experience—regardless of how relevant it might be for Canadian employers in need of specialized workers—and their subsequent deskilling and underemployment that will often keep them struggling for upward mobility and away from access to positions of leadership, influence, and power. This will reinforce the discourse of immigrants, particularly those from so-called Third World countries, as having 'inferior knowledge' and only being capable of lower-paid, unskilled labour in a Canadian society (Guo, 2009).

Stratification also occurs in terms of class as it intersects with race: In the face of choosing between undesirable 'others' from outside the nation, those who are deemed more 'productive' and less dependent will be somewhat preferred. Economic immigrants, while subjected to tedious processes to discourage their intentions to resettle, are still in a higher category than refugees and asylum seekers, with the former being considered 'legal immigrants.' However, refugees may undergo a faster process to obtain permanent residence with more flexibility on the requirements available, due to their particular circumstances. The complicated political conditions that cause the prompt exit from their country, giving them fewer possibilities to prepare and save funds in comparison to voluntary migrants, place them in a position of further vulnerability, dependent on the perception of authorities and local citizens and hoping to be considered 'deserving' of the more expedite process of permanent residence and the financial

support. Because of the unnecessary obstacles and deterrents placed for economic immigrants who have to earn the right to remain within Canada, they may experience conflict and feelings of rejection towards refugees, considering them recipients of an "unfair advantage" and considering themselves more deserving within the popular discourse that favours their 'legal immigrant' status.

## Same Action, Different Representation: Immigrants Versus 'Expatriates'

Immigration often comes with negative connotations in developed nations: Immigrants are seen as burdens or problems for their societies. But the capitalist phenomenon has also driven migrants from the 'powerful' nations into the developing ones to expand entrepreneurial ventures, and also extend the famous discourse of the benevolent national helping the less fortunate around the world. In this two-way migration processes, previously discussed national discourses of 'worthiness' and racial exclusion do not reflect equally for the same action.

Here we see the contradiction of the immigrant versus the *expatriate*. Immigrants (still considered the non-preferred race, but 'necessary others' as Mackey defines them) are always represented as supplicants who expect the 'better nation' to generously take them in and give them some limited rights, while restricting other privileges only reserved for the superior nationals, like access to the welfare state. Nations establish strict controls and hurdles for those working on trades, construction, manual labour and domestic labour. Not only must they prove that they 'deserve' to be considered and admitted into the nation, but they also have to comply with strict rules that limit their possibilities to become 'one more national' and start a new life. Economic immigrants rarely qualify for welfare. Some immigrants are temporary workers, who

are still required to pay premiums from their income as per the *Employment Insurance Act*, but are required to leave upon completion of their terms, thus being unable to make use of the benefits for which they have been paying access (Fleras, 2014). Still, the popular discourse that all 'outsiders' are dependent on the state and the taxpayers without making any contributions is often used both as a reason to maintain restrictions on their work and living opportunities, and emphasize their 'supplicant' status.

On the other hand, migrants from developed nations are supported by global organizations such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund to expand their markets, and even volunteers who are not looking for lucrative work or will be part of the productive sector find countless opportunities from NGOs to further their humanitarian impulses (Thobani, 2007). These types of travelers do not call themselves immigrants. The discourse of the immigrant has such a strong perception as a 'supplicant', that those who are not as poor—and usually white—opt to call themselves *expatriates*, giving a completely different, much more positive representation to the same action of entering another nation to work or start a new life. In both cases, the wealthier nation plays the discursive role of humanitarian and saviour, helping those who supposedly cannot help themselves like those inferior 'southern races' from the 1800s.

## Immigration and the Humanitarian Discourse

In Canada, the discourse of disguising the acceptance of cheaper labour as a moral commitment to help was consistent with the self-proclaimed humanitarian nature of the Canadian culture. However, neoliberal governments and globalization have both benefited from and produced harm to migrants from developing countries who look for a better life. While welfare

still exists, this system comes with limitations bound to citizenship, and a stigma to those who access it.

Presently, the humanitarian discourse proudly promoted by the Canadian government is supported by legislation and international agreements that commit the country to provide aid both locally and globally. Aside from the official encouragement of multiculturalism as an inherent part of Canada, the country is highly involved in initiatives of funding relief for other nations torn by political instability, natural disasters, poor access to health care, or famine. There are several international assistance projects in place through which Canada provides help around the globe (Government of Canada, 2018). According to the Canadian International Development Platform (2018), international assistance accounted for approximately 1.7 % of Canada's federal budget spending in 2017, focusing mostly on developing nations in Asia and Africa, as well as specific countries like Afghanistan, Haiti and Syria. In chapter 4, I will specifically refer to how these discourses conflict with humanitarian efforts in the specific case of Syrian refugees and immigrants from Muslim communities.

Having this seemingly extensive interest in helping people around the world and promoting politics of open arms to those in need, why is the humanitarian discourse met with the contradiction of exclusive policies, rejection from the public opinion or insufficient access to resources for those who have already crossed the Canadian borders? As I argued before, decades of learning discourses of exclusion as part of a national culture have embedded these views in the collective self of Canada. Racism and the negative representation of the 'other' as a threat have become a systemic issue (Fleras, 2014), where a false idea of neutrality and colour-blindness

becomes inaction towards these contradictions, therefore letting them reproduce among members of society without question.

#### **Conclusion: What the Mosaic Really Shows**

In this chapter, we traveled through Canadian history to understand its difficulties to find a unique national identity, and understand how the representation of the Canadian self has been constantly fragmented between the perception and the action. With a need to differentiate the nation from the United States as a constant throughout centuries, Canada has taken its discourse of tolerance and multiculturalism to construct a discourse of exalted identity as a cultural 'mosaic,' unlike the American 'melting pot' looking to dissolve differences, all becoming the same (Chaiton & McDonald, 1977). The mosaic, an analogy to represent different, mismatched 'tiles' doing their part produce a united piece, may not be accurate when official discourses intend to focus Canadian nationality on specific parts of the entire piece, or pretends to hide some pieces and attempts to break them to turn them into something else. By stepping back far enough and looking at the entire mosaic, do we see the same shape that we have been told we created? A history of contradictions says that the image created by the Canadian mosaic is still unclear, or reveals a very different representation of Canada as a whole—a concept of a vertical mosaic that has been identified before (Porter et al., 2015), full of hierarchies of oppression.

Canadian society, despite the praise for its tolerance, continues to live under the fabricated assumption of the 'average Canadian' or 'Canadian Canadian' that is white and Christian, standing against an army of hyphenated identities: French-Canadian, African-Canadian, Italian-Canadian, Chinese-Canadian... (Mackey, 1997). Those from British

ancestry are seen as the neutral image of what Canada is, without any more explanations needed, while others must justify their level of 'Canadianness' to be truly included in the privileged place of citizenship. Banton's (1977) affirmation that "there has always been a tendency for people to prefer those of their 'own kind' and to be wary of strangers" (p. 14) is contested when we see that the definition of one's 'own kind' can be full of socially learned subtleties that see invisible differences, a 'kind' that is variable and disconnected from physical qualities or measurable attributes in reality, but becomes real when it impacts the 'strangers' excluded from it.

Although many of the experiences and policies previously described are not institutionally supported as blatantly now as they were in the past, Canada cannot consider itself as a nation absent of inequalities related to discourses of racialization. The statements that specifically mentioned superior or inferior races are not encouraged anymore, but have taken a more subtle presence in Canadian society, with very real and tangible impacts on the livelihood of immigrant populations. The representation of the immigrant as a potential threat to the nation has different ways to manifest itself. The state has been creating a 'regime of truth' about immigration, feeding it and solidifying it through formal education (schools) and informal education (socialization and communication channels).

In the following chapter I expand on the evolution of the formal and informal channels disseminating these identity discourses in Canada. I will analyze the historical role of communication, media, and the formal education system in creating the discourse of the immigrant as an 'other' and a threat. I will also explore how the current media landscape in

Canada is contributing to political socialization in these matters, arriving at the national discourse regarding immigration and Syrian refugees.

# Chapter 4

# Canada's Public Sphere: Canadian Identity and the Muslim 'Other'

The previous chapter posed the argument that a British-imported construction of the Canadian identity was developed and promoted throughout the nation's history, and processes of racialization and colonialism shaped the national discourse in Canada, exacerbating oppression against those groups considered as 'others.' How did this discourse of identity become a part of a widely accepted and longstanding Canadian 'regime of truth' (Foucault, as cited in Hall, 1996, p. 205), despite the ethnic richness and diversity of the Canadian population? How has this 'regime of truth' evolved toward the current state of the Canadian public sphere, becoming the social context in which the Syrian refugee crisis discourses are created and disseminated?

This chapter aims to answer the questions above, by analyzing the factors that allowed the historical discourses reviewed in the previous chapter to become embedded into the fabric of the Canadian nation. I will discuss the historical role of the formal education system and mass communication channels to solidify a collective identity and influence socialization. I will also briefly explore the current state of Canadian media, and the phenomena and discourses that are impacting its public sphere—defined by Habermas (2006) as an independent 'space' where citizens form and discuss opinions related to their state's politics. I will look into the case of Muslim and Arab populations within this context, and what their place has been in Canadian media discourses over the past decades. This analysis intends to explain the factors that serve as a foundation for my analysis of discourses related to Syrian refugees in Canada.

### **Canadian Identity Through Education and Communication**

When the first European nation-states were created, the detachment of the new communities from the religious influence of Latin as the 'higher' language contributed to a rich variety of languages developed as a new way to define national identities. Vernacular literature and print-languages laid a basis for national consciousness and unified channels of communication below Latin. Language, cultural rituals, and formal education became crucial vehicles for the dissemination of nationalist ideas. Through these vehicles, state policies, historiographies, and national symbols in the school curricula were introduced (Anderson, 1991; Guibernau, 1996; Jusdanis, 2001; Manzo, 1996).

Formal education gives an official and disciplinary character to the respect and loyalty expected towards the nation—which is, in reality, directed towards the state. Foucault (1977) deconstructed the concept of discipline within specific realms for ruling classes to govern bodies and the principles, actions, and timing with which they should be guided—first, through religious congregations; later, military, workplaces, and schools. It is not a coincidence that nationalism historically occupies a significant place in centres of hegemonic exercise of discipline such as schools and army, through knowledge and the introduction of mandatory traditions. Citizens are socialized into these behaviours and expectations early in life and often from settings of unidirectional learning, where students receive pre-selected knowledge, but are not supposed to challenge or question it.

The expected admiration towards the nation is reinforced with repetitive actions such as mandatory learning and singing of anthems and daily reciting of pledges to honour the nation's flag. Failure to comply with participation in these nationalist rituals is usually punished as a sign of disrespect or lack of discipline, justifying the cultural relevance of nationalist rituals with the value of history. Anderson (1991) described the nation in its birth as something both 'new' and 'historical.' An exaltation of those who preceded the present generations—portrayed as 'heroes' in this discourse, sometimes just for being considered founders of the imagined community—and a moral obligation to honour their historic memory that 'made us who we are.'

The British Canadian state followed many of these steps to construct a homogeneous representation of the national identity and a narrative of the Canadian nation designed to exalt the racially 'desirable' Canadian (Thobani, 2007). It transformed these discourses into an official knowledge to reinforce power relations. For decades, Canadian history was carefully filtered in the school system to fulfill this purpose; many of the experiences of violent oppression and the racialized discourses that originated them have been removed or minimized in history teachings to avoid tarnishing the image of the nation's noble (white) founding fathers. The constant presence and lived experiences of racialized immigrants and minorities, such as African Canadians, were barely mentioned, with brief exceptions that emphasized white Canadians as humanitarian helping them escape from slavery (Winks, 1971). In some cases, they were not present in history at all. For example, Walker (1980) argued that "the student of Canadian history can go right through our school system, university courses and even graduate school, without ever being exposed to the history of blacks in Canada" (p. 3).

Up until the 1970s, biases and stereotypes were present in textbooks when it came to describing Indigenous populations, with phrases such as "Champlain spent the winter with the Hurons, living in a longhouse swarming with Indians, mice, fleas, and lice" (Creighton, 1962, as cited in Pratt, 1984, p. 154). The residential school system that forced assimilation on Indigenous peoples was mostly omitted in the history curriculum. These discourses, and the impact they had on the idea of Canadian identity, were not brought into question until the late twentieth century.

The historical process that formed the Canadian nation has been 'whitewashed' to present British Canadians as heroes who built the nation we know today, and white people as the sole attainers of accomplishment—minus the embarrassment and inconvenience of mentioning turbulent times of genocide, violence, racism, and exclusion (Fleras, 2014; Thobani, 2007; Walker, 1980). The official discourse of Canadian history is reflected in some museums as well, appropriating the representation of the oppressed minorities to fit the narrative, and depicting a curated version of history to play a pedagogical role in the formation of a national identity (Mackey, 1999). Even after the inclusion of multiculturalism as part of Canadian identity and the discourse adopted by the state at that point, which asserted that no ethnic group had priority over another, little was done in education to challenge the status quo of a vertical Canadian mosaic (Burke, 1984).

When it comes to informal education, a national culture 'regime of truth' is shaped among inhabitants of Canadian communities; this culture aims to reflect the nationalist lessons present in the school system, while manifesting an internalized consciousness outside of the disciplinary control of formal rituals. Even though the socialization processes to form the

national 'self' occur outside of 'captive' or controlled environments, they are still heavily influenced by the official discourse. Artistic displays, celebrations, and media are often considered useful tools for the state to instill nationalism.

Canada always had its constructed identity partly revolving around its own 'otherness' against the United States. Rather than finding what Canada was, the United States was a constant anti-model, or what Canada was *not* supposed to be. The proliferation of media products coming from the United States into Canada triggered initiatives to promote Canadian-made content, in an attempt to deter the American influence on Canadian popular culture.

A report of the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences in 1951 indicated the belief that the influence of the American communications industry in Canada was excessive. This became the foundation for the creation of the Canada Council and a push for governmental funding that would help support the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) and National Film Board of Canada. Another prominent example in history includes Bill C-58, the *Time/Reader's Digest Bill*. This Act intended to put a halt to the tax advantages enjoyed by U.S. publications such as *Time* and *Reader's Digest* for their distribution in Canada. Measures were taken to counteract their popularity, as they were believed to impede the development of a healthy and independent Canadian industry (Bashevkin, 1991).

In our current globalized world, a well-developed Canadian mediatic industry has immediate reach to millions of inhabitants in the territory, who are also connected to communications from the United States and other countries. The American influence has not

diminished, especially when it comes to politics, and one of the main examples of this claim is the influence of U.S. events like the 9/11 attacks had on the Canadian consciousness and the echoed discourses of representation surrounding Muslim and Arab populations.

## Canadian Media Today: Learning Selective 'Truths' in Twenty-First Century Politics

Technological advancements and the variety of platforms for people to access media have changed the dynamics of producing, disseminating, and learning discourses in informal settings in North America and the world. Smartphones and other portable devices allow people to have the latest news in their hands at all times, instead of having to wait for the newspaper in the morning, or tune to TV and radio news broadcasts at specific times of day. The birth of social media sites and apps enabled real-time interaction between news producers and their audiences. These innovations have brought both opportunities and limitations in terms of discourse and power in our society.

Even though social media sites and online forums were initially considered as platforms for entertainment and connecting with friends, they have become another channel for news media. Most Canadian mainstream media outlets have developed an online presence and manage several social media accounts. Despite the accurate claim during the early 2000s that Canada's news media were concentrated in very few corporations (Beers, 2006), the exponential growth of online news sites allowed for more options that have become increasingly popular over the years. According to the Canadian Media Concentration Research (CMCR) project, by 2018 online news sources have become a diverse field; the traditional names now share an audience with

other independent news websites, domestic and foreign (Winseck, 2019). For these smaller producers, the lack of resources or infrastructure to produce print, radio, or television news is no longer as much of an obstacle to make an impact. As noted by Beers (2006), online news are "interactive, 'viral' in distribution, immediately global in reach, and relatively inexpensive to produce" (p. 116).

The increasing affordability of multimedia technology and the wider access to both content consumption and production online has changed the dynamic of the public sphere as we knew it. News does not travel unilaterally toward a passive audience and the response can be immediate. Conversations happen on social media platforms where news authors, reporters or representatives of the news outlet respond to questions and opinions from the public. Readers and viewers can sometimes become news sources and broadcasters by publishing content on their personal social media channels about relevant events they are witnessing, before traditional news outlets have arrived to cover the stories. Social media allows for live-streaming video, producing a raw view of events publicly available as they occur, before media corporations present an edited or summarized version.

The possibilities above have changed some of the restrictions on what voices can be heard, who has enough 'authority' to publicly express their views, and what discourses will be received by the masses. The elites and dominant groups in society are still able to determine their 'regimes of truth,' and traditional news media are still able to set a news agenda to define what topics are relevant or pressing for discussion in the public sphere. However, the interactive nature of social media brings that public sphere to a dynamic minute-by-minute development of

alternative points of view, contesting voices, and initiatives of social change in response to the dominating discourses (Tupper, 2014). The visibility of dissent and diverse knowledges, particularly in the realm of identity discourses, has allowed for a slight decrease in what Noelle-Neumann (1977) identified as the 'spiral of silence' theory—a social tendency for people with what are considered less 'popular' opinions to remain silent or express them less vehemently in fear of disapproval, giving a false sense of power or accuracy to the more prevalent, loudly expressed opinions in society.

In Canada, one of the most significant examples of this new influence of social media on the public sphere is the success of the Idle No More movement. Founded in late 2012, Idle No More was born when Indigenous women expressed their concerns about the former Conservative Government's budget bill (C-45) and how its reforms would negatively impact the numbered treaties by the British Crown and First Nations people in Western Canada, as well as protections of Indigenous land established in several acts. The movement quickly gained notoriety and followers, who engaged with the cause across Canada thanks to a Facebook page and a series of tweets circulating under the hashtag #IdleNoMore (Tupper, 2014).

While bill C-45 passed, Idle No More opened a public debate over the relations between the federal government and First Nations, Inuit, and Metis populations, and the extent of Indigenous sovereignty. In 2009, then-Prime Minister Stephen Harper had said to international news media during the G-20 Summit that Canada had no history of colonialism (Ljunggren, 2009). In the previous chapter I reviewed the history that proves this discourse to be inaccurate, but by being disseminated on a global platform by the highest representative of the Canadian

nation-state, it is established as a hegemonic 'regime of truth' of Canadian identity and culture that erases state-supported actions of othering and racialization. In this context, Idle No More and its presence on social media placed a different discourse about colonization and voices from a minority into the public sphere, while providing a space for activism and informal education on topics like Indigenous sovereignty and environmental issues.

Even though cases like Idle No More present a wider space for typically unheard discourses, social media platforms present other concerns to consider when it comes to socialization and informal learning. A wider platform also means the ability to post almost any kind of content, regardless of accuracy. Particularly when it comes to political discourse, its connection to identity discourses and deeply held beliefs may affect people's willingness to verify the facts using other sources of information, or question the reliability of the media site they are reading. While social media accounts and posts can be reported, claims to protect freedom of speech have resulted in fewer restrictions from social media companies to publish false or misleading content. A study by Vosoughi et al. (2018) showed how false news can spread on Twitter at a much faster rate than the truth, likely due to novelty and emotional reactions to the content.

Another question that arises with online news, particularly on social media, is the complex processes that determine what discourses we see in our news feeds more than others, and why. Algorithms create curated versions of overwhelming loads of information to tailor our feeds with what they 'guessed' we want to see. People who are constantly visiting and sharing links from websites with a specific political leaning, will rarely see a radically different point of

view on their feeds, regardless of the accuracy or credibility of those frequently visited sites. These algorithms, working automatically on every user's offer of content, limit an otherwise incredibly diverse array of news, videos, and opinion pieces. Rather than sources of knowledge, online sources can become an "eco-chamber" for many to reinforce beliefs they already held about certain topics or groups. Since most social media companies are based in the United States, the prioritization and wide availability of U.S. news and websites on top of people's feeds can overshadow local content.

Habermas' (2006) observations from chapter 2 about the actors shaping the public sphere must be revisited once again at this point, to add owners and managers of corporations that have created social media platforms, including those firms dedicated to collecting personal information from users' online interactions (data mining). These actors utilize such information to create targeted marketing campaigns that have expanded their range from retail offers to include political messaging. The 2016 political election in the United States, as well as the rise of so-called 'alt-right' movements in this and other countries around the world, rely on nationalist and protectionist rhetoric to oppose initiatives that encourage equity or acceptance of diversity in societies. These events have opened a new chapter in this discussion and unveiled a chaotic environment for informal learning and interaction through media. The term "fake news" has been coined and popularized by groups to dismiss news stories that do not align with their assumptions, encouraged by political leaders (Reuters, 2017) and conspiracy theorists with mediatic influence, among others (BBC, 2018). Meanwhile, fabricated stories that look similar to legitimate news websites continue to appear, and platforms like Facebook have had their users'

data compromised by groups who targeted these fabricated online news to persuade readers into taking specific partisan positions for the 2016 election (Browne, 2018). False news and conspiracies, supported by politicians, resulted in a riot from supporters of former President Donald Trump, who forced their way into the U.S. Capitol to force the vice-president and congress people to overturn the election results, after claims of fraud from President Trump kept disseminating without proof. The riot, which was organized through several social media networks, had an outcome of at least five dead (Levenson et al., 2021; McEvoy, 2021).

The tendencies described above for knowledge creation and reproduction are echoed in Canada as well as in other parts of the world; people are changing the way they learn from media, now receiving unverified content as knowledge from which to learn, and distrusting what once were considered credible and validated sources of news and information regardless of verifiable facts. Klapper (1960) discussed the theoretical foundations of this phenomenon when he analyzed the relationship audiences had with media and the behaviours of selective exposure—the action of choosing only sources of information that align with personal beliefs; selective perception—distorting details of the information received when exposure to a dissonant discourse is inevitable; and selective retention—quickly forgetting a 'new truth' that does not align with personal beliefs. The availability of countless sources of both real and misleading information has elevated these behaviours exponentially, turning the learning process into a chaotic search for convenient truths.

Even though Klapper believed the selective exposure, perception, and retention behaviours to be indicators of the lack of influence media had to shape or change people's

opinions, it seems these mass platforms do influence the way discourses are validated and materialized into our daily social and political relations. For example, websites that look like news media but expose specific political leanings, such as the 'Patriot Post' in the United States, are a news-like source of discourses that present immigration per se as a problem and a threat to society, and heavily criticize views that are not consistent with Christianity (Craig, 2019). When it comes to the presence of immigrants and people of colour in North American media in a negative context, Arab and Muslim populations have been frequent targets. The identity discourses of Muslims as threats, and the othering created by the white Christian elites disseminated at a greater speed after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 in the United States.

#### Constructing a Representation of the Muslim Identity: Orientalism and Arabophobia

Even though the terrorist attacks of 2001 in the United States (often called 9/11) are a crucial factor in the construction of current discourses about Muslim and Arab communities found in the media, it is important to note that they only augmented and solidified the creation of a discursive formation that had been in the making for decades. Historically, Arab populations have been consistently 'othered' by the West; this analysis will focus on the discourses created in the United States, later echoed in Canada.

Stereotypes about Arab or Muslim people were present in North American media during the twentieth century, first presenting them as symbols of mystery, opulence, or sensuality.

Movies, for example, featured non-Arab actors dressed as sheikhs and showed Arab women as

belly dancers (Hamdon, 2010). These exaggerated, almost-fetishizing visual representations of these populations created a completely unilateral identity discourse that can be best described by Said's (1978) concept of Orientalism—a tendency to define cultures from the East ('Orientals') in terms of their 'otherness' from the West. The lack of exposure to Arab populations and cultures in North America, as opposed to European colonizer nations like France or England, resulted in a fabricated identity that was entirely based on difference. The United States represented Arabs as geographically distant, and culturally removed from what was considered the Western 'normal' society.

During the late 1970s, there was a significant pivot in the North American 'regime of truth' about Arabs and Muslims. Even though they were previously defined as distant, 'exotic' and unknown in the collective consciousness, their presence in American media grew exponentially, now intensifying previous stereotypes to present them as a looming threat. Iran took a prominent place in American news, between the Iranian revolution that resulted in this nation officially becoming an Islamic republic, and the oil crisis that affected supply to the United States. TV advertisements presented footage of Arab leaders from the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and other known personalities related to oil and Islam, defining them as the ones in control of American sources of oil. They did not include a clear explanation of who they were or how they related to each other; the lack of clarity contributed to the attempt to incite fear and anger in the audience (Said, 1997). Discourse in the United States focused on Arab populations as threatening because of the control exercised over their oil prices, and their association with "Islamic terrorism." Cartoons depicted Muslim and Arab men as

turban-wearing 'bandits,' movies represented Arab men as violent enemies and mobsters, and women were portrayed as submissive and dependent, needing to be rescued from the oppression of their own culture (Hamdon, 2010). Islam was newsworthy only in relation to oil and terrorism. Several 'experts' or intellectuals (who had not really studied Islam or Arab cultures in depth) were provided with a space in news publications to disseminate generalized, uncontested thoughts about Iran and describing cultures like Islam as an inevitable breeding ground for terrorism (Said, 1997).

I will clarify that the terms 'Arab' and 'Muslim' are used together and without distinction here intentionally, since the constructed discourse about their identities conflated these definitions together and used them interchangeably, despite the fact that there are non-Arab Muslims and non-Muslim Arabs. Said (1997) explains how American discourses referred to Islam as a religion, oftentimes replacing it with 'Islamic culture,' and always pointing to entire Arab nations as the problem. It is not clear whether the discourse points at religion, culture, nationality, or even appearance as the source of their menacing quality. Religion is an important starting point to establish the 'othering' practice, since it was constructed as a direct opposition to Christianity. Islam is described as a violent and inevitably radical religion. However, as indicated by Said, the discourse is shaped for the West to be opposed to Islam, instead of just Christianity. This discursive logic is found in history; in chapter 3, I argued that Christian values were embedded into the 'desirable' national identity in North America. Islam is subsequently seen as a religious force controlling all societies that include it, filling them with cultural

'backwardness' (Said, 1997). The idea of Islam and Arabs as a 'distant' culture eventually became a representation of an 'opposite' culture, inferior to Western values and progress.

The terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001, produced a government response in discourse that openly pointed at Arabs and Muslims as the enemy of the United States (Hamdon, 2010), and in praxis with policy changes and the beginning of the 'War on terror.' In Canada, the attacks prompted a direct response as well with the introduction of the Anti-terrorism Act (Government of Canada, 2017b). News coverage of the events established a narrative that emphasized the 9/11 attack as the most tragic event in U.S. history, frequently compared to Pearl Harbor (Landy, 2004; Monahan, 2010), and framed as an attack on America's culture and spirit (Monahan, 2010). When the organization Al-Qaeda claimed responsibility for the attacks, then-U.S. President George W. Bush stated that the attacks had happened because 'they' hate American freedoms such as freedom of religion and speech. He initially called for other nations to join their 'crusade' against terrorism; he later expressed his regrets for using a term with such a strong historical reference to a religious conflict, but the term continued to be utilized by journalists and commentators in Canadian media (Perigoe & Eid, 2014). Then-Prime Minister Jean Chrétien reproduced the discourse of a cultural attack in his initial speech, including Orientalist undertones by calling it an event impossible to comprehend (alluding to the 'mysterious' nature of the attackers) and an evil (a term of religious judgment) that was 'conjured up' to attack the freedoms of all civilized societies. He also spoke on behalf of the nation pledging to provide assistance to the United States during this time (Perigoe & Eid, 2014), turning the situation into a threat from which Canadians had to defend themselves as well.

Much of the discourses surrounding 9/11 in the media focused on heroizing first responders and describing the American nation as resilient, unified, benevolent, and patriotic (Landy, 2004). The exaltation of these qualities as inherent to their national identity, as well as the discourse of American victimhood and innocence, served as a justification for the retaliation that came with the 'war on terror' and to present the 'enemies' as the opposite of such qualities.

In the following months and years, both Canadian and American mass media produced a consistent discourse regarding Muslim communities; the interchangeable use of Arab imagery and representations to address religion and culture during the previous decades built a factor of racialization into the identity discourse. Faith or cultural practices were not the only factors to represent Islam, but also a categorization of *looking* like a Muslim. The outcomes of this representation in Canada were visible in a poll conducted by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) three weeks after the attacks, where 37 % of Canadians polled expressed increased negative feelings toward "Arabs," and 50 % encouraged racial profiling practices by agreeing with airline, police, and customs officials "giving special attention to individuals of Arabic origin" (Perigoe & Eid, 2014, p. 3). North American journalists had expressed similar support to racial profiling 'for a while' and ran numerous polls to measure the audiences' willingness to enforce restrictions on Arab individuals (Cainkar, 2009).

Rather than a political or ideological conflict, 9/11 was framed as a cultural clash and identified Islam as the target of othering, as a synonym of terrorism. These narratives did not present the terrorist attack as one single tragic event, but as the beginning of a permanent threat that required the population to stay alert and watch out for the enemies. Even a decade after the

attacks, this discourse remained as a 'regime of truth' in Canada reinforced by groups in power. Former Prime Minister Stephen Harper said in 2011 that "Islamicism" was still the biggest threat to Canada, speaking about his plans to combat terrorist activity (CBC News, 2011).

A common element of the identity discourse cemented in North American societies was the lack of Muslim voices to shape it. From the earliest representations of Arab or Muslim groups, their input was excluded from the definition of who they were and how they were different from 'us.' Their intentions were frequently described in the media without a counter-argument from Muslim people. What may have begun as propaganda looking for the population's support to advance the United States' plans of gaining greater control of oil supply, evolved into a prescriptive notion of identity that reinforced racialization and discrimination of Arab and Muslim populations. Turning the 'others' and their identity into a regime of truth that demonizes them and cannot be constructed or modified by them, represents a form of oppression from those who hold power in society, justifying discrimination through discourses that instill fear and uncertainty. It is an exaggerated application of Orientalism, which is ultimately "a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient" (Said, 1978, p. 11).

# **Conclusion: Learned Identities Have Tangible Effects**

This chapter explored the place of education in the formation of a collective national 'self' in relation to the 'others.' It also explained the role of the media as an informal source of learning, and the challenges for individuals to learn and share accurate knowledge when it

conflicts with deeply entrenched assumptions or core beliefs. There are different factors currently creating a space for a variety of discourses and voices in the twenty-first century. The public sphere, and the media consumption habits that feed the conversations in it, have changed significantly in the last few years. Fast access to national and international news online makes information from a myriad sources available to most people with an internet connection and portable devices. We have seen how major events in the United States can influence Canada's sentiments about a situation, how close both nations can become culturally and ideologically when it comes to creating and establishing discourses of the 'others,' despite the ongoing efforts from Canada to differentiate itself from the U.S. as a nation and a culture.

The political turmoil around the world has also brought us to what can be defined as an era of 'post-truth' politics—whether this means that sentiments are prioritized over facts to interpret and interiorize information, or, as Peters (2017) sustains, facts are not futile but "by the time the facts are gathered the media moment has passed, the headline has been grabbed, and the lie can be modified, apologised for or replaced by another" (p. 565). This situation calls for debates that are paramount in the fields of education and communication. People are learning through immediate flows of information that take the discussion about validity of knowledge and educators to a different level, realizing that the main influencers of the topics discussed in the public sphere are, in fact, educating their audiences and followers.

It is also crucial to analyze the tangible impacts of this complicated network of informal learning and identity discourses that have been normalized over the years. In the specific case of Muslim and Arab populations in North America, the impacts of the post-9/11 narrative of fear

around them developed and promoted by mass media were measurable. The number of reported attacks on Muslims in the United States reached over 400 in the year following 9/11. In Canada, the number of attacks grew from less than a dozen to 173 in 2002 (Perigoe & Eid, 2014), and have remained constant with at least 50 every year over the past 5 years. According to the National Council of Canadian Muslims (NCCM), the reported attacks range from hate propaganda, to online and verbal attacks, vandalism, threats, and physical violence. They have been reported from all across Canada, but have remained consistent every year particularly in Ontario, Québéc, and Alberta (NCCM, 2019). Violent attacks have been prominent in the news, like the death threats that forced a Syrian family to close their restaurant as mentioned in chapter 1 (Armus, 2019), and the terrorist attack perpetrated at the Centre Culturel Islamique de Québéc, a mosque in Québéc City, where an armed man killed six Muslim people and injured another eight, including children. The mosque had already been the target of other hate crimes in previous years (Lau et al., 2017; Scotti, 2017).

The oppressive and othering view of Muslim/Arab identity that has been in the making for decades has accompanied entire generations of people in North America. They grew up listening to fear-inducing descriptions of these communities, and learning in frequent informal conversations or news that they were supposed to feel threatened by the umbrella concept of Islam, including people who 'looked Muslim.' Discourses of this kind may have led many of them to see Muslim populations as groups that were not only inconsistent with the Canadian national identity, but directly opposed to it. These citizens are now taking leadership positions in Canada, can influence policy or are able to vote, taking these preconceived representations of

other groups as part of their experience and understanding of the world to make important decisions. This point will be important to consider when we analyze the current discourses about Syrian refugees in the news and how audiences are responding to them.

With so much proof of the influence of discourse (particularly identity discourses and their application to 'othering') in the way different groups in society will interact with each other, we must apply a critical perspective to what is being said in mass platforms, and how it constructs or maintains harmful power relations. In chapter five, I will explain my approach to this project through critical discourse analysis (CDA).

#### Chapter 5

#### **Methodology and Research Design**

In previous chapters, I discussed how socialization is one of the main pillars in the formation and learning of discourses, including the socially constructed representation of the 'self,' both individual and collective; recognition of identity through othering; and how understanding and internalizing new knowledge will be influenced by our previous learning experiences (Blommaert, 2005; Knowles, 1980; Merriam et al., 2007; Orgad, 2012). I explored the dialectical relationship between discourse and power, and how 'scientifically' validated knowledge or discourses create statements or 'regimes of truth' (Foucault, 1977; Hall, 1996; Surber, 1998).

Keeping this background in mind, I would like to turn our attention back to the research questions this project intends to answer: What are the discourses being disseminated publicly on the topic of the mass migration of Syrian refugees to Canada? How do these discourses and perceptions relate to national identity, 'othering' and systemic power relations in Canada? I have chosen critical discourse analysis (CDA) as the methodological framework to address these questions in my research. In this chapter, I explain my considerations about why and how CDA relates to this topic; I also outline the research design and data collection process that guide the data analysis found in chapter 6.

#### Methodology

If, as previously argued, discourse can be defined as "language-into-action" (Hanks, as cited in Blommaert, 2005, p. 2), we are reminded that it has a tangible impact on the social

groups or public spheres where it is used. For this reason, the critical aspect of discourse analysis becomes essential to understand both its roots and its ramifications in society. While discourse analysis deconstructs the text itself and focuses on the linguistics aspect of it, critical discourse analysis must look at the context in which discourse occurs to create connections between it and other objects, sometimes looking at it from different perspectives and disciplines (Fairclough, 2013). Dialectics between discourse and power exist (discourse creating/maintaining power, and power creating discourse) because of these intricate discursive connections.

Norman Fairclough (1992), a frequently cited theorist of CDA, proposes three dimensions of discourse to achieve a holistic analysis: Discourse as text, discourse as discursive practice, and discourse as social practice (pp. 73-96). The first dimension analyzes what is being said (and what words are left out of the conversation); finding rhetoric in text is an important part of this digital media analysis, as it is political language utilized with the purpose of changing beliefs and behaviours (Richardson, 2007). The second dimension, discourse as discursive practice, can be interpreted as how things get to be said. Connecting this aspect of CDA to my own project, it involves looking at the influence of the media over how political and social priorities are shaped in the public sphere. This dimension also creates a bridge to Foucault's (1977) concept of power-knowledge and its importance in the production of discourse. Power produces discourse, and at the same time claims known 'truths' as previous, unquestionable knowledge to interpret the discourse. The third dimension of discourse as social practice, could be understood answering the question of why things are said the way they are. Why do some discourses become 'common knowledge'? It requires a recognition of the dialectics of

ideological causes and effects; discourse has an ideological impact on social practice, but it is likely generated by ideology to begin with. In my critical discourse analysis about Syrian refugees, I connect the data findings to the historical context from chapter 3, which outlines the creation of Canadian nationalist ideologies and the power relations attached to them. Fairclough's CDA draws upon contributions from Gramsci and Althusser to address the weight of ideology in discourse and how discourse contributes to the struggle to maintain hegemony or domination in the social structure, even subconsciously. Hegemony, he argues, is not just about subjugation, but building alliances with the subordinate groups to actually obtain their consent through ideological means (Fairclough, 1992). While Foucault discusses how power creates 'regimes of truth,' there is a similar recognition in critical discourse analysis theory that indicates how ideology can be dissociated from its original class of power group, and become "naturalized." It becomes part of a common sense or "knowledge base" within a social group that is activated through interactions (Fairclough, 2013, p. 37). As I have argued in previous chapters, this phenomenon is inevitably connected to socialization and the way we learn from and with other people from our own group, our collective 'self.'

These dynamic relations between socialization/informal learning, common knowledge, and power relations have been exponentially increased by the changes brought by globalization, neoliberalism, and the immediacy of online access to news. An important premise to discuss the need for CDA as a tool for social analysis is the complex change in circumstances of modern society (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999). New technologies, industrial development, the rapid development of capitalism and neoliberalism, migrations, and more, have led to profound

changes and more complexity in economic and social processes. Fairclough and Chouliaraki argue that these "social forms that are produced by people and can be changed by people are being seen as if they were part of nature" (p. 4), which affects how individuals perceive official structures and power relations that have been institutionalized and embedded as a common context for society. The fact that many of these changes and their consequences are the product of specific groups in pursuit of maintaining a hegemonic state takes a secondary role; it is often considered just 'the way things are.' Even though Fairclough (1992) makes a point to distinguish his theory from Foucault's abstract approach to discourse analysis, this observation does connect the need for a critical approach to discourse analysis with Foucault's view on power as producer of knowledge. People that internalize and reproduce discourses created and reinforced by institutions (Fairclough, 2013) continue the normalization of these changing circumstances to maintain certain power dynamics. It is important for this study to adopt a methodological perspective that connects these discourses with the power groups or historical power relations related to them.

Within the field of critical discourse analysis, in this project I take a specific methodological approach that Norman Fairclough (2013) describes as a "dialectical-relational version of CDA" (p. 230) as the starting point to understand and apply CDA. Its main focus is to identify and understand the dialectical relations between semiosis—meaning behind a system of representation like language (Hall,1997)—and other social elements, to understand how the semiotic aspect plays a role in the establishment and reproduction of power relations and oppression, as well as the ideologies that uphold these relations. The dialectical nature of

semiosis makes this critical discourse analysis research a transdisciplinary one. I consider this approach very fitting for my project, which involves both media and adult learning perspectives to connect discourses with their context and origins to analyze their implications in society.

The dialectical-relational CDA methodology looks at discourse in a broader context and how it turns into action within a social order. It involves linguistic analysis (in this case, including other semiotic forms like images) and interdiscursive analysis. Fairclough (2013) explains interdiscursivity as a 'mediating' form of text and social analysis, of how different genres (ways of acting and interacting), discourses (ways of representing the world from particular perspectives), and styles (ways of identifying or constructing the 'self') are articulated together as part of an event, networks and social practices. He calls these configurations of genres, discourses and styles as "orders of discourse" (p. 74). When looking at orders of discourse in an interdiscursive analysis, we must consider the role of recontextualization, a key concept for Fairclough. He defines it as a 'colonization' of sorts of one field or institution by another or an appropriation of external discourses by particular social agents for a specific purpose or strategy. (Fairclough, 2013).

Since discourse is analyzed according to its influence in social relations or social structures, Fairclough explains how discourse is often operationalized by being enacted (through interaction) or inculcated (by ways of being), two relevant concepts in the realm of informal learning and socialization. My analysis intends to take Fairclough's theory as a cornerstone of an analysis of discourses and representation of Syrian refugees—a look at discourse in the media through this transdisciplinary lens, by pointing out how these previously socialized discourses

are being applied to the practice of news dissemination, and how they influence the Syrian refugees' place in the Canadian social order we know.

## Research Design

#### **Data Collection**

News about the Syrian conflict and refugee crisis, describing the refugees' struggles as they tried to relocate or flee to different European countries, were published in Canada for years. However, news circulated around the world in September 2015 about Syrian child Alan Kurdi, who drowned while he and his family tried to flee to Greece, had a pivotal role in the Canada's federal electoral campaign and the Canadian public sphere overall (CBC News, 2015a; Glavin, 2015a; Omand, 2016; Younglai & Nelson, 2015). The fact that Kurdi had relatives in Canada and could have possibly migrated to them (Glavin, 2015a; The Canadian Press, 2015b) opened an intense public debate about Canada's role in the global resettlement of Syrian refugees and what it meant for the nation to receive them as newcomers.

The time frame during which the largest migration of Syrian refugees occurred in Canada was from November, 2015, to February, 2016. More than 25,000 refugees arrived during this time (Government of Canada, 2020c). Keeping this background in mind and hoping to capture discourses that appeared before, during, and shortly after their arrival, I chose to delimit my data collection to news stories and articles related to Syrian refugees and their arrival in Canada published from September, 2015, through December, 2016.

Ideological positions from those disseminating a discourse are an important aspect to consider for a critical discourse analysis. For this reason, I aimed to collect news stories

published by media outlets with diverse ideological orientations. Data was retrieved from three online news sources with wide national reach: *The National Post*, *The Globe and Mail*, and *CBC News. The National Post* is considered an openly conservative platform (Winter, 2011); an investigation saw then-president Andrew MacLeod calling the media outlet "insufficiently conservative" (Mastracci, 2019). *The Globe and Mail* is classified as "liberal, slightly right-of-centre" (Winter, 2011, p. 96); looking at past editorials of endorsement for federal elections, it shows a mix of support for conservative and liberal governments (The Globe and Mail, 2015b). Publicly funded CBC has been constantly referred to as a left-leaning or liberal-biased source of news, to the extent that former Prime Minister Stephen Harper suggested many people at Radio-Canada (CBC's francophone division) hate conservative values (Hopper, 2015a).

The choices of media sources considered their national readership, in order to be truly representative of prevalent discourses in the Canadian public sphere. *The National Post* and *The Globe and Mail* distribute their news nationally in print format as well, while CBC makes use of television channels and radio stations; however, for this particular project I will only focus on written stories that were published on the three media platforms' news websites. The 2019 *Newspapers 24/7 Report* revealed that weekly readership of newspapers in Canada was at a high 88%; while many readers still access print, 52% added digital content to their news reading habits (News Media Canada, 2019). Vividata reports placed *The Globe and Mail*'s national weekday readership at 2.14 million, and *The National Post*'s at 1.4 million in 2018, both gaining tens of thousands of new readers specifically on digital platforms (Rody, 2018). Digital

interactions from CBC/Radio-Canada for the 2018-2019 period were measured at 163.1 million (CBC/Radio-Canada, 2019).

To find the news articles, I used each site's online search tool. I developed a broad set of keywords to search on every site, based on population (Syrian), timeframe (2015-2016), status (refugees), event (refugee crisis), and location (Canada). In order to maintain a manageable collection for analysis, I did not include news about Syrian refugees that did not have direct connection to Canada, the Canadian government, or their potential resettlement to Canada. This excluded news about Syrian refugee camps across the world, or news stories that involved Syrian refugees in European countries or the United States. The search yielded a total of 804 news stories, letters from readers, and articles identified as opinion pieces (including editorials and analyses from journalists) between all the chosen media platforms, distributed as explained in the table below. The complete list of articles can be found in Appendix A.

**Table 1**Distribution of News Articles Sample

News website	News stories	Opinion/Analysis	Letters from readers	Total
The National Post	155	61	7	223
The Globe and Mail	223	28	0	251
CBC News	318	12	0	330

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> The following keywords were used for this search: Syrian refugees 2015 news; Syrian refugees 2015; Syrian refugees arrive to Canada 2016; "Syrian refugee crisis" Canada; Syrian refugee crisis 2015; Syrian refugees in Canada; Syrian refugees migration Canada 2015 2016.

*Note*. The articles are categorized as opinion or analysis pieces as explicitly marked by the media outlet. Some articles that I would have categorized as opinion pieces are not categorized as such on the news website.

Even though the focus of critical discourse analysis lies traditionally in textual structures (Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000), I refer to chapter 2 to argue that visual representations are part of discourses and assumptions in society. My analysis of the sample collected considers the images utilized to illustrate news stories, particularly in the cases where the story did not refer to a specific person that was interviewed, and a stock image was published with the article in reference to Syrian refugees. How media sites chose to represent the Syrian refugees as a general group is one more angle to identify the discourses they are disseminating to their audiences<sup>3</sup>.

## **Data Analysis**

In chapter 6, I analyze the data collected following the stages and steps of Fairclough's (2013) dialectical-relational CDA framework described below. I will note that I do not divide my analysis by steps within each stage, to maintain the general flow of the analysis. However, each section of chapter 6 is meant to present a stage of Fairclough's CDA methodology, with all their steps covered within my analysis.

# Stage One: Focus Upon A Social Wrong In Its Semiotic Aspect

In this framework, social wrongs are defined as aspects of social systems that are harmful or detrimental to people's well-being, which could possibly be decreased or eliminated even if it

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> While there are relevant visual methodologies that could be applied specifically to the photo analysis separately, considering the semiotic aspects behind image production, circulation, and audience interpretation (Rose, 2016), I am limiting the scope of this study to following Fairclough's methodology approach overall, to maintain consistency with the dialectical-relational view of the topic.

ought to be through significant changes in these social systems or structures (Fairclough, 2013). This stage has two steps:

- Select a research topic related to a social wrong, which can be approached in a transdisciplinary manner by focusing on dialectical relations between semiotic and other social aspects.
- 2. Construct objects of research within the identified research topic, and theorize them in a transdisciplinary way.

Even though significant information related to this stage has been revealed through my research questions and previous chapters, I address stage one in chapter 6 by explaining the general social wrong I connect with Syrian refugees in Canada, clarifying why I consider it a social wrong, and specifying the research topic that becomes the focus of my analysis. For this purpose, I draw upon the background chapters from this project to weave a 'journey' that has created this social wrong. This analysis merges with the first step in stage two.

# Stage Two: Identify Obstacles To Addressing The Social Wrong

In this stage, Fairclough asks about the aspects of the current social structure that might be preventing the aforementioned social wrong from being addressed, through semiotic analysis of the social order. It includes three steps:

 Analyze dialectical relations between semiosis and other elements, orders of discourse (defined in the methodology section) and other elements of social practices and events.
 Fairclough emphasizes in this step that political texts are a crucial part of political events.

- 2. Select texts, focuses and categories to analyze them related to the chosen object of research.
- 3. Conduct an analysis of texts from interdiscursive and semiotic perspectives.

As mentioned above, the first step of this stage is merged in the chapter with the analysis of the social wrong. The dialectic relations between historical orders of discourse related to Canada's national identity and the effect they had in the power relations that exist in the current nation-state (and are still socialized within the imagined community of the Canadian nation) are a crucial part of how the social wrong came to be, and those dialectics are related to the discourses and social practices we see today.

For step two I have detailed in this chapter the selected texts (digital media articles) to be analyzed, and I revisit this step in my analysis to reinforce the connection with the object of research. It is expanded along with step three in chapter 6: The interdiscursive aspect becomes a connector of texts with social practice. In my analysis, I identify recurring categories of discourses that are related to the representation of Syrian refugees in the texts, and connect the semiotic aspect of these discourses (what meaning they are conveying, what they are representing) with aspects of socialization of the Canadian identity, othering and racism. I indicate historical sources of discourse studied in previous chapters that I see being recontextualized and reflected in the current news articles—similarities and how they relate to the social practices of news reporting, government policy, politics, electoral campaigns, actions and reactions of Canadians related to the national identity and othering aspects.

## Stage Three: Consider Whether The Social Order 'Needs' The Social Wrong

The idea of 'needing' a social wrong may seem odd when conducting a type of discourse analysis that is meant to find power imbalances with the purpose of driving social change. However, Fairclough explains this stage as a way to analyze if the social wrong is inherent to the social structures as we know them, if it would be possible to address that social wrong within the social order without significantly disrupting it, or if it would only be possible by changing the social structure. It involves an analysis about society and whether or not it is worth keeping social structures if they only seem to function with the social wrongs they produce.

In my project, this stage involves considerations about the relevant ideologies sustaining the social structure (already covered in chapter 3) and how they are related to sustaining those social wrongs or power relations. After identifying and analyzing discourses related to Syrian refugees in the previous stage, and how they relate to national identity and current social practice, I analyze whether these discourses are necessary to uphold the power relations of the Canadian nation and the structure as we know it today, or they could be avoided without changing the current system.

# Stage Four: Identify Possible Ways Past The Obstacles

In this stage, Fairclough intends to identify possible ways to overcome the obstacles found in the previous stage within current social processes. He argues this must be done with a semiotic focus; for example, considering ways in which the dominant discourses could be contested and opposed, whether it is with organized political groups, or informally by people in their every-day lives. My analysis includes thoughts and recommendations moving forward that

could potentially address, or at least contest the social wrong, based on my discursive findings and the practices they influence.

#### **Trustworthiness**

Critical discourse analysis itself has been subjected to significant critique because of its mission to conduct an analysis in relation to power relations, with the goal to address social inequalities. It faces the challenge of showing validity while rejecting the positivist concept of objectivity or neutrality and maintaining a commitment to denounce injustice and look for social change.

In her publication regarding CDA frameworks for educational research, Mullet (2018) provides a collection of several authors' criteria of trustworthiness to build a general guideline for qualitative rigor in critical discourse analysis. For this project, I draw applicable principles from this guide like reflexivity, adequacy of data, adequacy of interpretation, theoretical triangulation, and accessibility. I have explained the criterion of reflexivity in my positionality statement; I expand on the other applicable principles below. Other criteria in this guide, such as consequential validity (the amplification of perspectives of the oppressed or disempowered) might not be entirely applicable, given that my study does not include interviews or opinions of Syrian refugees.

# **Adequacy of Data**

Paraphrasing Lincoln & Guba, Mullet (2018) summarizes this criterion with completeness of evidence (no new findings would be revealed by new data), an adequate data collection strategy, and use of multiple sources for data collection. These principles are present in my research design through the following practices. Data collected for this study included three

different sources with different ideological and editorial approaches with the aim of providing room for diverse perspectives and comparison of discourses. The choice of timeframe for data collection (15 months) aims to encompass pieces from the dates when the topic of the Syrian refugee crisis was most relevant and prevalent in Canadian news (before, during, and immediately after the biggest resettlement of Syrian refugees in Canada). It also helped contain the data to a point where redundancy of information was found. I hope the keywords specified in my search for news and opinion articles clarify the scope of the type of stories on which I wanted to focus.

## **Adequacy of Interpretation**

Meeting the criterion of having a clear analytical framework, I have specified my choice of CDA guided by Fairclough's dialectical-relational methodology in the data analysis detailed above. I approach the data collected through an analytical framework that allows me to consider discourses about Syrian refugees within the mass communication aspect and practices of news reporting, in a transdisciplinary way understanding how they are informed by informal learning and socialization of the Canadian national 'self' and the others. By identifying recontextualization of other discourses, I can establish the dialectics between discourse, social practice, and power relations.

## **Theoretical Triangulation**

Mullet (2018) summarizes four levels of context that should be present in a critical discourse analysis: Immediate language; interdiscursive relations; immediate social context; and broad social context. I believe Fairclough's methodology addresses these levels at its different

stages to establish a clear context. The news and images selected and analyzed provide the immediate language through the stages of text analysis. Interdiscursive relations can be traced from the semiotic point of entry of the analysis (discussed in chapter 6) and Fairclough's emphasis on interdiscursivity, which I tie to the historical sources of discourses discussed in previous chapters. These historical sources, as well as the transdisciplinary aspect of the methodology that allows me to apply the lens of socialization and nationalism, help provide the broader context of the Canadian national identity in its connection to the social wrong and research topic, also related to the immediate social context of the federal election and the mass resettlement of Syrian refugees.

## Accessibility

This criterion is met when "findings are readable and comprehensible by the social groups under investigation" (Mullet, 2018, p. 121). By collecting data that is publicly accessible through media, and keeping my findings clear, I intend for this research to be accessible and comprehensible to those involved, and to hopefully inform further conversations and studies on this subject.

## **Ethical Considerations**

In addition to the trustworthiness aspect mentioned above, it is important to mention the ethics of critique itself in research. Judgement is considered 'moral' to some extent; Graham (2018) argues that it might be considered dishonest to approach critical discourse analysis under the pretense that there is no 'moral pursuit' in our critique. However, the principles that guide that morality are set by the agents and actions analyzed rather than a preconceived set of

principles that should be followed. He emphasizes the importance of absolute clarity in what we are studying, how, and with what purpose, so it can transparently guide the critique in its context, and in relation to our purpose. While we can judge discourse as action and, therefore, as a product of choices by the social agents or groups involved, the motivations and context that provide an understanding of our critique will be informed by our own clear research objectives.

Similar considerations about deontology (acting out of a 'sense of duty' by following an inalterable set of rules) being problematic for CDA are found in the work of Roderick (2018). He indicates that our values as researchers to make such judgements should come from a recognition of a relation between self and 'other' in the discourse and social context, and establish those values from the perspective of the needs of that 'other.'

Taking both authors' arguments into this project, the purpose of my research is not only to find the discourses related to Syrian refugees in Canada, but also to relate them to their origins and context through an understanding of mass media as a source of informal learning for large audiences. Since CDA, as Graham (2018) notes, is ethical in its aim to transform values and actions to achieve a more equal and fair social scene for all groups, my work intends to find these connections so they can be addressed in both fields of adult education and mass communication.

## **Positionality**

Speaking about the role of the researcher rather than just the general ethics of CDA, one of the most common debates related to this discipline is centred around the possibility of researchers' own political biases affecting the critical analysis and establishing aspects of context

for the discourses studied (Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000; Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999; Schegloff, 1997). Widdowson (1995) called CDA an interpretation exercise rather than an analysis, arguing that "whereas analysis recognises its own partiality, interpretation of its nature must suspend that recognition." (p. 159). Even though CDA does entail an analysis of dialectical social elements that can be explained beyond interpretation or preference, Widowson's point is echoed in what Roderick (2018) calls the problem of critique as "demystification" (p. 163). He explains that the idea of critical discourse analysis as the 'uncovering' of relations of oppression in society, assuming the groups being studied are completely oblivious to the existence of these power relations, can present a problem of both ethics and trustworthiness. This approach would place the researcher in a higher position, looking to reveal truths that others are unable to see, without the recognition of the researcher's own biases, and ideological and social backgrounds. I take this as an important point to consider in my positionality as a researcher and my choice of methodology.

Even though saying that these discourses and the power relations they maintain are seen by society "as if they were part of nature" (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999, p. 4) may seem like a demystifying perspective around CDA, the previous chapters in this project support a distinction between the problem of demystification, and the analysis of the role that informal learning plays into the upholding of current social structures. Practices and discourses that have been internalized and reproduced as part of socialization may not necessarily be a secret to the groups involved, or the product of a complex ruse to deceive them. I believe Fairclough's

methodology rather indicates how these discourses and structures become normalized and embedded in society, so they are not questioned or challenged as frequently.

To avoid a demystifying critique that would remove me from the topic and social groups I'm studying, I refer to the concept of reflexivity as explained by Rogers (2004). Reflexivity entails an acknowledgment that the researcher is inherently part of the subject matter they are trying to address. In this case, it involves a recognition that I am part of the data gathering, the audience, and the method to analyze the data. This acknowledgment comes hand-in-hand with the concept of 'bracketing,' which, commonly thought as an exercise to understand and 'set aside' biases and assumptions as a researcher at the beginning of the project, can be enhanced by keeping these assumptions present throughout the entire research and informing perspectives about data collected and analyzed (Fischer, 2009).

Using my analysis about socialization and informal learning from chapter 2 as a starting point for a reflexivity/bracketing exercise, I acknowledge that all interpretations made of the data collection and the conclusions reached are inevitably influenced by previous experiences (including my thoughts and experiences as an immigrant described in chapter 1), worldview, and knowledge acquired, which may include subconscious biases and assumptions that have been internalized over the years. I believe this would be the case for any researcher approaching a qualitative analysis of data, given that socialization is a longlife experience for almost all individuals.

I will add to this reflexivity practice that my experience in the field of mass communication has an influence over the way I look at media discourse; however, approaching this study from the field of education provides a new perspective of dialectics for me as a researcher to understand and analyze these discourses. I think it is important to mention as well that, even though my experience as an immigrant positions me in a particular way analyzing discourses of migration and refugees, the fact that I was not born and raised in Canada could be considered a factor to minimize personal biases related to discourses of Canadian history, Canadian nationalism, and identity, which I did not learn through Canadian formal education institutions (as covered in chapters 3 and 4). It is my intention to keep these considerations transparent and relevant to position my analysis.

#### **Other Studies**

Media discourses about Syrian refugees have been the subject of research in the past. Previous critical discourse analyses regarding Canadian media discourses about Syrian refugees include Tyyskä et al. (2018), and Mustafa & Pilus (2020), covering a smaller collection of news articles in different selections of media outlets and digital channels. A discourse analysis by Economou (2019) focuses on the implications of newspaper discourses for health outcomes of Syrian newcomers to Canada from an anthropological perspective.

Another study, although not exclusively addressing discourses about Syrian refugees, could be considered relevant because of the overall subject matter. Murdocca (2020) studied the discourse of humanitarian compassion as racial governance affecting Indigenous populations, refugees and others in Ontario.

While the studies found address similar topics in terms of discourses of racism and othering toward Syrian refugees, they do not approach them from an adult education perspective.

With my research, I intend to contribute an additional perspective to a topic that has been notorious and relevant enough to capture the attention of several researchers in their own fields.

#### Limitations

In order to maintain a manageable scope of data for this project, my study does not include the comments and reactions posted as a response to the news articles and pieces. Since not all stories received comments on the news website, but rather on social media posts, this would expand the data collection in some cases to thousands of comments per article, and some media sites might publish the same story more than once on different channels, getting new responses every time. However, I believe that future research including the audience's side could provide more findings about how readers are understanding the news, and how their own learned assumptions are reflected in their comments.

Another potential limitation could be the choice of certain authors such as Anderson (1991) and Habermas (2006) for my theoretical framework. Anderson's view of the media landscape to explain the initial stages of the dissemination of nationalism cannot take into consideration all the technological advances that have occurred in the decades after his publication. In the case of Habermas, his classical concept of the public sphere has been recently critiqued for its adherence to the Westphalian frame of the nation-state and this political space, questioning the legitimacy and efficacy of the public opinion in this concept because of the effects of inequality (Fraser, 2007).

I will clarify that, in both cases, my intention was to provide core concepts to define them more clearly and have them as a reference in my subsequent analysis. Anderson's view is meant

to contribute to a definition of national identity and nationalism, whose concept of the imagined community becomes particularly relevant in my perspective of social learning through discourse. While his mention of the first uses of media to disseminate official nationalism is present to provide a historical reference, it was complemented with further information about the current media landscape. The core concept of the imagined community, however, does not necessarily change with new media platforms and interactive channels. In the case of Habermas, the public sphere as a concept is meant to provide a general idea of how social learning from news and political affairs can occur, regardless of specific platforms and locations—we could consider very specific public spheres that are relevant to places or groups and acknowledge inequality as a factor in reduced access to these spaces for some. However, for the purpose of this study I am placing an emphasis on the broadened access provided by online news and communities to create and produce public discussions.

#### Conclusion

This chapter explored the key aspects of critical discourse analysis (CDA) as a research tool that connects discourse and meaning with social issues and the imbalanced power relations that produce them. I chose CDA as a way to look at learning and socialization with a focus on these power relations, and how they may or may not be reflected in our daily communications with each other, including communication through informal sources of knowledge like mass media. The research design and methodology I chose to guide my CDA about representation of Syrian refugees in articles from Canadian news sites is based on Norman Fairclough's dialectical-relational approach (2013). It provides the framework to analyze discourse from

different perspectives, considering the complexities of how some disciplines and ideologies affect others in society, and how orders of discourse (and discursive formations, as Foucault argued) are created through the curation of discourses from multiple sources that are recontextualized to apply certain perspectives or messages to a new situation. This aspect is key to the analysis of representation of self and others through discourse, and what is assumed as common background knowledge for a news reader.

Previous chapters touched on relevant aspects of the development of the Canadian national identity in the context of colonization and exclusion, Orientalism and Arabophobia, adult learning and socialization, and the role of media as a channel between power structures and people in the public sphere. The important (dialectical) relation between discourse and power was discussed, taking Foucault's theoretical approach as the foundation. In my data analysis, I connect all these topics to explain discourses of identity in Canadian society and create the broader context for analysis. By bringing these chapters together, I intend to show the relevance of these areas in the creation of media discourses today.

Keeping in mind the ethical considerations and my own positionality as a researcher, with my own socialized knowledge, unconscious biases, and beliefs, I aim to conduct an analysis that binds text with meaning and context as accurately as possible. This analysis is intended to serve as a starting point of an ongoing conversation that is timely and increasingly needed in the current global context, where digital media, and the variety of discourses in it, has an undeniable influence on how audiences view political events and social change.

#### Chapter 6

#### Media Discourses About Syrian Refugees in Canada: A Critical Discourse Analysis

The previous chapter explained the methodology that I apply to my research and analysis of media discourses. In the span of 15 months, I identified several discourses in digital news pieces from three different Canadian media sites. Some are directly related to general perceptions of identity of Syrian refugees, while others place attributes of refugees in relation to another social element or structure. Since many of these discourses are created from a lens of 'othering,' I have identified discourses of Canadian national identity against which the refugees' perceived identity discourses are compared or described.

In this chapter, I discuss and analyze my findings following the four stages of a dialectical-relational approach to critical discourse analysis (CDA) (Fairclough, 2013), as described in chapter 5: (1) Focusing on a social wrong from a semiotic aspect; (2) identifying obstacles to addressing the social wrong; (3) considering whether the social structure 'needs' the social wrong; (4) identifying possible ways past the obstacles. I intend to present the stages as chapter sections with clarity and distinction from one another as possible; however, as indicated by Fairclough, these are not necessarily sequential stages and they overlap with each other in the establishment of dialectical relations between all elements.

## 1. Social Wrong and Research Topic

To define a 'social wrong,' I will apply a wider lens to the topics I have been discussing in previous chapters. While a broad research topic related to this project can be the outcomes of immigration in Canada, a specific social wrong stemming from it will be the marginalization of

newcomers (in this particular case, Syrian refugees) and the social division that exists between them and the rest of the Canadian population. An important aspect of the social wrong is the fact that, as a part of a social system or order, it becomes detrimental to human well-being (Fairclough, 2013). I argue that such social division meets this requirement from many angles: It is detrimental to the well-being of refugees themselves, their mental health and their ability to thrive in a new environment. It hinders peaceful social relations and interactions, from the isolation of refugees from the community, to altercations and hate crimes. Division and discrimination have cultural and political implications when a country that is self-proclaimed as multicultural fails to truly integrate newcomers as part of its diversity. There is an impact on the economy as well; as shown in chapter 3, the hurdles experienced by newcomers when employers do not want to hire them regardless of their qualifications or experience leave them vulnerable and unable to improve their quality of life, increasing inequality in this society. Local governments face the outcomes of more people (who are able and keen to work) needing financial assistance because of unemployment.

I have shaped the object of research throughout the chapters by analyzing and connecting theories of nationalism and their presence in the formation of the 'Canadian identity' with theories of socialization as a key part of learning and the representation of individual and collective identities. The following summary highlights the main transdisciplinary theoretical perspectives that have been discussed and ties them with the research focus.

At the core of the division between those considered 'Canadians' and newcomer populations is the socialized construction of who qualifies as Canadian and who does not.

Previously, we have studied socialization as the processes through which individuals become part of a society (Brown, 1976). Learning in society (or learning to become part of a society) implies the existence of an in-group to which the individual belongs, distinctive from the out-group (everyone else), and the knowledge and worldview within the in-group is reinforced through consensus (Hogg & Abrams, 1988; Tajfel & Turner, 2004). The shared knowledge includes the development of assumptions and meaning schemes (beliefs, judgments, feelings) and points of view informed by those schemes which will likely 'fit in' with the group (Mezirow, 2002). Most importantly, however, includes the understanding of a collective identity, created and interiorized through systems of representation unique to the culture of this group (Hall, 1997; Orgad, 2012). This collective 'self' reinforces the in-group when it is recognized and validated by others, solidifying an awareness of difference (Blommaert, 2005). Many of the meaning schemes and points of view learned in society reflect the collective identity.

The Canadian identity, much like that of other nations, responds to the construction of a national collective 'self' through principles of nationalism, developed and enforced by the nation-state. If the nation is a sovereign imagined community that assumes a shared knowledge and a common vision between its members (Anderson, 1991; Guibernau, 1996; Jusdanis, 2001; Smith, 2010), it is understood as an in-group that its members have learned to recognize as part of their 'self,' as well as the supposed shared values or beliefs that are inherent to the nationality.

However, it is important to remember that the nation-state utilizes this affinity (through official nationalism) as a way to instill solidarity, loyalty and compliance among its members, while it asserts dominance against other out-groups (in this case, other nations and their

nation-states). Given that the collective 'self' needs distinction and recognition from the others, the national identity is built and propagated by exalting qualities of what the national individual is supposed to be—the 'desirable' national citizen—and categorizing such qualities as superior to the other nations (Thobani, 2007). A historical review in chapter 3 shows that the exalted Canadian national was constructed as a mirror of the white British colonizer and their cultural assumptions and beliefs: A self-categorization as a strong 'nordic race,' virtuous with exemplary morals because of Christianity, hardy, resilient, and civilized (Berger, 1966; Thobani, 2007). Racialization was utilized as a common factor to separate the 'self' from the undesirables and the out-groups, assigning lower moral qualities to other 'races' and justifying the quest for permanent domination that nationalism promotes. This British (and eventually Canadian) nationalism sought to eliminate and replace the life and customs of out-groups in the land that did not conform to the desirable identity, starting with the violent colonization of Indigenous peoples, and later expanding this comparison and dominance to immigrants from other nations that were not considered white or from the superior 'North.' As described in chapter 3, these principles of Canadian official nationalism have informed and justified political decisions about immigration throughout the nation-state's history, despite the addition of multiculturalism as part of the national identity.

The fact that the Canadian nation-state's practices of domination and oppression need to find traction in principles that must be common and accepted knowledge in order for the national members to support (or at least not hinder) the cause, leads to the discourses of official nationalism being socialized through different systems, including formal education and mass

communication. I return to Foucault's 'regime of truth and error' or regime of truth, a collection of discourses created and disseminated by those groups in power to maintain and excuse those relations of domination, and which are given a quality of 'true' unquestionable knowledge because of the validation of the power structures (Foucault et al., 2003).

The use of discourse to perpetuate official nationalism and power relations in the nation is relevant in adult learning, particularly in the processes of socialization and creation of points of view through media consumption. The public sphere as defined by Habermas (2006) and the topics that become relevant in it to spark discussion and judgment of the political groups in power, are largely influenced by the media. In this project, our focus is the influence of news in the development and socialization of that knowledge, and how it presents topics and stories related to the resettlement of Syrian refugees.

This leads us to the semiotic point of entry for this critical discourse analysis, which is the analysis of the representation and processes of 'othering' as an emphasis of difference (Blommaert, 2005) to reinforce in-group/out-group dynamics in the Canadian nation. These processes occur taking the ideal of the Canadian national as the point of reference against which the 'others' will be evaluated.

## 2. Media Discourses and Obstacles to Addressing Discrimination Against Syrian Refugees

The context provided above is crucial to understand the complex dialectics of social aspects creating discourse, and discourse creating or reinforcing social processes and structures. Immigration has always been a political topic. Policies have been created to address it, and it is a frequent point of debate in the Canadian public sphere. As Fairclough (2013) states, "political

texts are not some superficial embroidery upon political events but a fundamental, constitutive part of them" (p. 244). In the case of the resettlement of Syrian refugees in 2015, the dialectics became more obvious with a federal election fastly approaching in Canada and the overlap of these two events in the news. It is possible to see how the semiotic aspect of the 'othering' practices towards Syrian refugees is related to other social elements or 'moments' in the Canadian reality. These processes shape political decisions such as immigration policy, influence vote intention, and change the mediatic priority some news events take in media outlets. They also influence public opinion and social interactions; as seen in the surveys mentioned in chapter 1 and the experiences of economic migrants in chapter 3, there has been a disconnect between Canada's official welcoming 'call' for newcomers and the documented reactions of different sectors of the population towards them. Media is at the centre of these processes through reporting and opinion pieces, reflecting the development of these processes, and sometimes feeding them as well.

The starting point of Canada's largest plan for refugee resettlement—as well as the ongoing conversation in the media and the public sphere about what refugees would mean to Canada as a nation—was, indeed, propelled by the effect of a mediatic publication. A photo of Alan Kurdi, a Syrian toddler who drowned and washed ashore on the coasts of Turkey after his family tried to flee to Greece, was shared around the world causing general shock and outrage. The fact that Kurdi had relatives in Canada, in addition to conversations about immigration policy amid the upcoming federal election, provided the foundation for a discussion on what

Canada's role should be in the Syrian refugee crisis. It set the stage to talk about Syrian refugees, and about Canadians in relation or comparison to Syrian refugees.

The 804 news and opinion pieces selected from three main Canadian digital news sites (*The National Post, The Globe and Mail*, and CBC News) produced several recurring themes and discourses, most of them present somehow in all the websites. My focus remained on discourses that presented interaction between identities (or perceived identities), and 'othering'—descriptions of Syrian refugees, references to the Canadian national 'self,' comparisons between the two, and mentions of Syrian refugees in connection to politics and political parties as well. In my analysis below, I list each recurring discourse found and the way media outlets approached it. I also refer to stock images utilized to accompany the news stories and their contributions to said discourses. I connect these common themes to other discourses that have been drawn upon from my historical and theoretical reviews from past chapters.

It is important to note that, from the total collection of news and opinion articles, some of them include several of the discourses found, while others do not include any of them and were not found to present any other recurring theme or category.

# Discourse 1: Syrian Refugees Coming to Canada as a Reflection of Canada's Humanitarian Values and Nature

As mentioned above, Alan Kurdi's photo in the news gave rise to a heated political debate about Canada's humanitarian values and whether or not the actions taken by the Canadian government at the time to provide aid were consistent with Canada doing its 'fair share.'

However, there is a consistent discourse of humanitarian aid to Syrian refugees as a component

of Canadian identity in the stories analyzed. Several articles present politicians, activists, columnists, religious groups, and members of the communities expressing agreement with the idea of bringing more Syrian refugees to Canada and connecting their desire to welcome refugees with qualities unique to Canada's national identity.

Out of the 187 news pieces that included this discourse, most were from *The Globe and Mail*, followed closely by CBC News, and fewer on *The National Post*. On all sites, this topic was more present during 2015, with emphasis in September when Alan Kurdi's photo was in discussion, and later in the year when Syrian refugees began to arrive.

An opinion piece in *The National Post* compared Canada's response to the Syrian refugee crisis so far with the resettlement of Vietnamese refugees during the 1970s, describing Canada's response from decades past as "an outpouring of generosity and humanitarian enthusiasm" (McParland, 2015a, para. 1) that was not being shown for those fleeing Syria. The headline of the article is "Syrian crisis is a chance for Canada to show its generosity." By taking in more refugees, the author says, "Canada has a chance to demonstrate it is an honourable country" (para. 8).

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, while still a candidate for the election, urged the federal government to take in more Syrian refugees as soon as possible. The news story quotes him saying that "Canadians get it. This is about doing the right thing, about living up to the values that we cherish as a country" (CBC News, 2015a, para. 13). The statement of Canadian identity appears in other quotes from politicians and columnists saying the acceptance and sponsorship of Syrian refugees is "who we are as Canadians" (Coyne, 2015, para. 14), that providing help is

remembering "what it means to be Canadian" (Hill, 2015, para. 7), and that "we are a compassionate and immigrant-positive country" (Wente, 2015, para. 2), just to name a few examples. Syrian refugees in Canada become a confirmation of Canadian national values and an opportunity to show those values to the world, something that Canadians will certainly 'get.' In Trudeau's quote, there is no specification about whether the word 'Canadians' is meant to identify people holding Canadian citizenship, people who live in Canada regardless of their immigration status, or people born and raised in Canada, which leaves an open question about who is included in the word 'we' when he says "we cherish." There is a separation between this imagined national 'self' that will automatically relate to these values, and the 'others' who may not understand, and therefore are not Canadian.

The othering of Syrian refugees for not 'getting it' becomes present in a different news story. At the arrival of a group of Syrian refugees in Winnipeg in October 2015, Barbara Wynes, chair of Refuge Winnipeg, said, "I guess the first thing is to teach them is (sic) how welcoming people are (...) then we will show them about Winnipeg and how we live here and how we accept and enjoy the diversity of Manitoba" (CBC News, 2015c, para. 8). The welcoming nature of people in Canada is described as something to be *taught*, reinforcing the collective self as something constructed through social learning. There is an implicit assumption that Syrian refugees do not know that acceptance is a Canadian value, or that they do not have acceptance of difference as a value in their own culture, therefore Canadian people must teach them about it.

In this discourse, most prominent during the months preceding the mass resettlement of Syrian refugees in Canada and as their arrival was reported, refugees are constantly represented in a secondary role, mostly as 'beneficiaries' of Canadian inherent values, where the identity of Canadians takes priority and is exalted through the Syrian refugees' presence. On all three news websites, the articles provide opinions from the columnists, as well as quotes mostly from politicians, refugee sponsors, and members of organizations speaking about the suffering of Syrian refugees and why receiving them is the honourable thing to do for Canadians. A role is allocated to Syrian refugees through passivation (van Leeuwen, 2008) in the news: The articles are not focused on the activity of immigration, but on the action of accepting and welcoming refugees, placing them at the receiving end of Canadians' kindness. While Syrian refugees are named constantly in these news and opinion articles, their identity is deemphasized to highlight the Canadian identity in relation to them. Their role as 'others' is allocated still in a passive and beneficiary manner, through the assumption of difference—what they do not know and need to be taught about how Canadians are.

A few exemptions to this passivation are curated quotes from Syrian refugees that exalt Canadian heroic and humanitarian values, or reinforce otherness and cultural stereotypes for Syrians and other nearby nations. In a CBC story published to introduce a few Syrian and Iraqi refugees and families arriving or already living in Calgary, the only direct quote included from the Alromhien family from Syria under a "journey, ambitions and experience" subtitle was, "We find more humanity here than in Arab nations," attributed to the father of the family (Aldous, 2015a, para. 24). The quote is repeated and presented separately with larger text in the body of the story for emphasis. Every other piece of information about this family was paraphrased by

the author. The same story features the Hashim family. The photo of the father has a caption with the only quote from him, "This country saved our lives" (para. 25).

The identity discourse of Canadians as particularly humanitarian in these news pieces is recontextualized from historical recognition by international organizations, the explicit mention of Canada's humanitarian ideals in the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* (Government of Canada, 2001), as mentioned in chapter 1, and subsequent mentions in official government websites and media. Bringing this discourse to the conversation in relation to—and in contrast to—Syrian refugees, all the media sites analyzed included texts related to this national quality without a need to expand or explain more about it. In previous chapters, I discussed that journalists in media define a 'starting point' to provide information to the public, for which they need to assume that the audience shares a general sociocultural context, and there is a foundation of basic shared knowledge that will not need to be explained in order to report news (Van Dijk, 2008a). The Canadian national 'self' represented in this case is considered general knowledge that has been previously acquired by the readers. Statements about the humanitarian values of Canadians are published without further clarification. It is such an ingrained part of the learned identity, that authors do not seem to think it needs an explanation. It reinforces the comment that it is, indeed, expected of Canadians to 'get it.'

Studying the discourse of Syrian refugees as a representation of Canadian values from Fairclough's perspective of interdiscursivity as an essential part of a relational-dialectical analysis (2013), the style (way to construct the 'self') used here that is extracted from the constructed and collectively learned Canadian national identity intersects with similar discourses

(representations of the world) and genres (interactions) that have been present in Canadian history and policy for centuries. These aspects of self and otherness solidify power relations and discourses of superiority and domination that I have mentioned in previous chapters. In many of the news stories and opinion articles analyzed, quotes and comments about Canadian values are often accompanied by similar texts providing justifications of why Syrian refugees deserve to be recipients of such Canadian generosity. While there are explicit mentions of the shock from Alan Kurdi's case as the catalyst for reflection and humanitarian action, Syrian refugees are often associated with words like 'poor,' 'desperate,' 'ragged,' 'wretched,' and 'needy' (Andrew-Gee, 2015; CBC Radio, 2015; Glavin, 2015b; Renzetti, 2015). In chapter 3, I discussed the vulnerability of refugees in comparison to economic migrants, and how they need to be deemed as 'deserving' by several governmental and international organizations to be resettled due to the lack of a cumbersome process like the one those designated as 'skilled workers' go through. Historic discourses of the 'deserving poor,' as argued in that previous chapter, have placed a judgment for years on those newcomers needing help or welfare, based on their ability to contribute to the economy and be morally desirable—when 'idleness' is considered a sin, the preference is those who emulate the model of the Christian hardworking man (Trattner, 1984). As argued, refugees could be seen as 'less deserving' of relocation to Canada because they have not proven their skills to contribute to the economy, but this media discourse presents Syrian refugees as desirable from a charitable perspective rather than as equal members of the Canadian community.

The representation of Syrian refugees through this lens of desperation and the emphasized need to be saved by Canadians takes us to the construction of Canadian nationalism in chapter 3 Starting with the reminder that nationalism is meant to be a tool for colonization and dominance, it is possible to see the learned and interiorized 'self' of the desired Canadian (white, Christian) that is kind to the less fortunate. Since the racial categorizations developed at the time the Canadian nation-state was built presented 'southern races' as those in need of the 'nordic,' superior people's help to properly build a good life (basically, to 'save them from themselves,' which would explain Syrian refugees' passivation as social actors in the discourse), the contradiction with the Canadian myth of multiculturalism becomes more apparent. The welcoming discourse comes from a place of superiority and is presented as temporary or conditional. The National Post's readers' letters section in September, 2015, titled "Fixing the refugee mess" (Letters, 2015a), included opinions from Canadian readers about how the government should address the Syrian refugee crisis. In these texts, some proposed that Canadian citizens used the upcoming election to decide if they actually wanted refugees to come in; others emphasized that, while Syrian refugees deserved Canadian compassion, it was important to make sure they were really needy and not just economic migrants trying to "take advantage" (para. 18). Several opinions stated that Canada could not take so many people in, and suggested Canada should provide temporary refuge expecting them to be returned to Syria once the conflict had ended. Some indicated their interiorization of otherness by proposing 'test' questions about values and beliefs for Syrian refugees to answer in order to be allowed into Canada. There were contradicting representations of refugees versus immigrants, where in different opinions one group was considered more desirable for Canadians than the other.

The connection between Syrian refugees described explicitly as desperate victims and their designation as deserving of humanitarian aid includes the exaltation not only of the humanitarian quality of Canadians, but of Canada as a whole nation. Canada is represented as a prize or reward that can be granted by generous Canadians to Syrian refugees. An editorial from The Globe and Mail (2015a) encouraging Canada to 'do more' for Syrian refugees, includes a comparison of Canada to "heaven" in the eyes of those wishing to come (para. 4) and states that the question for Canadians is not how many want to come to Canada, because "it is nearly all of humanity," but how many "we will allow to come" (para. 3). The editorial ends with the suggestion that if 'we' save several lives, "we save the world." These statements echo, once again, the construction of the British Canadian ideal of morality and superiority, in a nation everybody else wishes to inhabit (suggesting in the plurality under the word 'nation' the imagined community of citizens, rather than just the land itself or the state). Benevolence in these examples is understood by Canadians as an undeniable value they possess (and others do not), but reserved only for those who 'earn' it by proving to be at significantly lower social levels. The discourses surrounding this type of welfare historically did not focus on welcoming people as future citizens to share the nation with them equally, but rather as proof of Western superiority and the superiority of the white nation (Thobani, 2007).

# Discourse 2: Syrian Refugees as Burden and Sacrifice, Versus Refugees as Benefit to Canadians

With discourses of compassion and humanitarianism, Canadian media websites also presented a discourse of Syrian refugees represented as a cause of loss for Canadian

nationals—both in terms of economic costs for the government and sponsors to receive them in Canada, and the personal sacrifices Canadians 'had to' make in order to welcome refugees. As a counterbalance (and another contradiction), other discourses argued that Syrian refugees would be beneficial for Canada's economy, therefore not representing loss for Canadians.

These discourses can be found in 192 stories, and more than half of them were published by CBC News. While this outlet and *The National Post* included this topic more during 2015 and decreased its presence after most of the refugees arrived in early 2016, it was constant in *The Globe and Mail* throughout the whole period studied.

The first discourse that represents loss and sacrifice is in many cases present from the headline. Most modern journalists reporting and writing 'hard news' (which is considered an 'objective' report of events) recognize and follow the inverted pyramid model, originated in American journalism during the nineteenth century to standardize structure and provide more clarity in news (Pottker, 2003). With this model, the most important information is meant to be placed at the top of the story and trickles down in relevance until the lower-priority pieces of information add detail to the story. Headlines are an aspect of news rhetoric meant to attract readers, and provide a semantic function in relation to the text at the same time that they 'alert' the readers about the content of the news story (Richardson, 2007). The headline and lead are intended to serve as a summary of the event, so that a reader can understand the most important information about it even without reading the entire piece.

Through the inverted pyramid model, all three media sites prioritized words that connected the Syrian refugees' arrival with excess, problems and difficulties for Canada. Some

terms found in headlines about the resettlement process are 'chaos,' 'influx,' 'overwhelmed,' 'scramble,' 'challenge,' and 'mess' (Calgary Eyeopener, 2015; CBC News, 2016b; Chase et al., 2015; Ireton, 2016; Letters, 2015a; Levitz, 2016a; The Canadian Press, 2016a). These words continue to be echoed in the body of the articles as well. A headline from CBC in December 2015 reads "Syrian Refugees: Ready or not, here they come" (Aldous, 2015a), implying that their arrival is an imminent event to overcome. Nevertheless, Canada in its initiative to receive refugees is described with terms associated with strength. Another headline from December reads "'Colossal effort' underway to bring 10,000 Syrian refugees to Canada by year's end" (Harris, 2015). The words "colossal effort" are placed in scare quotes because they are repeating a quote from then-Minister of Immigration John McCallum. It could be suggested that the quotation marks are used to place distance between the official nation-state discourse and what the media outlet aims to convey. The government is then emphasizing the nation's strength to overcome the challenge that refugees represent. Inside the story, the work of the government staff to move the process forward is described as "what are being called "Herculean" efforts" (para. 20). The author does not specify who called the efforts "Herculean," but the general topic of the story suggests it may have come from McCallum's remarks. However, "are being called" instead of a past tense form is an indication that this word has been mentioned continuously, or by more than one person.

The theme of sacrifice and loss is present in news about non-governmental efforts as well. When reporting on some of the charitable actions Canadians had taken to contribute to the Syrian refugee resettlement, some headlines showed a choice of terms that placed emphasis on

loss for Canadians. One example is the CBC News article "Calgary family forgoes kitchen renos to sponsor Syrian refugees" (Adach, 2015). The choice of the word "forgoes" instead of "postpones" implies that the family is entirely giving up the possibility of ever having a new kitchen, rather than changing the timeline. The loss of the kitchen renovation is placed first in the sentence, taking priority as the main event over the sponsoring of refugees.

The emphasis on the family's decision to redirect their renovation funds as a sacrifice is echoed within the story with a quote from the husband, Kirk Hardman, saying "it's just one of the things you sacrifice and go, 'Yeah, it's not a big deal'" (para. 8). Even though the husband's quote says it is not a big problem for them, captions under photos of the couple in their home continue to focus on what the couple is losing: "A new sink will have to wait," and "Neena Hardman is giving up her dream kitchen to give the funds to sponsor a family of Syrian refugees." Even though the refugees are represented in this news story, their identity is once again passivised as recipients of someone else's funds or charity, and as the reason for someone else's loss.

Another noteworthy example involves two stories about a similar topic: "Syrian refugees get warm welcome in Calgary despite Alberta's economic woes" (Bickis & Krugel, 2015) and "Despite economic troubles, Alberta welcomes Syrian refugees" (Carbert, 2016a). The story that focuses on Calgary is from CBC News, while the story that refers to Alberta is from *The Globe and Mail*. They were published two months apart, but in both cases the authors considered the economic problems a main part of the story to exalt the Albertans' action of welcoming the refugees. In one headline the warm welcome takes priority, while in the other the economic troubles are placed first.

Money, sometimes in specific amounts, is frequently mentioned in the news related to Syrian refugees and how much it takes to finalize their resettlement (CBC News, 2015d). *The National Post* refers to the funding allocated by the government to the refugee plan over several years as the "price tag" in the headline of a story (The Canadian Press, 2015d). Even though "price tag" is a common informal expression to talk about the cost of something, the choice of words that are mostly used for an acquisition or a purchase place the Syrian refugees at the lower end of a hierarchical relationship with Canadians, and could imply ownership. The content was originally produced by the press agency The Canadian Press (CP), which then sells it to different media outlets that make edits to the stories to adapt them to their own site or newspaper's style. CBC News ran the same story with a different headline using the word "cost" (Levitz, 2015a). Both credit the CP in the byline, an indication that they made minimal edits to the story. In this case it is not possible to determine with certainty whether or not the "price tag" words were added by *The National Post*, but they are not present anywhere else in the body of both stories.

While all these news construct Syrian refugees as minimized beneficiaries of the wealth and goodwill of Canadians, they are represented differently when it comes to reinforcing historical discourses of newcomers as people who 'take advantage' of the nation. A story has the headline "Syrian refugee family to benefit from couple cancelling big wedding" (CBC News, 2015g). Here the Syrian refugees take priority and an active role. The story about a couple who decided to marry at city hall and ask for donations to sponsor refugees in lieu of gifts is led by a title that represents their voluntary decision to direct funds to the resettlement in a secondary role. The main action to summarize the story seems to be how the Syrian refugees "benefit from"

the couple's wedding situation, a concept that indicates a profit or advantage the refugees are taking.

The perpetuation of this discourse with an "activation" of their role (van Leeuwen, 2008, p. 33) as takers of charity or welfare continues in other news where Syrian refugees are said to "flock" to food banks (CBC News, 2016c). The government contributed to shape this situation as part of the Syrian refugee identity when the immigration minister was quoted attributing Syrian refugees' visits to food banks to a "cultural element" (The Canadian Press, 2016c), suggesting that they were used to receiving free food in refugee camps. The comment was later retracted by the minister, who described it as insensitive (The Canadian Press, 2016b; The Canadian Press, 2016d). The retraction was published in *The Globe and Mail* and *The National Post* but was absent in CBC News, which had reported the initial remarks.

In a CBC News story mentioned above profiling several refugee families, there is a mention that "Parents Rasool and Suhad Al-Ali insist they want to work and not just take hand-outs." (Aldous, 2015b, para. 31). Since this content is paraphrased by the author rather than a direct quote, it is not possible to know if the parents mentioned the "hand-outs" during the interview or if it was an addition to establish another possible outcome associated with Syrian refugees. The use of the word "insist" implies a need for repetition or emphasis of this statement, something that needs constant explanation.

This perception of a community as expecting to 'take' from the Canadian nation is not new or exclusively attributed to Syrian refugees. For example, past discourses have been used openly in the Canadian formal education system to present Black people as "perpetually begging

and receiving charity" (Winks, 1971, p. 363). We see that these discourses are being repurposed to associate them with other people of colour (establishing otherness against the ideal white, hard-working Canadian national) and presented in a slightly subtler, but still identifiable way in informal sources of knowledge such as news.

As mentioned at the beginning of this section, the representation of Syrian refugees as recipients of Canadians' wealth also includes an opposite discourse. Several articles, though fewer than the ones connecting refugees to burden, present them as useful to the Canadian nation and a boost to the local economy. The highlight of a 2016 story is the statement by the Immigration Minister that New Brunswick is 'crying out' for Syrian refugees (CBC News, 2016a). In the article, the minister is quoted saying that New Brunswick and Quebec are places that "really can use the refugees" (para. 5). In this representation, the Canadian cities are the active agents that will 'use' refugees. In contrast, other news stories place Syrian refugees as the dynamic force in the sentence, including quotes that indicate they will help stimulate the economy, increase population growth, create wealth, and contribute as much to supply as they do to demand (CBC News, 2015b; Fabian, 2015; National Post View, 2015b). Canadian citizens are quoted supporting refugees as an economic benefit. "We need to re-launch our economy. What better way to do than to invite people who have shown they have the courage to start from scratch?" said an attendee to a Halifax rally in support of receiving more refugees (CBC News, 2015e).

A distinction is made between Syrian refugees and other newcomers within this discourse. A story quotes then-Defence Minister Harjit Sajjan speaking about the advantages of

resettling Syrian refugees in Canada and how they will benefit the nation, adding "They are not fleeing poverty – they are fleeing war. These people are coming ... with skill sets" (Leblanc & Chase, 2015, para. 15). We see a procatalepsis or anticipation of an argument against refugees that the Minister addresses in his statement: In these sentences, not fleeing poverty is mentioned as an argument in favour of resettling refugees, and it is immediately followed by a mention of the refugees' skill sets. Absence in text is just as important as presence; even though no other group is mentioned explicitly in this comparison, the emphasis on Syrian refugees' motives to flee and attributes implies othering towards economic migrants based on class, and questions other newcomers' skills. This brings us back to the first discourse in the previous section, where economic migrants are framed as people "taking advantage" of Canadian humanitarianism. An opinion piece in *The National Post* addresses this idea directly when the author sustains that "we should seek as much immigration by desirable people as this vast and underpopulated country can accommodate, with a preference for legitimate fugitives from oppression" (Black, 2015, para. 13). The article does not define the parameters that make an immigrant "desirable," but do place an emphasis on wanting people that flee oppression. We also see the addition of the word "legitimate," which again implies that there are illegitimate fugitives, but does not specify what makes a fugitive legitimate.

Contradictions remain present within this discourse as well, fed by historical discourses of immigration. Even though we see a government official speak of the benefits and skills of Syrian refugees because they are not fleeing poverty, they are still presented as *de facto* workers of low-skilled jobs in the news. In the stories mentioned above about Alberta welcoming

refugees in the middle of its economic crisis, an Albertan engineer is quoted saying he agrees with the refugee resettlement because he will not be "looking for the same jobs they are" (Bickis & Krugel, 2015, para. 9), and an associate professor in political science reassures unemployed Albertans by explaining that refugees will be competing mostly with other immigrants for "jobs that most Canadians no longer want to do" (Carbert, 2016a, para. 10). The same assumption is found in another story that mentions how Canadian sponsors can help Syrian refugees with their "connections to entry-level jobs as cleaners or the like that almost no Canadians want" (Schwartz, 2015, para. 24).

The discourse that presents refugees as beneficial to Canada, just like the humanitarian discourse, fails to present them as potential equal citizens that will share the land. Instead, it draws from historical contradictory discourses surrounding immigration discussed in previous chapters, where newcomers are judged by their supposed moral qualities to be deserving of the opportunity to migrate, but at the same time are necessary for wealthier nations to maintain population and production levels to benefit the economy, and are seen as desirable for low-skilled labour that is presented as undesirable by local workers.

## Discourse 3: Syrian Refugees as a Threat to Canadians

During the designated period, a total of 168 news and opinion pieces were found that emphasized the othering of Syrian refugees by presenting them as a potential security threat to the Canadian nation. These articles connect refugees with the assumption that Arab and Muslim communities are likely to include terrorists and present terrorism as a practice that is inherently

Muslim and not expected from people who practice other religions. *The National Post* had the most stories with this discourse (69), while CBC News had the fewest (42).

Before the change of government and during the transition and the outlining of the new resettlement plan in 2015, the topic of screening Syrian refugees to determine their security risk was a constant factor for consideration in the nation's official discourse and the public response to the plan. It is present in news and opinion articles about the number of refugees that Canada should resettle, as well as the appropriate timeline for their arrival (Elliott, 2015; Graveland, 2015; Ivison, 2015b; Letters, 2015a). It is common to see a contradiction in this discourse where someone is quoted, or an opinion is written, saying that Syrian refugees pose very low risk to Canadians, but adding nonetheless that there is a need to be careful in screening potential refugees.

The recontextualization of nationalist discourses exalting Christian people as the desirable Canadians appears through the othering of refugees in direct relation to their religion—either generalizing all Syrian refugees as Muslim or specifying a preference for a non-Muslim minority of Syrian refugees. Before the election, then-Defence Minister Jason Kenney was quoted sharing plans from the federal government to focus on fast-tracking religious and ethnic minorities in the region, alleging that Christian groups, among others, are among the most vulnerable in this conflict (CBC News, 2015c). The story produced an official national discourse that highlights a preference for Christian communities and an othering of the large majority of Muslim communities in Syria.

Others drew a direct connection between Islam and security risks. In a piece from *The Globe and Mail* commenting on possible political outcomes of the increased attention on the Syrian refugee crisis, the author adds, "Only the tiniest fraction of Muslim immigrants fail to integrate fully and successfully into Canadian society, but that tiny fraction can pose a serious problem to internal security" (Ibbitson, 2015, para. 9). In this piece, a direct connection is made between being Muslim and being a problem or unable to integrate, despite the attempt to minimize the connection by starting the sentence with "only the tiniest fraction."

In *The National Post*, a Christian priest who is often featured as an opinion columnist starts a piece with the headline "It is not too strong to call what is happening to Christians in Syria and Iraq a genocide" (de Souza, 2015b). Even though the headline places a focus on Syrians that are Christian, he softens the message at the beginning of the article by saying there should be no prioritization of Christian refugees based solely on disliking Muslims. However, the article states that, while it is wrong to say all Muslim refugees are potential terrorists, it is "obtuse" to say a Sunni Muslim man "formerly waging jihad" against the Syrian President is the same security risk as a Christian family driven out of Iraq, for example. "The latter do not produce terrorists; the former, in rare but real cases, do" (para. 4). He goes on to say that it is entirely reasonable for Canadian officials to have this consideration when vetting Syrian refugees, and that if the rules favour Christians for security reasons, "it is perfectly legitimate" (para. 5). The author also makes the argument that Christian and non-Muslim minorities would be "preferred" as well if the parameter to choose is based on vulnerability (para. 6). His opinion reproduces and expands on a point he had made months before in another article, mentioning the

risk of bringing "extremist elements" to Canada (de Souza, 2015a, para. 5) and how community integration efforts need to happen for those who come, because it is more important "where the potential for radicalization exists" (para. 8).

It is important to mark the news site's choice to include a religious figure in its roster of opinion columnists. This author is the only one with an additional title in his byline ("Father"). This description by nomination (van Leeuwen, 2008) suggests an intention to legitimize his views from a religious or spiritual perspective and an emphasis on preferring a Christian perspective since no other leaders from different religions are included or nominated as frequent columnists. From this position of legitimation by the media outlet, Father de Souza asserts that questioning Muslim refugees as potentially dangerous and a preference for Christian refugees are "perfectly legitimate" and "entirely reasonable." If we just consider the social practice of disseminating an opinion about a topic of high importance in the public sphere, the priest as a social actor is using his influence in society to 'repackage' and validate Arabophobic discourses in Canadian society with the reassurance that they are "reasonable."

Father de Souza's opinions were not isolated from the direction of the general conversation at the time. A terrorist attack in Paris on November 13, 2015 placed a special emphasis on the discourse connecting Syrian refugees and terrorism. Even though the topic was present in some articles before this event, an increase in news that included the discourse of Syrian refugees as a threat was notable between November 13 and November 20 in all three media sites, with stories mentioning the security risks of Syrian refugees arriving in Canada and in relation to the terrorist attacks published almost every day.

A CBC story opens with the headline "Syrian refugee security screening 'paramount,' says Health Minister Jane Philpott" followed by the caption or teaser of the story: "Paris attacks should not deter response to a humanitarian crisis, minister says" (Mas, 2015). The story explains the Minister's stance on the importance of screening of refugees "amid security concerns after the attacks in Paris" (para. 1), but does not go further to explain the connection between Syrian refugees and the attacks or why they are a reason for concern, which security concerns exist, or who expressed them. By not expanding on these details, the author is categorizing them as common knowledge that readers already have and will be able to use to understand the context of this article. Another CBC News article has the headline "Syrian refugees welcomed to B.C. despite Paris attacks" (Brend, 2015), once more assuming a direct relation between both events that should be understood by the readers who should understand why refugees are being welcomed "despite" the terrorist attack that happened in another country. A review from previous chapters in this project shows that this common knowledge would be a recontextualization of the American discourse that followed the 9/11 attacks, categorizing Muslims or Arab-presenting people as threats. It is possible to encounter direct reproductions of that discourse, for example by then-Alberta Wildrose Party leader Brian Jean, stating after the Paris attack that "Western civilization is under attack (...) by a radical and evil ideology" (Postmedia News, 2015a, para. 14).

Even though the Minister's quotes in the story are of reassurance about the safety of Canadians, the same article emphasizes the discourse of threat from official state sources by featuring the Premier of Saskatchewan's calls to suspend the resettlement plan because of the

attacks, and the then-leader of the Conservative Party's request to delay the resettlement process to put "the safety of Canadians first" (para. 9). In contrast, another source identified as a "national security expert" (para. 13) is quoted stating that Syrian refugees are not a significant security risk.

The discursive connection between Syrian refugees and the terrorist attack becomes more tangible when, after stating that the Paris attacks would not change the original plan to resettle 25,000 Syrian refugees before the end of 2015 (Curry, 2015), the government changed the deadline to complete the resettlement process until February of 2016. The change was directly attributed to the Paris terrorist attack (Clark, 2015). According to the headline from *The Globe* and Mail, Prime Minister Justin Trudau said the plan "had to change" after the attack. The use of the words "had to" suggests lack of choice, duty or obligation. In the story, Prime Minister Trudeau is quoted acknowledging his response happened after the Paris attack changed Canadians' perception. He does not explain what the perception was before and what it became afterwards. However, a paraphrased text in the article sustains that the Prime Minister "conceded that for many Canadians, thinking of the Mideast raises concerns" (para. 7). In this sentence, "Canadians" are described as a significant portion of the national community by aggregation (van Leeuwen, 2007) through the quantifier "many." The specific reference to Syrian refugees disappears and they are genericized to the broader geographical reference "the Mideast," expanding the social actors to Arab people by association and othering them as a cause for concern—a direct reference to historical Orientalist and Arabophobic discourses that have been prevalent in North America for decades. Also noteworthy is the use of the word "conceded" to

describe the Prime Minister's reaction towards the alleged concern from Canadians. The term describes an act of recognition of something to be valid or true.

The government's decision to "act on security concerns" by extending the resettlement timeline was described in opinion and analysis pieces as "smart" (Hall, 2015a; Ivison, 2015b) and potentially a "moment of national pride" (Ivison, 2015b). This response exalts the othering of external populations as threatening, and praises acts of 'protection' against them as part of nationalist discourse.

One particular detail is a piece of news published in mid-2016 detailing the results of a federal poll conducted in November 2015, before the change of plans was announced, which concluded that most Canadians do not link immigration with terrorist threats (Levitz, 2016d). While the result revealed favourable attitudes toward immigration, the director of the Canadian Institute of Identities and Migration is quoted questioning the fact that the federal Immigration Department asked explicit questions in a poll creating a link between immigration and terrorism.

Continuing with the recontextualization of established discourses surrounding Muslim and Arab populations, it is possible to identify the vilification of Arab men, particularly heterosexual men, in the news and in the official national discourse. As part of the Syrian refugee resettlement plan, the Canadian government announced the prioritization of refugees such as women and complete families as the most vulnerable, considered less of a risk (Friesen, 2015). Even though news specified that lone males would not be accepted into Canada due to security concerns, an exception was made for men who could prove they were gay (Hopper, 2015b; Postmedia News, 2015b).

The perception of Syrian men appears echoed by then-Mayor of Quebec City Régis

Labeaume, who is quoted as saying that "families are less frightening to people than frustrated

20-year-old men" in reference to the refugees he would prefer to welcome in his city (CBC

News, 2015f, para. 3). In the quote, both refugee families and men are described as frightening to
"people" (a very broad term to convey plurality), but to different extents, and men are
represented as "frustrated" without further explanation. The sentiment is reproduced in an article
from *The Globe and Mail*—which was not marked as an opinion piece—explaining the
differences between Syrian refugees that relocate to Europe and those who arrive in Canada. The
author mentions crimes in European countries that were attributed to people "Arabic in
appearance" among others (MacKinnon, 2016, para. 8), but concludes that the problem with
refugees, instead of culture, is "the gender mix that Europe is importing" (para. 10).

Whether it is specific to Syrian heterosexual men or the broader group of Syrian refugees, questioning their resettlement in Canada as a security risk comes with rationalization of these discourses as normal concerns. Opinion pieces like one in *The National Post* apply tactics of procatalepsis around the rhetoric of concern and fear of refugees. The author sustains that "it is not racist to worry" and it is "not xenophobic" to seek to protect those nearest from danger (Den Tandt, 2015, para. 5). However, it is by definition xenophobic to fear others because of their country of origin and reject them in opposition to the "nearest" ones. This discourse finds comfort in indetermination and plurality: The author states that an imagined scenario of terrorists arriving in Canada and perpetrating an attack is "on everyone's mind" and describes the hesitancy to accept refugees as "human nature" (para. 5).

### Discourse 4: Syrian Refugees as Problematic and Unable to Integrate

Aside from the discourses that focused on Syrian refugees as a financial burden—or benefit—to Canadians, other news included content that highlighted their differences and represented them as a burden or difficulty because of their culture, problems, or attitudes. These references are found in 112 articles. Overall, the discourse was present in a similar proportion in all three news sites. CBC News had the highest number with 47 stories, *The Globe and Mail* presented this discourse in 34 pieces, and *The National Post* had the lowest with 31.

Several articles emphasize what seem to be impediments or 'challenges' for Syrian refugees to successfully adapt and transition to life in Canada, such as being poor and vulnerable (MacKinnon, 2016), having a "mountain" of health issues (Blackwell, 2015), and being in need of many specialized services to overcome these problems. In a 2015 article, a quote from an Immigrant Services Society of British Columbia representative describes the hypothetical situation of a Syrian refugee being relocated somewhere without those support services, calling the person potentially "problematic for that community" because it is difficult to work with their traumas (Chase, 2015, para. 17). Other pieces add mentions of complaints from the newly arrived refugees' neighbours because of noise (Postmedia Network, 2016; Yawar, 2016). One opinion piece in *The National Post* aiming to advocate for Canada's acceptance of more refugees for resettlement describes them as a "whackload of desperate, broken Syrians" (Blatchford, 2015, para. 19). The use of the descriptor "broken" categorizes the refugees as 'defective' by the author's standards, or in need of fixing.

In contradiction with the discourse that represented refugees as beneficial to Canada's economy, in some pieces they are described as lacking education, as well as job and language skills (Kirkey, 2015; Wente, 2015). During the resettlement, the decision by some refugees to decline the offer to come to Canada was attributed to a majority being "poorer" and "less-educated," prone to false assumptions and uninformed decisions based on fear (Williams, 2016, para. 9). Language is often emphasized not just as a reason for concern, but casually as a marker of difference. An article about Syrian refugee children interacting in a Canadian summer camp quotes one of them, with the author's specification that it was said "in broken English" (Szklarski, 2016, para. 3).

Part of the discursive representation of Syrian refugees as problematic means constructing their identity as the 'other' due to cultural difference or unwillingness to integrate. An opinion article anticipates refugees facing a "cultural cliff" when arriving in Canada (Fisher, 2015). Frequent mentions of the need to educate Syrian refugees (even children) in "Canadian cultural norms" (Szklarski, 2016) emphasizes them as potentially having dramatically different behaviours and social norms. News stories focus on the difficulties and 'incompatibilities' that Canadians face sponsoring refugees (Ireton, 2015). Other opinion articles express concerns about the refugees' ability to integrate, comparing them to Canada as "extremely different cultures" (Wente, 2015, para. 4). There is a repeated topic in the news from all sites where cultural diversity in Syrian refugees is presented as a potential problem.

Even when an article does not intend to describe difference as problematic, it may still emphasize difference and create a larger wedge of otherness. A CBC article describes the

Canadian refugee sponsors that are being interviewed as people who "have nearly a century of experience helping these "strangers at our gates" settle in." (Schwartz, 2015, para. 4). The use of quotation marks in the article suggests that the name comes from someone or somewhere else. It is possible to infer that the phrase is a reference to the book about Canadian immigration and policy by author Valerie Knowles with the same title, originally published in 2007 and with a later edition referenced in this research project (Knowles, 2016). However, the journalist does not explain the origin of the phrase in the article, or provide more context for this word choice. It is possible for the author to have assumed that the book was popular enough with the news site audience to understand the reference, but for readers who may not be familiar with the book, these words present Syrian refugees in a context of dramatic difference and otherness, as "strangers."

The concern about cultural difference and integration coming from the public reading the news is combined with nationalist discourses constructed around the Canadian nation. A letter from a reader published in *The National Post* states that, while Canada has an ethical obligation to help Syrian refugees, they should understand the expectations from them, including accepting Canada as their new country and "be loyal foremost to Canada," as well as an obligation to learn the language and "assimilate" (Letters, 2015b, para. 8).

Some articles that present the resettlement from a Syrian refugee's perspective show that they, indeed, might notice these representations constructed about them and aim to create a counter-argument for them. Syrian refugee Mai Eilia expresses in an interview that she is grateful, but feels stigmatized by the "refugee" categorization. She is quoted countering a tacit

representation of identity that, as explained above, has been present in several news articles: "I'm not second class. I'm very well educated. I can speak three languages. I travelled all over the world." (The Canadian Press, 2015c, para. 16).

Syrian refugees are also often associated with negative emotions and behaviours in the news, such as ungratefulness, lack of interest, and conflict. Another article from *The National* Post claims that 'officials' describes Syrian refugees as "lukewarm" about coming to Canada before the end of the year (Postmedia News, 2015). Even though the article begins with the paraphrasing of a United Nations refugee official urging Canadians "not to draw any hasty conclusions" (para. 1) about refugees who had recently turned down the offer to move in 2015, and subsequent paragraphs explain that many refugees were just not prepared to move with such short notice, the use of the word "lukewarm" in the headline leads the story presenting them as disinterested in Canada. Another article from the same site curates a few short news it describes as "reasons to fear for humanity," beginning with "Migrants find Sweden too cold for comfort" (McParland, 2015b) and explains how a group of Iraqi and Syrian refugees relocated in Sweden refused to get off the bus, complaining that the place was too cold and isolated. During the focus on Alan Kurdi's tragedy in the news, an article from an interview originally published by a German news outlet surfaced in Canada (including the media sites analyzed here), with a headline that describes Alan Kurdi's father blaming Canada for the tragedy (Canadian Press, 2015b). While the article later quotes him blaming the federal government's inaction and cumbersome paperwork requirements, the headline uses the word "Canada" that, in popular terms, may refer to the whole nation and its population, not just the head of the nation-state.

In some articles, news sites reproduce warnings to potential refugee sponsors about the attitudes they may receive from the refugees they are helping. A CBC article interviews a seasoned refugee sponsor and curates a list of things people should know before embarking on a sponsorship journey (On the Coast, 2015). One of the main list items is to be prepared for 'push back,' warning people that it is "natural for refugees to push back against the various people who have helped them" (para. 12). The use of the word "natural" suggests to readers that it is an inherent or common personality trait from Syrian refugees to lash out at others, and specifies that the reaction is towards people "who have helped them," emphasizing the idea of them being unappreciative of the help received.

One opinion piece from *The National Post* placed special emphasis on refugees as 'others,' not only unwilling to integrate to Canadian society, but seeking to compete with it. The author describes "Middle East" migrants (including people from Syria) moving to Europe, adding that they come "demanding a share of the security and prosperity of the West" (Jonas, 2015, para. 1). After the use of the language describing a violent action (demanding), he cites a fiction novel, as well as texts from two journalists from Italy and the United States respectively, to support his argument about the existence of a 'new kind' of immigrant that is "quite unlike the customary refugee" (para. 10). He insists on this group's demanding behaviour in the description of the supposed new immigrant, and says, "The new immigrant is an invader." (para. 11). The opinion piece continues a description of an immigrant that does not only compete for economic opportunity, but also for identity—since these immigrants cannot create an identity for the 'host population,' the author says, they just compete for the existing identity of a nation.

With this "invader" discourse we see a connection to the previous discourse analyzed that presented Syrian refugees as a threat, but from a different perspective. Syrian refugees are presented to readers as threatening—not just as a threat to national security, but also to a nation's identity and culture. The author mentions that the "invader" status is not tied to race or religion, but with the understanding that Canada's national identity was created on a foundation of exclusion and racism, the 'others' and 'invaders' threatening the constructed national 'self' will be mostly racialized and culturally diverse.

## **Discourse 5: Syrian Refugees in Connection With Political Parties**

Given the context of the federal election that occurred shortly after Alan Kurdi's photo sparked debate about Canada's resettlement of Syrian refugees, the topic became intertwined with politics almost simultaneously, tying different stances and actions to political parties. A total of 164 news and opinions represent Syrian refugees in direct connection with politics, particularly with the Liberal Party after winning the election. Even though these discourses were present in all three news sources, there is a significant majority in *The National Post*, which included them in 85 news and opinion pieces. *The Globe and Mail* and CBC News were very close to each other in mentions of this discourse, with 40 and 39 articles, respectively.

Most of these news show a representation of Syrian refugees in relation to Canadian political parties. Leading up to the election, the Syrian child Alan Kurdi's photo was described as a reason why Conservatives were "on the back foot" during the campaign (Ivison, 2015a, para.

6). Opinion pieces attributed Syrian refugees' roadblocks to resettle in Canada to the Conservatives (Glavin, 2015c).

After the election, while sometimes the refugee resettlement was called a federal government initiative or Canada's plan, it was often described as a "Liberal settlement program" (CBC News, 2015i), a "Liberal pledge" (Brean, 2015) a "Liberal plan" (Kane, 2015; Mas, 2016a), or Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's refugee plan (Morrow et al., 2015). All these references create an association or a tacit affinity between Syrian refugees and the Liberal Party—while it is not literally stated, the frequent mention of refugees and Liberals represents Syrian newcomers in Canada as the product of a Liberal idea, and a difficulty or political obstacle for Conservatives. This is also exemplified in news where the Liberal Party is presented as provider of help and benefits to Syrian refugees, like the headline "Liberals restore refugee health benefits cut by previous government" (Carbert, 2016b), the sentence "The Liberal government has promised to waive [travel and medical] costs for the 25,000 Syrian refugees they have promised to bring in" (Hunter & Hager, 2016, para. 12), and a story that opens with "The Liberals are committing to finding new ways to get Syrian refugees to Canada and into other countries" (Levitz, 2016b, para. 1). While these sentences are reporting facts that have been announced by the Canadian government, the specification of "Liberal" in it (a naming convention that is not used consistently in all news referring to the current federal government) suggests a wording choice to establish this political affinity.

In a CBC News story about government changes in process after 25,000 refugees arrived in Canada, a refugee sponsorship group coordinator is quoted saying that "When the Trudeau government got their 25,000 refugees" it left many processes incomplete (CBC News, 2016d, para. 10). The subtle creation of an affinity between Syrian refugees and a politician or political

party becomes more apparent with the use of the possessive "their." Going beyond the discourses of national identity that are frequently used to separate newcomers from locals, the interiorized idea that Syrian refugees 'belong' to a political group (hence, a political affiliation) creates a different level of othering between them and people that follow other political parties.

#### Discourse 6: Syrians as 'Privileged' Refugees

During the selected timeframe for analysis, the discussion in some news and opinion articles regarding Syrian refugees focused on comparisons between them and refugees from other countries or other underserved populations, to suggest possible advantages for the Syrian group regarding approval to come to Canada and benefits. References to a discourse representing Syrian refugees as 'privileged' or receivers of preferential treatment were found in 39 articles, mostly from CBC News (17) and *The National Post* (15). *The Globe and Mail* only had seven articles connected to this discourse.

Even though it was the federal government that designed a plan to expedite the approval process for Syrian refugees to be resettled in Canada because of the urgency of the situation, the Immigration Minister is quoted in a CBC News article cautioning against putting Syrian refugees in a favourable position over other groups (Mas, 2016b). In the article, then-Minister McCallum speaks about welcoming refugees, adding "we are mindful that we don't want to offend Canadians who have themselves been waiting for a long time for social housing and things of that nature" (para. 4). By having these two topics in one same message, the former Minister suggested that welcoming Syrian refugees and social housing for Canadians are related, or that one situation is directly affected by the other. There is no context or explanation about why

welcoming Syrian refugees should offend Canadians in need of housing. While it is left to the readers to reach conclusions according to their own assumptions or beliefs, the quote from a government official is suggesting that a direct connection exists. In the same article, McCallum is paraphrased saying that hate crimes such as the pepper spray attack that a group of Syrian refugees suffered in early January 2016 and the Ontario mosque set on fire in November 2015 are not representative of national sentiments, but the government "must avoid fuelling anti-refugee sentiment" by ensuring Syrian refugees are not put "ahead of the queue" (para. 9). In this paragraph, the root cause of hate crimes against Muslim communities or Syrian refugees is placed on the government 'fueling' an anti-refugee sentiment rather than discourses of racism or xenophobia. It also suggests that the sentiment is fueled by Syrian refugees receiving some sort of preferential treatment, suggesting there is a single "queue" to receive benefits that they may be bypassing. The idea of Syrian refugees being a detriment to the needs of other groups already living in Canada is echoed in a CBC News analysis that questions if Canadians will be "as generous to First Nations as they are to Syrian refugees" (Hall, 2015b), and a CBC News story with the headline "Syrian refugees shouldn't take priority over homeless, group says" (CBC News, 2015j), once again suggesting that the situation of both groups and the issues that need to be addressed for both are related or comparable.

Other examples compare Syrian refugees to those from other countries. A news story in *The Globe and Mail* providing information for Canadians who wanted to sponsor refugees in September 2015, quotes the executive director of the Canadian Council for Refugees explaining the "problem" of not having many "visa office referred" refugees from Syria at the time. The

author of the article paraphrases the explanation that non-Syrian refugees are "less attractive to sponsors" who were moved to help because of the Syrian conflict (Moore & Freeze, 2015, para.

13). Other news and analysis pieces specifically indicate a disadvantage to Iraqi refugees and those from African nations, who are described as lacking generosity and interest from Canadians because of the priority of the Syrian refugee resettlement (Rolfsen, 2015; Rolfsen, 2016).

Another perspective is presented in opinion pieces like one in *The National Post*, where the columnist specifically presents Syrian refugees as more deserving or desirable in comparison to other newcomers. When explaining previous governments' restrictions on the number of asylum applications accepted, the author adds that few Canadians want to return to a system that was abused, "not by the huddled masses from war zones, but by Mexicans, Hungarians and Czechs seeking a higher standard of living" (Ivison, 2015a, para. 28). The mention of three specific nationalities as 'abusers' of the immigration and asylum request systems in opposition of "huddled masses from war zones" tries to create a more positive sentiment from the readers towards the latter rather than the former ones. The author follows this sentence with, "But Syria is different. Harper has seen the exceptional nature of the Syrian migrant crisis" (para. 29). This brings the reference of "huddled masses from war zones" back to the focus on Syrian refugees and suggests former Prime Minister Harper understood the situation of Syrian refugees as special. By starting the sentence with "But," the author is comparing the idea of Mexican, Hungarian, and Czech refugees allegedly 'abusing' the system as opposite to Syrian refugees and their situation.

While most of the news mentioned above and others including similar discourses did not specify how the Syrian refugee resettlement directly took support or resources away from other groups, the presence of this topic and these comparisons repeat the tacit idea that Syrian refugees in Canada are the recipients of an unfair advantage that will affect the needs of others, even more so when these suggestions come from an official national source like government officials. From the perspective of socialization and knowledge to define the self and others, this discourse could present Syrian refugees to the public as a potential threat to the well-being or prosperity of other people, local and newcomers, an assumption that could lead to defensiveness and hesitancy to accept them as part of the national population.

#### Visual Representation of Syrian Refugees by Media Sites

I include this type of non-lexical analysis in this project because, as mentioned in previous chapters, representation transcends the written or spoken word. The visual carries important meaning in societies as well, which has been learned and socialized to become common knowledge in a specific culture or group. Drawing from van Leeuwen's (2008) perspective on the visual representation of social actors, I concur with the idea that the semiotic division of labour between word and image is frequent in communication. In news, words are meant to explain facts while images might capture a moment in time that communicates more on its own. However, the use of non-specific imagery in news provides an important insight into what (or who) the media choose to represent, and what assumptions play into that choice. The 'object' reproduced in an image can carry a connection to a context (place, time, culture) and all the preconceptions that surround this context (van Leeuwen, 2008).

To add visual illustration to the 'cover' of many of the news collected for this analysis, media sites chose photos of politicians, people that were interviewed for each specific article, or sometimes chose not to include a main photo at all. However, several articles that referred to Syrian refugees and their resettlement process included a stock photo as the main image—either credited to a stock photo website or a news agency, or from the same news outlet but not depicting people quoted or mentioned in the article. The discourses that are taken from these choices tell us what reporters or staff from the news websites analyzed understand as Syrian refugees, or what socialized knowledge and assumptions they apply when they have to choose a way to represent them without a specific person to photograph.

Two main categories were identified in the 173 articles with identified stock photos:

Photos of children, and photos of adults and large groups. Some photos included families with children and adults in them; in those cases, the photos were categorized according to the subjects who were positioned as the centre of attention (in focus, closer than other subjects, or looking at the camera directly) in the frame.

The National Post had the most articles illustrated with stock photos, with 74. CBC News utilized stock photos in 64 articles, and *The Globe and Mail* had 35 articles. As an additional note, both CBC News and *The Globe and Mail* include captions with a general description of the images. *The National Post* does not include captions.

A total of 116 articles had children as the main focus of the 'cover' photo, with CBC News posting the most (57) and *The Globe and Mail* having the fewest (21). *The National Post* featured children in 38 articles. Some of the captions locate them at refugee camps, or arriving in

Canada. These articles were not specifically about Syrian children; they reported updates about Syrian refugees coming to Canada or how Canada was preparing to receive them. The constant connection between the Syrian refugee crisis and children is not unexpected, since it was the photo of toddler Alan Kurdi on a Turkish beach that caused shock and propelled the conversation and further actions to relocate Syrian refugees in Canada. I must note that, for this analysis, articles that included the photo of Alan Kurdi are not included in the stock photo count (even if it came from a press agency or stock photo site) because he was identified by name, and the photo was usually accompanying a story that mentioned him and his family.

The representation of Syrian refugees with children at the forefront suggests a discourse that places them in a non-threatening position, in need of help and support. While all media sites included photos of children in different settings or with different people, one difference noticed is that children in *The National Post* and *The Globe and Mail*'s stock photos are more often in a larger group or with a parent holding them (Friesen, 2015; Ivison, 2015c; Levitz, 2015b; Postmedia News, 2015c; Selley, 2015), whereas it is often possible to see Syrian children in CBC News alone or without adults featured clearly in the picture accompanying them (Brend, 2015; CBC News, 2015h; The Early Edition, 2015a). The depiction of children without someone caring for them amplifies the extreme vulnerability and isolation of the Syrian refugee condition.

Within the context of some of the discourses analyzed before in this chapter, we can see how infantilizing Syrian refugees, while possibly evoking caring and non-confrontational sentiments for the reader, also reiterates some of those discourses by representing them as unable to be self-sufficient, suggesting a significant responsibility that will be acquired by those

receiving them to cover their needs. Most images present the children at eye level; however, some show children photographed from above, with the readers 'looking down' on them, like a photo in CBC News that presents a group of children extending their hands trying to grab or receive something (Mas, 2016c), which suggests a power relation that emphasizes this discourse of vulnerability and lack of independence—readers in the Canadian nation are placed in the position of power to 'save,' support, guide, and be responsible for the represented Syrian refugees.

In the case of photos of adults, 57 articles were identified featuring this theme, most of them from *The National Post* (36). CBC News had the fewest (7). The images that feature adults are diverse, but the vast majority of them in all websites present them in groups and very frequently in movement, carrying backpacks an walking in the same direction, seemingly in the middle of their migration (de Souza, 2015b; Fabian, 2015; MacKinnon, 2016).

The depiction of groups versus individuals is important in this discourse analysis. Very large groups remove individual differences and reinforce the idea that "they are all the same" (van Leeuwen, 2008, p. 144), something that is especially important in the context of news reproducing discourses that represented Syrian refugees as a potential threat or connected them and Muslim people with terrorism. In these group photos, there's often significant distance between the camera and the people, making many of them undistinguishable. By utilizing these photos to illustrate news related to the resettlement of Syrian refugees to Canada, the news sites intend to depict Syrian refugees as a very large 'wave' of people migrating (emphasizing other textual discourses about refugees as an insurmountable burden coming at the Canadian nation).

They are also a significant indicator of otherness between the national in-group and the Syrian out-group: Since the semiosis of distance is connected with interpersonal relationships (van Leeuwen, 2008), long shots of Syrian refugees in groups present them as distant strangers in comparison with the Canadian 'self.' One example of note is seen in *The National Post* (Letters, 2015a), where a very large group of Syrian refugees is depicted on a highway walking away from the camera. Other articles, like one in *The Globe and Mail* from September 2015 that aimed to dispel myths about the Syrian refugee crisis, show the silhouettes of a group of (apparently male) refugees walking. This news site identified them as "Syrian refugees and migrants" in the caption (Saunders, 2015). By choosing a photo that removes any discernible features from the individuals in it, the representation of Syrian refugees as others and 'strangers' was set early on before the mass resettlement, depicting them as mysterious and distant people which whom the reader could not 'connect' socially or establish trust. Some of the photos showing groups of refugees present them behind fences or gates (Blatchford, 2015), establishing for the reader that there is a barrier or a division between them and 'us,' and they are outsiders, on the other side of those protective barriers. Some photos show them in an effort to pass through the barriers, for example a group of men crawling under a fence with barbed wire in a story published on *The* National Post (Slate, 2015).

One particular difference that stood out between the news sites analyzed was the representation of Syrian men in explicitly violent or chaotic contexts in *The National Post*, which is not as present on the other sites. While all websites had images that featured men with serious expressions while walking in groups or waiting in line, a few articles on this site represented

them in an actively violent or distressed state. An opinion article from September 10, 2015 talks about the importance of Canada's "leadership on the migrant issue" (National Post View, 2015a). The main image shows a man running engulfed in flames at the forefront, with a handful of men in the background watching. It is important to remember that *The National Post* does not add captions to its photos in online articles, which means there is no context to explain what is happening, where this situation took place, or why the man is on fire. The same image is used the same day to illustrate a news story about the Mayor of Toronto preparing to welcome 1,000 Syrian refugees in the near future (The Canadian Press, 2015a). This photo and photos showing similar scenes are not found in the other news outlets analyzed.

In these news, the Syrian adult women depicted are rarely alone. In most photos, they appear taking care of children, walking as part of a group (but not leading the group), or crying. Some photos emphasize otherness towards them by showing them in their head coverings, including niqabs (Gollom, 2015), which had been a controversial political topic at the time with a debate about whether or not Muslim women should be allowed to wear them to Canadian citizenship ceremonies. It is possible to see how, regardless of the topic the news story covered, Orientalist and Arabophobic discourses leak into the choices of imagery: Men in chaotic or violent situations, as hidden shadows or silhouettes, giving readers a sense of unknown threat, while women are presented as submissive or secondary characters, different because of their religion, and almost always suffering.

Use of the same stock images between media sites was overall very uncommon. One example is the photo of a man with an expression of sadness holding a sleeping child, which was

used in an opinion piece from *The National Post* published on November 18, 2015 (Glavin, 2015d), discussing Canada's role in the fight against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). The same photo can be found in a few CBC News stories, including one from November 23, 2015, detailing challenges mayors identify about services that Syrian refugees will need, such as education and housing (The Early Edition, 2015b).

In summary, images provide a look into assumed and internalized discourses and, showing what many Canadian media reporters think when they have the freedom to choose how to represent Syrian refugees visually. It is also clear that some representations of refugees echo textual discourses analyzed previously in this chapter, even though the texts and images suggesting the same representation or othering of Syrian refugees were not always together in the same article.

## 3. Othering of Syrian Refugees as the Social Wrong, and Its Place in the Social Order

In chapter 3, I discussed the complex and discriminatory historical power relation that the Canadian nation-state built with immigrants. In the beginning of the post–World War era, many restrictions to immigration were removed with the purpose of increasing labour to rebuild and strengthen infrastructure and economic growth, but the ideological assumptions and stereotypes about racialized immigrants as 'less than' the locals have continued to be prevalent. While it could be argued that the Canadian nation, as a contributor to the global capitalist system—more specifically, neoliberalism—relies heavily on exploitation and importation of younger workers to continue its expansion, I had previously cited work that shows how immigrants earning equal incomes compared to Canadian-born citizens could potentially cause larger benefits to the

economy and create new jobs (Fleras, 2014). This means that, from an economic standpoint, the current order may not actually need the othering of Syrian refugees (and others) or their representation as lower-skilled to benefit the nation. Nevertheless, when we analyze the social order from a perspective of Canadian (official) nationalism, the answer is different.

The idea of the Canadian nation and the identity of the 'typical' Canadian has been socialized in the collective consciousness as the exalted white person from Anglo-Saxon heritage, and a devoted Christian. Values have been defined and perpetuated as inherently Canadian. In order to maintain the population's loyalty and support to the policies of the nation-state—and to those who rule it—the Canadian nationalist discourse needs to continuously feed assumptions of superiority and othering. It is important to see that these discourses, regardless of whether they were positive or negative towards refugees, mostly presented them as a distant group that was rarely the active agent in the news. They were recipients of Canadians' generosity, suspicion, concerns. The references to Canadian citizens' interactions with newcomers frequently come as part of the nation's superiority discourse: Both humanitarianism towards refugees and the idea of the multicultural nation are discourses meant to exalt the virtues of the Canadian-born locals for *allowing* them, not the populations that join them because they are not actually seen as equal. This explains the frequent contradictions between official discourses, and between the official and the unofficial in the public sphere.

The discourses found maintain a dialectical relation with the current social order and the power structure of this nation-state: Nationalist discourses about Canadans' laudable humanitarian nature led to a higher focus on a Syrian refugee resettlement, and Syrian refugees

were represented as a catalyst to compare against and exalt this national identity trait. Prejudice against Syrian refugees as a burden is reflected in the limited opportunities refugees found to get a job soon after arrival; some were still unemployed months after arriving 2016 (Levitz, 2016c). Due to lack of possibilities to make ends meet, many refugees were using food banks (The Canadian Press, 2016c), an action that was used to feed and amplify the discourse of Syrian refugees being a burden and expecting handouts. The existing discursive connections between Syrian refugees and threats of terrorism included them immediately in the conversations about the terrorist attack in Paris in November 2015, and the growing discourses about it led to the federal government delaying its timeline for resettling Syrian refugees in Canada, claiming a need for better security checks before their arrival. These are just a few examples of discourses creating social practice, which in turn continues feeding or reinforcing those discourses. Through the continued amplification of discourses of otherness, the nation-state is able to exalt the desired 'self' and define newcomers as an out-group.

The need for this 'social wrong' is not limited to Syrian refugees. Since a significant part of the othering directed at Syrian refugees and other newcomers is based on race, ethnicity, and spirituality, we have to consider that the current social order needs it to justify and continue its history of colonization and displacement of First Nation, Inuit, and Metis peoples of this land. In my historical review I explained how the definition of the nation's 'others' and their representation as threatening, culturally unfit, and lacking in skills or virtues, is not geographically-based. The socialization of the exalted Canadian national identity through division and racialization continues through formal education and through informal learning in

mass media, in order to reinforce the power structures and power imbalances created centuries ago.

# 4. Identifying Possible Ways Past the Contradictions

To be able to think about ways to counter these social wrongs and the impact they have on Canadian society, we must understand that the most powerful feature of discourses of othering towards Syrian refugees in relation to the Canadian national identity is the fact that they are internalized and socialized to the point that they can take place in everyday news without raising a wave of questions from readers. As explained by Foucault (1990), power is a set of strategies enforced from numerous angles in society that eventually are solidified into the 'state apparatus.' Applying Foucault's theory to this particular analysis, the othering of Syrian refugees in Canadian society is the product of a discursive formation—a collection of discourses recontextualized from historical moments and ideologies and repeated from different sources to create a full discursive 'picture' of a group that is meant to be represented as different, or as a group of outsiders that could threaten the harmony of the in-group. The nationalist discourse of superiority is created not only by multiple representations of what Syrian refugees are, but more importantly, representations of what they are not.

While it is difficult to propose solutions that completely eliminate these discourses and disintegrate the power imbalances that have been upheld for hundreds of years, a very effective tool against socialized discourse is awareness. Pointing out the existence and perpetuation of the entire discursive formation, as well as its dialectical relation with the current power imbalances and the practices it maintains, is a way to contest the racism and nationalist assumptions that

turned them into common knowledge in Canadian society. One example is the Institute for Canadian Citizenship's *Citizen Resilience Project* (Institute for Canadian Citizenship, 2022). The project's objective is to empower citizens to identify disinformation and false discourses. During a campaign about the project in 2020, the Institute disseminated information through social media and emails about different topics, such as the threat of divisive digital discourse and misrepresentation of racialized or marginalized groups online. In their third topic, called (*Mis)Representation - Who is shaping the story?* the authors mention the disproportionate targeting of Muslim communities, among others, with disinformation, harassment, and propaganda online, and how racist discourses towards racialized communities have been present in other recent events, such as discussions related to the COVID-19 pandemic (Institute for Canadian Citizenship, 2020).

It is important to challenge misleading identity discourses in the public sphere. Between underrepresented (or misrepresented) communities, allies, and organizations, it is necessary to maintain a growing movement that shines a light on discourses of othering and challenges them, not allowing them to go unnoticed or ignored in society anymore. This movement needs to contest the previously socialized discourses with representations of Syrian refugees, as well as other newcomer populations, that accurately depict who they are, how they see themselves, and their lived experiences and interactions with Canadian society. Just as it was possible to contest official discourses and educate audiences in the past with campaigns like #IdleNoMore (Tupper, 2014), it is possible to utilize social media platforms to give voice to the 'others' and their counter discourses to Canadian nationalism.

It is also crucial to continue research into discourses that are learned and disseminated informally, turning its findings into programs and information campaigns to continue the discussion and awareness in communities across Canada. Research of this kind can also inform the influence of harmful discourses in opportunities for equal representation in power structures and development of policy that affects the future of racialized communities.

#### Conclusion

This critical discourses analysis presented a collection of discourses and representation of identities of Syrian refugees that created a consistent idea of otherness in contrast with the constructed identity of the Canadian nation. Many of these discourses have been recontextualized from previous historical discourses that contributed to an unequal creation of the Canadian nation, designed for the power of Canadians who reflect the national identity of the British colonizer, and that were spread through formal education systems, law, and now through informal sources of education and socialization.

While some of the discourses were not surprising due to their constant presence in social media and I mention some of them in chapter 4, one of the most unexpected outcomes of my critical discourse analysis of news was the lack of significant differences between the three news outlets in terms of the discourses found and how they were presented to readers, both textually and visually. A few discourses were presented more directly in *The National Post* due to the higher number of opinion pieces published (particularly the description of refugees as invaders, or their emphasis on Christianity as a safeguard to avoid terrorism in Canada) compared to other outlets. However, the direct language to reinforce a discourse is not entirely absent from the

other sites either. While I identified minor differences in some stories that were published in all, or their use of images, the discourses I found were present in all sites, mostly proportionally in quantity. Considering that the news sites were chosen because of their differing political views, this provides an interesting conclusion: Othering of Syrian refugees is not a practice that can be attributed to a specific political affiliation. It has truly been internalized and socialized as a shared assumption for a very long time in Canada, to the extent that even those groups who seem to be compassionate and 'friendlier' towards the idea of welcoming refugees can unconsciously represent them in a way that emphasizes difference and inequality.

Fairlough's (2013) dialectical-relational methodology for CDA helped to show both the dialectics of discourse and the opportunities for transdisciplinary approach to this analysis. From the events analyzed in the news, it is possible to argue that the relation between discourse and social practice is dialectical: Many of these discourses have come from historical social practices established and perpetuated by the power structures, and at the same time some discourses informed social practices during the resettlement process (such as the shift in electoral campaign focus from the nationalist humanitarian perspective, and the change of Syrian refugee resettlement dates by the government previously mentioned). The recontextualization, shaping, and dissemination of the Syrian refugee representation discourses is an exercise of informal education through the social practice of news production and publication, which aims to create messages in a context that will be generally understood by the audience that shares common knowledge. The development of counter discourses or community work to challenge the

unconscious bias should be a transdisciplinary effort as well—a combination of perspectives from education, media, and community input.

#### Chapter 7

### A Journey Through the Canadian Contradiction

In this project, I conducted a critical discourse analysis of news articles looking to respond to these research questions: What are the discourses being disseminated publicly on the topic of the mass migration of Syrian refugees to Canada? How do these discourses and perceptions relate to national identity, 'othering' and systemic power relations in Canada? The approach to this analysis drew upon a theoretical framework based on the role of socialization as a key component of informal learning, as well as the role of discourse and its influence in social and power relations.

The decision to combine both elements as the framework to analyze news was made based on the weight social learning has in individual and collective categorizations, as well as systems of representation that are relevant to a particular social group—a unique understanding that is needed for an individual to 'belong' to their identified in-group (Brown, 1976; Hall, 1997). The meaning of 'self' for someone in a social circle guides their perspective about who are considered 'others' in relation to their own social group. The necessary identification of difference from others in order for this identity to exist, can lead people to perceive a social out-group as potentially threatening: 'Othering' becomes a common part of interactions between communities (Blommaert, 2005; Hogg & Abrams, 1988; Tajfel & Turner, 2004). Because these perceptions are formed through a collective representation of the self and the 'other,' discourse, defined by Hanks as "language-into-action" (as cited in Blommaert, 2005, p. 2) plays a crucial role in the construction and dissemination of these representations. To expand on the importance

of discourse in social interactions, I pointed to Foucault (1990; 1977) and his theory of the dialectics of power and discourse. Power is created by the production of valid knowledge through discursive formations (collections of discourses that interact with each other), and at the same time power produces knowledge that is validated as 'true' in the state apparatus. In summary, discourse is learned and internalized through social interaction, and it is able to create and uphold power relations.

For the purposes of this critical discourse analysis, I placed the focus on discourses and representations of self and othering, since the analysis was specific to Syrian refugees in Canada. I analyzed theories of nationalism, how they connect to socialization through the construction of collective identities as imagined communities (Anderson, 1991), the practices of othering that acted as the foundations of nationalist discourses, and their relevance to the formation of nation-states as we know them today. To provide a context about existing representations and power relations in Canada based on identity discourses, I conducted a historical review outlining the construction of the Canadian national identity. I presented the creation of the Canadian 'national' to reflect the exalted identity of the white, Christian, British colonizer (Thobani, 2007).

The understanding of the origin of the Canadian self was an important starting point to identify the nationalist practices of othering rooted in racism and displacement, both towards newcomers and Indigenous peoples who already inhabited the land. My review revealed that the pursuit of this ideal Canadian citizen led to racism becoming embedded into the core of the nation-state, its laws, and interactions with newcomers still identifiable today, creating a

contradiction with modern discourses of Canadian national identity that present the nation as especially welcoming, multicultural, and humanitarian. While racism is not as blatant or crude today as it once was in the Canadian nation-state (to the point of being openly added into policy), it is still present in a systemic way, thanks to discursive formations disseminated over the centuries through channels of official nationalism, the formal education system, and, eventually, mass media. This chapter was necessary to inform my analysis and determine instances of interdiscursivity—the reutilization and recontextualization of these discourses from historical events, old and current policy, and ideologies to be combined and built into the collective self of the Canadian national identity that is assumed as a reality today.

The choice of critical discourse analysis (CDA) was made considering how it connected the elements of my theoretical framework: A discourse analysis conducted with a critical lens and a focus on power relations and oppression allowed me to reflect more accurately the connections between social learning, discourse, and power. The analysis, involving a collection of 804 news articles from three Canadian media websites known to have different political leanings, was conducted following the stages of Norman Fairclough's (2013)

"dialectical-relational version of CDA" (p. 230). I chose this methodology because of its focus on the dialectical relation between semiosis—the meaning produced by a system representation such as language (Hall,1997)—and other social elements, including social practice. I considered Fairclough's interest in making critical discourse analysis transdisciplinary through this methodology very applicable to my own positionality as a researcher, uniting the fields of media and adult learning in this project.

#### Findings, Implications, and Future Approaches

A total of six recurrent discourses referring to Syrian refugees and their representation to Canadian readers were found in news articles across three news websites (CBC News, *The National Post*, and *The Globe and Mail*) from 2015 and 2016—before, during, and after the biggest resettlement of Syrian refugees in Canada. Syrian refugees were represented as a reflection of Canada's national identity as humanitarian; as a potential burden (and benefit) to the Canadian nation and its economy; as a potential threat to Canada's safety; as problematic and unwilling to integrate to the Canadian nation; as privileged in comparison with other refugees and vulnerable groups; and as related to Canadian politics and political parties. An additional critical discourse analysis of stock images used to illustrate the news reinforced many of the discourses mentioned above and produced new representations, such as the 'infantilization' of Syrian refugees, and an emphasis on distance and difference from the reader through depictions of refugees as faceless shadows, coming from far away.

Seen together rather than as individual pieces, the identified discourses in news and opinion articles show a discursive formation surrounding the identity of Syrian refugees that emphasizes difference and othering, places their voices in the background compared to Canadians, and presents them not in their potential to become fellow Canadian citizens, but in relation to their potential as 'poor and deserving enough' from the Canadian humanitarian discourse standpoint or the benefit they could provide to Canada. There is an identifiable recontextualization of historical discourses that have existed in Canada as a form of exclusion of newcomers and racialized people. They are 'packaged' with Arabophobic and Orientalist

discourses that have been disseminated in Canada in the past and grew after the 9/11 attacks in the United States, conflating the racialized Arab with the representation of Muslim people as distant and difficult to understand, as a threat or potential enemies of the nation, and culturally 'backwards' (Hamdon, 2010; Said, 1997).

These discourses expose a clear contradiction between what they reflect from Canadians' socialized assumptions in relation to others, and what the Canadian national identity has been constructed to be. There are two lines of discursive formations: One is the public-facing, explicit set of discourses that Canadians reproduce from the state about being multicultural, welcoming of diversity, and humanitarian. The other is the underlying, less explicit set of discourses that show how Canadians are not always comfortable with difference, and can often categorize out-groups with generalizations that do not place them as equals from them, or as 'deserving' of the privilege of living in the Canadian nation. These two sets of discourses sometimes overlap or clash when disseminated massively from different sources and remain in the public sphere. However, both remain present in the collective consciousness, and the existence of these contradictions is not verbalized often enough.

Considering that news stories are often produced with the assumption of some 'common knowledge' and sociocultural context shared by the audience that does not need to be explained (Van Dijk, 2008a), and the fact that the origin of these exclusionary ideas towards Syrian refugees was never explained very explicitly to the audiences, I conclude that the discourses of othering have been internalized as something people just 'know' in the imagined community of the Canadian nation. It is important to note from this research as well that the general

assumptions and interdiscursivity that created these representations of Syrian refugees in the news are not a choice specific to one political ideology—these are collective ideas of what a Syrian refugee is or looks like which are present in Canadian outlets of diverse political leanings. This reinforces the concept of discourses of identity and othering learned as part of socialization. Rather than being taught currently through formal channels such as government policy or school textbooks, they have been disseminated and solidified socially and reproduced (perhaps unknowingly) by many journalists and readers, regardless of political affiliation, and likely in contradiction at times with the discourses that make up their own representation of individual self.

A central aspect of this project has been an emphasis on the dialectics between discourse and power, and between discourse and social practice. As such, it is necessary to recognize the implications of this group of discourses surrounding the representation of Syrian refugees.

Discourses like the ones found in this project have been constructed within and by the power structures we have in our society, founded on colonization and racism. In turn, these discourses are used to justify and perpetuate discriminatory practices and unequal power relations—even the timeline of the resettlement itself and the conversation about screening and selection were shifted due to popular perceptions anticipating refugees as a threat, an action with which the government provided validity to this discourse. By emphasizing difference and attaching categorizations to Syrian refugees that present them as a potentially threatening out-group to the Canadian nation, the possibility of an equitable, truly humanitarian, and more seamless integration process is hindered for them. The circulation of these discourses between media

sources, government, and the public sphere might affect interpersonal relations between locals and newcomers as well, making refugees' socialization and community-building processes more difficult in their new home.

Because there are tangible implications as a consequence of perpetuating discourses of othering, it is crucial to reflect on the real influence of mass media as a likely source of informal learning for adults, and study the outcomes in society more closely. Shortly after the terrorist attack in Paris in November, 2015, which sparked several news articles focused on the debate about delaying resettlement and strengthening security measures for accepting Syrian refugees, a mosque in Peterborough, Ontario, was deliberately set on fire (Freeze, 2015). Similar hate crimes against the Muslim community have been committed in Canada months and years later, some of which I have mentioned in past chapters. While it is not possible to attribute these crimes directly and exclusively to socialized discourses reproduced through news media, it is not possible either to deny their potential influence due to the wide reach of these media sites in Canada and the growing political polarization that is fed by online content, something I discussed in chapter 1. Paraphrasing John Richardson (2007), newspaper discourse—in this case, online news discourse—always aims to do something, even if that something is to 'inform.' What is the real objective, and what is the outcome produced by these news and opinion articles? What is the expected action or reaction from the audience?

The questions above invite the academic settings in the field of education to give a more detailed and timely look at adult learning outside of formal, non-formal, and self-directed efforts. While many instances of learning in adulthood occur intentionally and individually, there is a

vast amount of informal and incidental knowledge that does not happen in a vacuum. I suggest that, while social learning is not ignored, it could be further studied and developed in consideration of the global context and the rapid growth of digital technologies for communication and social interaction. It is also important to consider the overlap of disciplines in the quest for a better understanding of socially learned discourse. Learning has often been associated with theories of human psychology. However, the inclusion of communication theories and media research in education curricula can be helpful to identify the factors that affect social informal learning in adults in the twenty-first century. This should not be limited to students and researchers that are focused mostly on informal learning. For current and future educators practicing in formal institutions, the awareness and understanding of socialization, and the influence of media and digital channels as informal sources of knowledge to propagate in social contexts can provide the tools to identify the appearance of socialized discourses in formal settings and to address them more thoroughly. Drawing from Tisdell's (2008) words in her media and higher education research, there is also a crucial opportunity to consider discussing and teaching critical media literacy in formal education settings.

On the other side of the discussion, media studies, communication, and journalism are academic programs that could grow and benefit as well from a cross-educational approach through inclusion of adult learning theories in their curricula, creating an awareness of communicators as producers and facilitators of knowledge, and the social and ethical implications of this role. Since the Syrian refugee resettlement in 2016, many other groups of racialized people have arrived in Canada as refugees, creating new waves of harmful discourses

of othering and hostility toward the newcomers. During this time, disinformation on social media and political rhetoric in self-proclaimed non-mainstream media sites online has polarized populations in North America even further, exacerbating social issues like racism, hate speech, homophobia and transphobia, and more. These events make discussions about discourse and socialization through media even more relevant for our future as a real multicultural nation.

For future research directions, I suggest that this project is an initial step towards more discovery and questions regarding social discourse, media, and migration. While I was not able to develop an analysis on the audience's reactions and applications of the knowledge learned through these hundreds of news, many comments in response to the published articles on social media allowed for a glimpse into different ways in which one topic was comprehended by readers. What factors influence these differences? Is it possible to change core beliefs through socialization or mass-disseminated knowledge?

At the same time, it could be very enlightening to counter the lack of a 'voice' from the studied group in this research and develop a more complex study of the implications, if any, of mass media discourses and representations in the Syrian refugee community, and how they may affect their own understanding of their identity and place in the Canadian nation. Have they identified these discourses as well? Have their lived experiences reflected the presence of these discourses? How have they affected their resettlement process? Have the discourses contributed to their own construction of discourses about Canada and its population? All these questions could provide a broader understanding of the social wrong discussed in the project. Furthermore, this study could be repeated in the future analyzing discourses about other refugee and newcomer

populations in Canada, as well as racialized communities that did not immigrate to this nation, to identify similarities and differences from all these perspectives.

Whether it is by formal, non-formal or informal channels, it is crucial to educate and create awareness about discourses and unconscious biases that have been created and perpetuated through our social interactions. By encouraging a critical view into what society reflects through media (and therefore, looking into our own assumptions and discourses of othering as members of society) and challenging what the power structures create and validate through their own discourses, consciously or unconsciously, we can advance in our work to identify, expose and redress policy and social practices that perpetuate social wrongs, othering, discrimination, and inequality.

India.

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## Appendix A

## List of News and Opinion Pieces Collected for Analysis

**Table A1**Articles from CBC News, September 2015 to December 2016

Date	Headline	URL
	Chris Alexander defends Canada's refugee	https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/chris-alexander-immigration-syria-re
2015-09-02	response, blames media for ignoring crisis	fugee-crisis-conservatives-1.3213514
	Refugee crisis: Canada must do more,	https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/refugee-migrant-harper-election-1.3
2015-09-02	Harper's policies have failed, rivals say	213128
		https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/aunt-of-alan-kurdi-
	Aunt of Alan Kurdi, drowned Syrian boy, did	drowned-syrian-boy-did-not-apply-to-sponsor-family-in-canada-1.321
2015-09-03	not apply to sponsor family in Canada	4517
	Islanders looking to help support Syrian	https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/prince-edward-island/islanders-looki
2015-09-03	refugees	ng-to-help-support-syrian-refugees-1.3215178
	Little Alan Kurdi, washed ashore, suddenly	https://www.cbc.ca/news/world/little-alan-kurdi-washed-ashore-sudde
2015-09-03	refocuses Syrian tragedy: Nahlah Ayed	nly-refocuses-syrian-tragedy-nahlah-ayed-1.3213893
	Refugee crisis, drowned Syrian boy shift	https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/syria-migrants-canada-drowned-mig
2015-09-03	focus of election campaign	rants-leaders-respond-1.3213878
	Canada's refugee policy questioned after	https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/syria-refugees-canada-immigration-
2015-09-04	Syrian boy's drowning	alan-kurdi-1.3214850
	Chris Alexander defends Canada's refugee	https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/chris-alexander-immigration-syria-re
2015-09-02	response, blames media for ignoring crisis	fugee-crisis-conservatives-1.3213514

	Refugee crisis: Canada must do more,	https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/refugee-migrant-harper-election-1.3
2015-09-02	Harper's policies have failed, rivals say	213128
		https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/aunt-of-alan-kurdi-
	Aunt of Alan Kurdi, drowned Syrian boy, did	drowned-syrian-boy-did-not-apply-to-sponsor-family-in-canada-1.321
2015-09-03	not apply to sponsor family in Canada	4517
	Islanders looking to help support Syrian	https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/prince-edward-island/islanders-looki
2015-09-03	refugees	ng-to-help-support-syrian-refugees-1.3215178
	Little Alan Kurdi, washed ashore, suddenly	https://www.cbc.ca/news/world/little-alan-kurdi-washed-ashore-sudde
2015-09-03	refocuses Syrian tragedy: Nahlah Ayed	nly-refocuses-syrian-tragedy-nahlah-ayed-1.3213893
	Refugee crisis, drowned Syrian boy shift	https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/syria-migrants-canada-drowned-mig
2015-09-03	focus of election campaign	rants-leaders-respond-1.3213878
	Canada's refugee policy questioned after	https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/syria-refugees-canada-immigration-
2015-09-04	Syrian boy's drowning	alan-kurdi-1.3214850
	Harper wants to keep refugee crisis focus on	https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/harper-alan-kurdi-photo-syria-refuge
2015-09-04	big picture: Chris Hall	es-1.3215028
	Greg Selinger, Manitoba premier, asks feds	https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/selinger-refugee-sponsorship-1.3217
2015-09-06	to double refugee sponsorship cap	438
	Syrian refugees welcome in New Brunswick,	https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/new-brunswick/syrian-refugees-welc
2015-09-07	says minister	ome-in-new-brunswick-says-minister-1.3218632
	Stephen Harper says Canada will not airlift	https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/stephen-harper-says-canada-will-not
2015-09-08	refugees without proper security screening	-airlift-refugees-without-proper-security-screening-1.3219359
	Refugee reality check: the truth about	https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/refugee-reality-chec
2015-09-09	sponsoring	k-the-truth-about-sponsoring-1.3220130
	Stephen Harper suggests Canada will do	https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/canada-election-2015-syria-refugee-
2015-09-10	more to help Syrian refugees	canada-government-1.3221757

	Father of drowned Syrian boy Alan Kurdi	https://www.cbc.ca/news/world/father-of-drowned-syrian-boy-alan-ku
2015-09-11	blames Canada for death of wife and son	rdi-blames-canada-for-death-of-wife-and-son-1.3223846
	Government creates emergency relief fund to	https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/canada-election-2015-federal-human
2015-09-12	aid Syrian crisis victims	itarian-assistance-syrians-1.3225728
		https://www.cbc.ca/radio/thehouse/syrian-refugee-crisis-what-s-next-1
	Tories set to revamp Syrian refugee response	.3222463/tories-set-to-revamp-syrian-refugee-response-in-wake-of-cri
2015-09-12	in wake of criticism, Jason Kenney says	ticism-jason-kenney-says-1.3225298
	Ottawa program offering free legal advice	https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/ottawa-program-offering-free
	for Syrian refugee sponsors expanding	-legal-advice-for-syrian-refugee-sponsors-expanding-nationally-1.325
2015-10-02	nationally	4599
	24 Syrian refugees arrive in Winnipeg after	https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/24-syrian-refugees-arrive-i
2015-10-05	year of work, \$100K in donations	n-winnipeg-after-year-of-work-100k-in-donations-1.3257922
	Sponsoring Syrian refugees easier said than	https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/sponsoring-syrian-refugees-i
2015-10-08	done, Calgary group finds	s-easier-said-than-done-1.3261890
	Stephen Harper denies PMO staff vetted	https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/canada-election-2015-refugee-proce
2015-10-08	Syrian refugee files	ssing-pmo-1.3262423
	Justin Trudeau says PMO role in refugee	https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/trudeau-middle-class-tax-cut-refuge
2015-10-09	resettlement 'disgusting'	es-1.3264339
	Halifax rally wants country to let in more	https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/halifax-rally-syrian-refu
2015-10-10	Syrian refugees	gees-syria-1.3266444
	Syrian refugee family hopes Toronto church	https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/programs/metromorning/toro
2015-10-11	sponsorship leads to expedited visas	nto-church-seeks-emergency-visa-syrian-family-1.3266995
	Winnipeggers learn about sponsoring Syrian	https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/winnipeggers-learn-about-
2015-10-20	refugees at info session	sponsoring-syrian-refugees-at-info-session-1.3278529
2015-10-22	Syrian refugees among recipients of aid from	https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatchewan/syrian-refugees-amon

	donated crops	g-recipients-of-aid-from-donated-crops-1.3284578
	Justin Trudeau 'is a good person', says Tima	https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/tima-kurdi-justin-tr
2015-10-23	Kurdi, aunt of drowned Syrian boy	udeau-alan-syrian-boy-drowned-1.3286795
	'Would Canada take us?' The cry from	https://www.cbc.ca/news/world/syria-refugees-germany-canada-1.328
2015-10-24	Germany's refugee shelters	6239
	Justin Trudeau urged to take action on Syrian	https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/justin-trudeau-urged-to-take-action-
2015-10-26	refugees	on-syrian-refugees-1.3289058
	Justin Trudeau to move forward with	https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/justin-trudeau-to-move-forward-wit
2015-10-27	ambitious agenda by year's end	h-ambitious-agenda-by-year-s-end-1.3291425
	Justin Trudeau's promise to take 25,000	https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/trudeau-syria-refugees-settlement-gr
2015-10-28	Syrian refugees this year 'problematic'	oups-1.3291959
	Syrian refugees to be welcomed by several	https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/syrian-refugees-nova-sc
2015-10-28	Nova Scotia communities	otia-1.3293279
	Ottawa woman's family told they must flee	
	Syrian home to get chance to come to	
2015-10-30	Canada	https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/family-flee-syria-1.3296084
	Brad Peyton's family screens San Andreas to	https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/newfoundland-labrador/peyton-sana
2015-11-03	bring Syrian refugees to Gander	ndreas-refugees-1.3301515
	Manitoba social agencies gear up for Syrian	https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/manitoba-social-agencies-s
2015-11-05	refugee arrival	yria-refugees-1.3305472
	Syrian refugee plan has officials 'working	https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/canada-mccallum-syrian-refugee-pla
2015-11-07	around the clock,' McCallum says	n-1.3307788
	Refugees struggle to cope with their	https://www.cbc.ca/news/world/refugees-europe-trauma-hasan-abdalla
2015-11-08	traumatic memories	-1.3297380
2015-11-09	Syrian refugee crisis: Canada strikes	https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/immigration-minister-john-mccallu

	committee to fast track resettlement	m-1.3310839
	Thousands of Syrian refugees expected in	https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/refugees-coming-to
2015-11-09	B.C. by end of the year	-bc-1.3310809
	Syrian refugees can count on help from City	https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/prince-edward-island/refugees-charlo
2015-11-10	of Charlottetown: mayor	ttetown-mayor-1.3312658
	Syrian refugees: Resort manager offers to let	https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/syrain-refugees-res
2015-11-10	newcomers stay at his place	ort-manager-1.3313489
	Aid group worries non-Syrian refugees may	https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/aid-group-worries-non-syri
2015-11-11	be made to wait longer	an-refugees-may-be-made-to-wait-longer-1.3313833
	Syrian refugee influx expected in Calgary	https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/calgary-syrian-refugees-hous
2015-11-11	prompts warning of housing 'chaos'	ing-chaos-1.3314646
	Syrian refugees will need mental health	https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/mental-health-refug
2015-11-11	support, says B.C. advocate	ees-1.3314284
	Cabinet commits to 'quick and substantial	https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/liberal-syrian-refugee-plan-1.331555
2015-11-12	help' for refugees but gives few details	4
	Quebec's Syrian resettlement plan 'chaotic',	https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/syrian-refugees-quebec-gov
2015-11-12	refugee advocate says	ernment-1.3316952
	Syrian refugees get online tutoring from	https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/syrian-refugees-tutoring-m
2015-11-12	McGill University students	cgill-university-1.3315471
	100 Syrian refugee families can resettle in	https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/prince-edward-island/pei-syrian-refu
2015-11-13	P.E.I., says premier	gee-families-1.3317663
	New Brunswick could handle 1,500 Syrian	https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/new-brunswick/new-brunswick-syria
2015-11-13	refugees	n-refugees-1.3317774
	Refugee agencies in Alberta prepare to	https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/refugee-agencies-in-albert
2015-11-13	welcome 3,000 Syrians	a-prepare-to-welcome-3-000-syrians-1.3318732

	Standing room only at Syrian refugee	https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/new-brunswick/refugees-moncton-m
2015-11-13	meeting in Moncton	eeting-syria-help-1.3317380
	Syrian refugee families get support from	https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/syrian-refugee-bc-
2015-11-13	B.C. Muslim Association	muslim-association-1.3317893
	Syrian refugees will help stimulate economy,	https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/syrian-refugees-halifax-e
2015-11-13	says Halifax Chamber of Commerce	ntrepreneurs-economy-1.3317089
	Canada's Syrian refugee target could delay	
2015-11-15	non-Syrian applicants, advocates worry	https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/refugees-non-syrian-1.3316467
	Denis Coderre and Régis Labeaume mayors	https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/syrian-refugees-canada-mo
2015-11-16	differ on Syrian refugee file	ntreal-mayor-1.3321642
	Nenshi urges Calgary to welcome Syrian	https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/syrian-refugees-welcome-in-
2015-11-16	refugees with 'open arms'	calgary-open-arms-nenshi-1.3321682
	Paris attacks won't deter Syrian refugee	https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/new-brunswick/new-brunswick-syria
2015-11-16	plans, Landry says	n-refugees-1.3320854
	Sask. Premier Brad Wall asks Ottawa to	https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatoon/sask-premier-brad-wall-as
2015-11-16	suspend Syrian refugee plan	ks-ottawa-to-suspend-syrian-refugee-plan-1.3321159
		https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatchewan/sask-prepares-for-2-00
	Sask. prepares for 2,000 Syrian refugees in	0-syrian-refugees-in-45-days-while-premier-wall-calls-for-pause-1.33
2015-11-16	45 days, while Premier Wall calls for pause	21435
	Syrian refugee deadline tough to meet,	https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/quebec-announces-syrian-r
2015-11-16	Quebec immigration minister says	efugee-plan-1.3320742
	Syrian refugee security screening	
	'paramount,' says Health Minister Jane	https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/syrian-refugee-security-screening-pa
2015-11-16	Philpott	ramount-says-health-minister-jane-philpott-1.3318227
2015-11-16	Syrian refugees settling at highest per capita	https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/syrian-refugees-sett

	rate in Coquitlam	lement-where-surrey-coquitlam-burnaby-bc-richmond-vancouver-1.33
	_	21584
	Syrian refugees welcomed to B.C. despite	https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/paris-attacks-syrian
2015-11-16	Paris attacks	-resettlement-refugees-b-c-iss-bc-1.3321480
	Toronto nowhere near ready for refugees,	https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/programs/metromorning/city
2015-11-16	citizenship judge says	-of-sanctuary-1.3318245
	Canadians keen to fight ISIS but lose zeal to	https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/vote-compass-surveys-paris-attacks-
2015-11-17	admit refugees, surveys suggest	refugees-isis-canada-1.3322934
	Régis Labeaume says Syrian orphans	https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/quebec-city-regis-labeaume
2015-11-17	preferable to 'frustrated' young men	-syrian-orphans-1.3323526
	Syrian refugee backlash 'un-Canadian,' says	https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/syrian-refugees-war
2015-11-17	former B.C. premier Ujjal Dosanjh	m-welcome-northern-bc-christy-clark-1.3322375
	What you need to know to help Syrian	https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/syrian-refugee-settle-toronto-
2015-11-17	refugees settle in Toronto	1.3322163
	Yvonne Jones slams 'very racist, very hateful'	https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/newfoundland-labrador/refugee-cont
2015-11-17	comments against Syrian refugees	roversy-in-goose-bay-1.3322572
		https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/programs/metromorning/afte
	After migration, many Syrians coming to	r-migration-many-syrians-coming-to-toronto-face-psychological-chall
2015-11-18	Toronto face psychological challenges	enges-1.3323403
	From Aleppo to Toronto: Syrian family	https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/programs/metromorning/syri
2015-11-18	arrives in Canada safe but penniless	an-refugee-finances-1.3324860
	Quebec immigration minister tells mayors to	https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/kathleen-weil-regis-labeau
2015-11-18	watch their tone on refugees	me-refugees-1.3325597
	Refugee crisis: Vancouver Jewish temple	https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/refugee-crisis-templ
2015-11-18	raises \$40K to sponsor Syrian family	e-shalom-sponsors-syrian-refugee-family-1.3325410

	Syrian refugees: Nova Scotia 211 line	https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/nova-scotia-211-syrian-r
2015-11-18	swamped with calls offering help	efugee-calls-1.3324754
	Syrian refugees: B.C. government checking	https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/syrian-refugees-bc-
2015-11-18	capacity of regions to settle newcomers	settlement-backlash-plan-1.3324702
	Syrian refugees pose low risk, but no reason	https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/syrian-refugees-security-risks-paris-
2015-11-18	to rush process, experts say	attacks-canada-1.3323603
	Calgary Syrian refugee settlement full of	https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/calgary-syrian-refugee-info-s
2015-11-19	challenges, questions	ession-1.3327382
	Refugees should not be made scapegoats for	https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/refugees-scapegoats-attacks-
2015-11-19	Paris attacks, Ontario groups say	1.3326653
	Refugees to be temporarily housed at	https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/refugees-temporary-military-housin
2015-11-19	military sites in Quebec, Ontario	g-quebec-ontario-1.3326462
	Syrian refugee family to benefit from couple	https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/toronto-wedding-syrian-refu
2015-11-19	cancelling big wedding	gees-1.3326652
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2015-11-19	building for Syrian refugees	e-developer-ian-gillespie-syrian-refugees-1.3327123
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2015-11-20	refugee influx	va-scotia-1.3327464
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	Liberals to announce details of Syrian	
2015-11-20	refugee plan Tuesday	https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/syrian-refugee-plan-1.3328190
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2015-11-23	Helping Syrian refugees full of rewards says	https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/settlement-mentor-r

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2015-11-23	with families	y-1.3331950
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2015-11-24	know and don't know	ent-1.3331754
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2015-11-24	of a breather,' settlement group says	e-deadline-a-bit-of-a-breather-settlement-group-says-1.3335655
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	Liberals won't meet deadline to bring 25,000	https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/liberal-plan-syrian-refugees-1.33336
2015-11-24	Syrian refugees to Canada by year's end	23
	Refugees in B.C.: Coming to Vancouver will	https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/vancouver-bc-syria
2015-11-24	be tough, immigration lawyer says	n-refugees-cost-1.3334258
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	Syrian refugees in Canada: Military, medical	https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/syrian-refugees-housing-trenton-1.33
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2015-11-25	end of February	to-gatineau-by-end-of-february-1.3337501
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2015-11-25	2017	n-1.3336046
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2015-11-26	bring in up to 2,000 Syrian refugees	3337923
	Saint John YMCA seeking volunteers to help	https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/new-brunswick/saint-john-ymca-refu
2015-11-26	resettle refugees	gees-1.3338158
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2015-11-26	to do well, psychiatrist says	https://www.cbc.ca/news/health/syrian-refugee-children-1.3338602
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2015-11-26	Syrian refugees supported by furniture drive	-supported-by-furniture-drive-1.3337853

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	Syrian refugees: 7 ways you can help them	https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/syrian-refugees-immigrant-d
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2015-12-01	Dec. 10, document says	-to-start-dec-10-document-says-1.3346228
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2015-12-01	settling into new life in N.L.	-family-nl-1.3343284
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2015-12-08	refugees' health needs	https://www.cbc.ca/news/health/syrian-refugee-health-1.3355934
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2015-12-08	flights start landing?	55763
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2015-12-09	living in Calgary	4
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2015-12-10	backlash is online, councillor says	ee-sponsor-backlash-1.3357263
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2015-12-10	Syrian refugees	-centre-donations-1.3358922
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2015-12-10	after more than 10 years apart	d-1.3360173
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2015-12-10	Calgary despite Alberta's economic woes	m-welcome-1.3358845
2015-12-10	Syrian refugees now in Toronto look forward	https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/syria-refugees-arrive-1.3360

	to 'beautiful future'	154
	After arrival, the hard work of resettling	https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/programs/metromorning/syri
2015-12-11	begins for Syrian refugees	an-refugees-resettlement-1.3359956
	Scarborough mother and daughter to host 43	https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/syrian-refugees-scarborough-
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2015-12-11	events in Canada Council initiative	s-free-shows-1.3360968
	Refugees' first year in Canada can be one of	https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/refugees-first-year-in-canada-1.3361
2015-12-12	challenges, joy	279
	P.E.I. welcomes 1st refugee under Liberal	https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/prince-edward-island/government-sp
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2015-12-14	homeless, group says	n-refugees-1.3363572
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2015-12-15	Syrian refugees' resettlement in Toronto, say	66345

	volunteers	
	Suppliers for Syrian refugee welcome kits	https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/syrian-refugees-welcome-kits-1.336
2015-12-15	kept secret for security reasons	3962
	Syrian refugees may work through trauma	https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/syrian-refugees-may-work
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2015-12-16	Syrian refugees to Canada by year's end	3367474
	Coquitlam Syrian family says this will be	https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/coquitlam-syrian-fa
2015-12-16	'the best Christmas ever'	mily-says-this-will-be-the-best-christmas-ever-1.3368855
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2015-12-16	welcoming party and politicians	368885
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2015-12-17	praised in Arab media	-1.3368223
	Prioritize privately-sponsored Syrian	https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/prioritize-privately-
2015-12-17	refugees first, says Vancouver rabbi	sponsored-syrian-refugees-1.3369616
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	Syrian refugees in Canada could hit 50,000	https://www.cbc.ca/news/world/canada-syrian-refugees-2016-1.33740
2015-12-20	next year, says McCallum	69
	Why Canada's refugee plan falls well short	https://www.cbc.ca/news/world/why-canada-s-refugee-plan-falls-well-
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2015-12-21	delayed in favour of Syrian applicants	790
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2015-12-23	Canadian soil' by year's end: McCallum	ar-end-1.3378261
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	Justin Trudeau's Christmas message urges	https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/justin-trudeau-christmas-message-1.
2015-12-23	warm welcome to Syrian refugees	3378111
	Syrian refugees not always available for	https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/refugee-sponsors-non-syrians-1.3376
2015-12-23	sponsorship, Canadians learn	790
	Siham's story: 'I wanted to believe we could	
2015-12-26	have a peaceful life again'	https://www.cbc.ca/news/world/siham-refugee-diary-1.3378657
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2015-12-28	Syrian refugee family 'so happy' in Canada	9374
	Tima Kurdi welcomes her family to Metro	https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/tima-kurdi-welcom
2015-12-28	Vancouver	es-her-family-to-metro-vancouver-1.3382194
	Syrian refugee says Halifax arrival was 'the	https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/syrain-refguees-halifax-s
2015-12-29	moment' of his life	tory-1.3382591
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2015-12-30	John's Thursday	ees-arrive-st-johns-dec-2015-1.3384624
	Syrian refugee family of 7 to arrive in	https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/syrian-families-arrive-ne
2015-12-31	Halifax New Year's Day	w-years-1.3386047
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2015-12-31	N.B.	redericton-1.3386297

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2015-12-31	Summerside	-home-shown-off-in-summerside-1.3385607
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	Alan Kurdi's family opens hair salon in	air-salon-with-refugee-brother-mohammad-working-beside-her-1.338
2016-01-02	Canada	7473
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2016-01-06	after arrival in Toronto	m-arrives-in-toronto-1.3391690
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2016-01-06	interactive door to Syrian refugees	-map-jennifer-rae-pierce-1.3391655
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	more money for food than Canadians on	https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/do-government-assisted-refugees-re
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	Trudeau condemns pepper spray attack at	https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/pepper-spray-attack
2016-01-09	Vancouver event for Syrian refugees	-1.3396899
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	Refugee sponsors struggle to find available	https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/refugee-sponsors-st
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2016-01-21	baskets to Syrian refugees	h-syrian-refugee-donations-1.3414554
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	Summerside mayor 'surprised' no Syrian	https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/prince-edward-island/pei-summersid
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2016-02-04	Kurdi's cousins adjusting to life in Canada	551
	Syrian refugee dentist and engineer face long	https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/syrian-refugee-dent
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2016-02-22	25,000 refugees this week	.3459072
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2016-02-23	permanent homes, as Ottawa seeks hotels	uesday-1.3455579
	RCMP creates how-to document for	https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/rcmp-refugee-document-arrival-1.34
2016-02-23	understanding new Syrian refugees	59234
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2016-02-29	Phase 2, says John McCallum	69589
	Maritime provinces lead the way in resettling	https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/new-brunswick/syrian-refugees-new-
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2016-03-01	refugees, government says	saskatchewan-1.3471906
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	Syrian refugee family in Dartmouth	https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/syrian-refugee-family-da
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2016-03-09	Syrian refugees find work against the odds	d-work-against-the-odds-1.3482349
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	Federal spending spiked during final	https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/syrian-refugees-spending-deadline-1
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2016-06-23	thousands of arrivals still months away	649862
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2016-07-01	away from scars of war	35
	Syrian refugee celebrates 'amazing' 1st	https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/syrian-refugee-cele
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**Table A2**Articles from The Globe and Mail, September 2015 to December 2016

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2015-09-02	The migrant crisis: here's why it's not what you think	https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/world/europes-migrant-crisis-eight-reasons-its-not-what-youthink/article26194675/
2015-09-03	'I was only hoping to provide a better life for my children,' father of drowned migrant boy says	https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/world/they-died-in-my-arm s-father-of-drowned-migrant-boy-speaks-out/article26207543/
2015-09-03	Activist wearing T-shirt referring to dead Syrian boy arrested at Harper event	https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/british-columbia/activist-we aring-t-shirt-referring-to-dead-syrian-boy-arrested-at-harper-event/ar ticle26222911/
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2015-09-03	Boy on the beach reminds us that the migrant crisis is also Canada's crisis	https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/world/boy-on-the-beach-re minds-us-that-the-migrant-crisis-is-also-canadas-crisis/article262032 45/
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2015-09-03	Family of drowned boy did not apply for asylum: Ottawa	https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/syrian-family-whose-children-were-found-on-turkish-beach-tried-to-come-to-canada/arti

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**Table A3**Articles from The National Post, September 2015 to December 2016

Date	Headline	URL
2015-09-02	Terry Glavin: Canada is watching Syria die	https://nationalpost.com/opinion/terry-glavin-the-tears-of-syria
	'I want the whole world to see': Father of	
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2015-09-03	Refugee crisis isn't as bad as it seems, Harper says responding to photo of dead boy, it's 'far, far worse'	https://nationalpost.com/news/politics/refugee-crisis-isnt-as-bad-as-it-seems-harper-says-responding-to-photo-of-dead-boy-its-far-far-worse
2015-09-04	'He wants to staynext to them': Alan Kurdi's father buries his wife and two sons in hometown they fled	https://nationalpost.com/news/world/he-wants-to-staynext-to-them-ala n-kurdis-father-buries-his-wife-and-two-sons-in-hometown-they-fled/
2015-09-04	Christie Blatchford: Alan Kurdi's story should galvanize the world — but Harper can't be blamed for this tragedy	https://nationalpost.com/news/politics/christie-blatchford-alan-kurdis-story-should-galvanize-the-world-but-harper-cant-be-blamed-for-this-tragedy
2015-09-04	Most Canadians believe their country should do more for migrants: poll	https://nationalpost.com/news/politics/most-canadians-believe-their-country-should-do-more-for-migrants-poll
2015-09-04	National Post View: We have been too willing to think refugees as a Middle East crisis: It is a global crisis	https://nationalpost.com/opinion/national-post-view-we-have-been-to o-willing-to-think-of-the-refugee-catastrophe-as-a-middle-east-crisis-i t-is-a-global-crisis
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