

# **Representations of Environmentally Displaced People in Canadian**

## **Print Media**

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Thesis submitted to the

Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies

In partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the Master of Arts degree in Sociology

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## Abstract

**Context:** This thesis analyzes media coverage in Canada of environmentally displaced people (EDP) due to their recent prominence in political discussions on a national and international level as well as in the literature.

**Objectives:** This thesis has three goals, notably (1) to raise awareness of EDP as a social phenomenon; (2) to understand how EDP are currently constructed in the public sphere; and (3) to analyze whether Canadian media characterizes EDP within discourses of victimization and/or devictimization. Ultimately, this thesis investigates: *How does Canadian print media represent environmentally displaced people?*

**Methodology:** A total of 149 (132 English and 17 French) Canadian news articles, appearing from 2000 to 2017, were selected for analysis through a search strategy that included specific key words. The articles selected appeared in the Toronto Star, Globe & Mail, Montreal Gazette, Ottawa Citizen, Vancouver Sun, Le Journal de Québec, La Presse, and Canada Newswire.

**Results:** The results were analyzed by using a frame analysis. Based on this analysis, a few key points were commonly used to represent EDP, including the uncertainty over which terms to use, their quantification, as well as a scare tactic to entice action towards climate change. Overall, the media tended to portray EDP using themes of devictimization.

**Conclusion:** Future research should be conducted to continue to analyze media representations of those displaced. It is also imperative to collect more data on EDP in order to resolve the debate around their definition and officially recognize one term to help facilitate research and increase the legitimacy of those displaced - whether they are recognized as migrants or refugees.

## Résumé

**Contexte :** Cette thèse analyse les reportages médiatiques au Canada des personnes déplacées par l'environnement (PDE). Ce sujet a récemment attiré attention à cause des discussions politiques nationales et internationales, ainsi que des publications dans la littérature.

**Objectives :** Cette thèse a trois buts, notamment (1) d'apporter attention à ce phénomène social, (2) de comprendre comment les PDE sont construits dans le sphère publique, et (3) d'essayer d'analyser si les médias canadiens caractérisent les PDE par des discours de victimisation et/ou de dévictimisation. Cette thèse examine : *Comment la presse écrite canadienne représente-t-elle les personnes déplacées par l'environnement?*

**Méthodologie :** Une stratégie de recherche a été développée à travers une sélection de mots clés, une période de temps entre 2000 et 2017, et une concentration sur le Toronto Star, Globe & Mail, Montréal Gazette, Ottawa Citizen, Vancouver Sun, Le Journal de Québec, La Presse et Canada Newswire. En total, 149 articles de journal, dont 132 sont en anglais et 17 en français, ont été choisis.

**Résultats :** Les résultats de cette thèse ont été analysés à l'aide d'une analyse de cadre. Certains thèmes ont souvent émergé, notamment l'incertitude concernant les termes utilisés, leur quantification, ainsi qu'une tactique de peur incitant action envers le changement climatique. En général, les médias ont eu tendance de représenter les PDE avec des thèmes de dévictimisation.

**Conclusion :** Des recherches futures sont encouragées à continuer d'analyser les représentations médiatiques des PDF. Il est aussi important de collecter plus de données sur les PDF afin de résoudre le débat autour de leur définition et de reconnaître un seul concept pour faciliter la recherche et accroître leur légitimité comme migrants ou comme réfugiés.

## Abbreviations

EDP = Environmentally Displaced People

GHG= Greenhouse Gas

IDMC = Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre

IDP = Internally Displaced People

IOM = International Organization for Migration

IPAC = the Institute of Public Administration of Canada

IPCC = Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

NGO = Non-Governmental Organization

OECD = Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

UN = United Nations

UNHCR = United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UNISDR = United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction

U.S. = United States of America

## Acknowledgements

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Dr. Nathan Young of the School of Sociology and Anthropology of the University of Ottawa for his supervision as well as his help, support and guidance throughout this process – and especially for taking me on as a student at the very last minute. I am so appreciative that I was able to see my thesis topic through.

A big thank you to my Thesis Committee members Dr. Philippe Couton and Dr. Kathleen Rodgers for all their suggestions and feedback, which greatly helped shape my thesis. I would like to thank Dr. Jose Lopez for his encouragement and revision of my proposal during its initial stages, and Dr. Hilda Joyce Portilla who first drew my attention to environmentally displaced people from a sociological perspective.

I would also like to acknowledge Charlotte for all her tireless input and revision. I cannot imagine having gone through this process without her continuous encouragement.

A big thank you to my family for their continued support through every endeavour, and especially Carina and Shane for all their revision throughout this process, and to my parents for helping me with tuition costs. To all my friends for much needed thesis breaks. And to Matthew, for allowing me to read every single draft, good or bad, for all the study date nights, and for his unconditional support.

# Chapter One: Introduction

## Introduction of the Topic

Environmental displacement is not a recent phenomenon. In fact, it dates back to the first type of migration, which in somewhat archaic language is termed “primitive migration” (Petersen, 1958). This primitive form of migration is driven by an ecological push, as those affected are unable to cope with nature’s forces like droughts and crop failures (Huntington, 1907; Petersen, 1958); therefore, humans and animals alike emigrate in order to avoid conflict over an insufficiency of resources (Piguet, 2012). In fact, it has been argued that environmental reasons were the main cause for the fall of the Roman Empire, caused by “barbarian invasions” of Europe due to the climate in Eastern Asia that was becoming increasingly drier and inhabitable (Huntington, 1907). Historically, environmental migration caused the colonisation of Greenland by the Vikings, the famine migration in northern Germany in 1316, the desertification of the Arabian Peninsula which led to the birth of the ancient Egyptian civilisation (Afifi & Jäger, 2010), and the nomadic movements of the Mayans (Krishnamurthy, 2012). Environmental migration is also viewed as the root cause of the 1930s Dust Bowl migration, which is regarded as the most important population movement in the U.S. (Ionesco, 2016). The arid conditions caused severe dust storms, which in turn forced the displacement of 2.5 million people from Oklahoma, Texas and Arkansas towards the west of the country (Ionesco, 2016).

This ancient form of migration, caused by environmental displacement, has begun to garner more public attention. For instance, the label *environmental refugee* was introduced in the past few decades to designate individuals fleeing a drought, during the 1970s, in the Sahel region of Africa (Urban, 2005). This major catastrophe ruined agricultural and pastoral land by rendering it cracked



and infertile, affecting five different countries in the area (Urban, 2005). Research now reports that climate change is expected to increase the frequency of sudden-onset disasters, such as storms and floods, worsen the consequences of slow-onset disasters, like droughts, and further affect gradual processes of environmental degradation, such as desertification (OECD, 2016).

Although the subject of EDP is beginning to become more prominent in news media as well as in geographical, policy-oriented, migratory and international legal studies, there is still little known about the representations of these displaced people. In fact, no research currently exists that analyzes the representations of all EDP in Canadian media. It is particularly important to understand media representations of EDP since the goal of media coverage is to define problems, diagnose causes, make moral judgments and suggest solutions (Trumbo, 1996). As such, there is a need to analyze media in order to gain a better understanding of how EDP are beginning to be constructed as a social problem to the Canadian public. Therefore, this thesis seeks to analyze: *How does Canadian print media represent environmentally displaced people?*

## Organization of the Thesis

In order to answer this research question, this thesis is divided into seven chapters, each covering an important aspect of the research process. In Chapter Two, the context of the thesis will be explored. This includes the definitions of several key concepts, notably EDP, displacement, displaced persons, environmental issues, climate change, and internally displaced people. In addition, this chapter presents an overview of recent statistics related to environmental displacement. It also describes Canada's role regarding this type of displacement, including climate change disasters in Canada, the current investment toward climate change, the pressure on

Canada to adopt formal legal protections, and the two cases where Canada offered temporary protection measures.

In Chapter Three, the background and rationale for the thesis are provided. Notably, this chapter is further divided into two sections: one that serves as a literature review, while the other explains the research rationale and objectives. In the literature review, several different topics are covered, including the history of migration and the classification of EDP, the debate over the terminology, climate change and migration, political and security concerns surrounding migration, media representations of climate issues, and media representations of EDP and refugees. Along with the literature review, this chapter states the empirical and social contributions of the thesis, the three objectives of the research, as well as the primary and secondary research questions.

The following chapter, Chapter Four, introduces relevant theory to the thesis in a theoretical framework. In particular, this chapter explains the power and influence of media through the media-dependency hypothesis, cultural hegemony, symbolic interactionism and social constructionism. Thereafter, media representations and frames are described, along with frame analysis and critical frame analysis, which are the type of analyses conducted for this thesis. Lastly, this chapter explores the concepts of banal nationalism and imaginative geography in addition to the theory of minority-group relations.

Chapter Five describes the methodology of this thesis and is divided into two different sections. The first explains the search strategy, which explores the different decisions taken in order to determine specific key words, a time range, newspapers, region, language and how best to remove duplicates. The second section of this chapter describes the analysis procedures. This description of the procedures include the analytical tool used, the approach selected, as well as the different deductive frames chosen to structure the analysis of the news articles, notably the name

of the article, the author, the date of publication, the newspaper, the type of article, the tone, the location of the environmental disaster, the type of disaster (sudden- or slow-onset disasters), the actors mentioned (passive or active), as well as the key themes.

Following the methodology in Chapter Five, Chapter Six presents the analysis of this thesis. This detailed chapter is further composed of three distinct parts. Since the newspaper articles generally do not specifically concern EDP and cover multiple other topics instead (i.e. climate change, political parties, documentaries, etc.), the results were consequently divided into different parts: Part A presents the results obtained that specifically concern EDP, while Part B describes a few key themes that were frequently mentioned in the news articles. In particular, Part A highlights nine different results, including the uncertainty surrounding EDP terms, the definition of EDP, the EDP's country of origin, the description of the event(s) leading to/causing displacement, EDP as quantitative numbers, security concerns, EDP as active or passive, the tone of the news articles, and the frequency of EDP coverage. On the other hand, Part B concentrates on the sources and experts consulted, climate change solutions, as well as the political in the environmental. The last part of Chapter Six, Part C, offers a discussion of the analyzed results. This discussion centers around Canadians' perceptions of EDP, the victimization and/or devictimization of EDP, as well as a critical analysis of the news coverage on EDP.

The final chapter, Chapter Seven, presents the conclusion. This chapter is further structured into three sections, where the first acts as a summary of the thesis in order to briefly explain the results, while the second section explains the limitations of the thesis. The third and final section of the conclusion describes potential future research avenues that could/should be explored in order to obtain a better understanding of media representations of EDP in Canadian newspapers and to

go further by conducting more in-depth studies on how these displaced people are constructed as a social problem.

## Chapter Two: Context

### Definitions

With the recent prominence of EDP, there have been a multitude of terms used to classify the people who are forced to relocate due to environmental disasters (sudden-onset, slow-onset or degradation), such as *environmental refugees*, *environmentally displaced people*, *climate migrants* and *forced environmental migrants* (D'Aoust, 2012; Omeziri & Gore, 2014). For the purpose of this thesis, these individuals will be referred to as *environmentally displaced people* (EDP). This term has a multifaceted definition since there is currently a large debate over the legal status of these people and the correct terminology to use, as EDP do not fit into the internationally accepted categories of refugees or internally displaced people (Boano et al., 2008). In particular, the term *migrant* ignores the urgent, extreme consequences and the vulnerability experienced by those displaced (Kovic, 2008; Mastaler, 2015), and the term *refugee* could impact the legitimacy of political refugees' claims (Afifi & Jäger, 2010; Castles, 2002). As such, EDP acts an umbrella term to encompass all other concepts. Although most definitions of EDP tend to describe them in terms of *what they are not*, the International Organization of Migration (IOM) provides a clear definition of EDP, as:

Persons who are displaced within their country of habitual residence or who have crossed an international border and for whom environmental degradation, deterioration or destruction is a major cause of their displacement, although not necessarily the sole one. This term is used as a less controversial alternative to environmental refugee or climate refugee that have no legal basis or *raison d'être* in international law, to refer to a category of environmental migrants whose movement is of a clearly forced nature (2011, p. 34).

To better understand this definition, several concepts need to be defined and explained. Specifically, displacement is the “forced removal of a person from his or her home or country, often due to armed conflict or natural disasters” (International Organization for Migration, 2011,

p. 29). Therefore, displacement generally occurs when there is a “serious disruption of the functioning of a community or a society causing widespread human, material, economic or environmental losses, which exceed the ability of the affected community or society to cope using its own resources” (UNISDR, 2009, p. 9). Based on these definitions, a displaced person is “a person who flees his or her State or community due to fear or dangers for reasons other than those which make him or her a refugee” (International Organization for Migration, 2011, p. 29). These individuals are generally forced to relocate due to internal conflict or, for the purpose of this thesis, human-made environmental conditions.

Another key component of the EDP definition refers to environmental aspects. Environment and climate change will feature prominently in this thesis. Accordingly, it is important to highlight their similarities as well as their differences. Environment is characterized by “air, land, water and all other external conditions or influences under which humans, animals and plants live or are developed” (Ministry of Environment, 1996, para. 1). Climate change refers to a change in climate, associated directly or indirectly to human-made consequences, resulting in the alteration of the global atmosphere’s composition and climate variability (United Nations, 1992). Moreover, climate change has adverse effects, specifically “changes in the physical environment or biota [...] which have significant deleterious effects on the composition, resilience or productivity of natural and managed ecosystems or on the operation of socio-economic systems or on human health and welfare” (United Nations, 1992, paras. 1–2). Consequently, the terms environmental issues and climate change differ in the sense that climate change has a specific meaning, whereas the environment is more of a global term. Therefore, climate change can be encompassed by the environment, although climate change in itself is a prominent actuality from human-made actions, increasing the frequency and the variability of environmental events.

Lastly, it is important to address the difference between EDP and internally displaced people (IDP), as EDP are sometimes referred to as the latter. According to the IOM, IDP are:

Persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border (2011, p. 52).

Accordingly, IDP are characterized by displacement within a country, whereas EDP are not constrained to specific geographical transits and can therefore relocate within or outside their country of origin. As previously discussed, EDP serves as an umbrella term encompassing IDP, migrants and refugees with reference to climate change and environmental conditions.

## Overview of Recent Statistics

Within the last few decades, the subject of environmental displacement has garnered attention due to a range of predictions from a number of authors and agencies, including that there will be 150 million environmental refugees (Myers, 1993), 200 million environmentally forced migrants or climate refugees (Friends of the Earth, 2017; Stern, 2006), or 1 billion forced displacements (Christian Aid, 2007) by 2050. While the World Bank (n.d.) cites that only 10-20% of current migration can be explained by environmental conditions, the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) (Bilak et al., 2018) found that 61% of new displacements occurred from natural disasters in contrast with only 39% caused by conflict (see Figure 1). In fact, in 2017, an estimated 18.8 million individuals were newly displaced due to natural disasters, such as floods, cyclones, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, or tropical storms (Bilak et al., 2018). In a previous study, Bilak et al. (2016) found that an average of 25.4 million people were displaced each year, between 2007 and 2015, due to natural disasters. It is also important to note that these estimates do not include

displacement caused by slower onset environmental degradation, as these events are more difficult to predict and measure due to their nature (Bilak et al., 2018). These statistics, along with reports from the Emergency Events Database (Glasser & Guha-Sapir, 2016), indicate that the rate and effects of environmental disasters are increasing, as well as the number of people affected.

### NEW DISPLACEMENT BY CONFLICT AND DISASTERS IN 2017

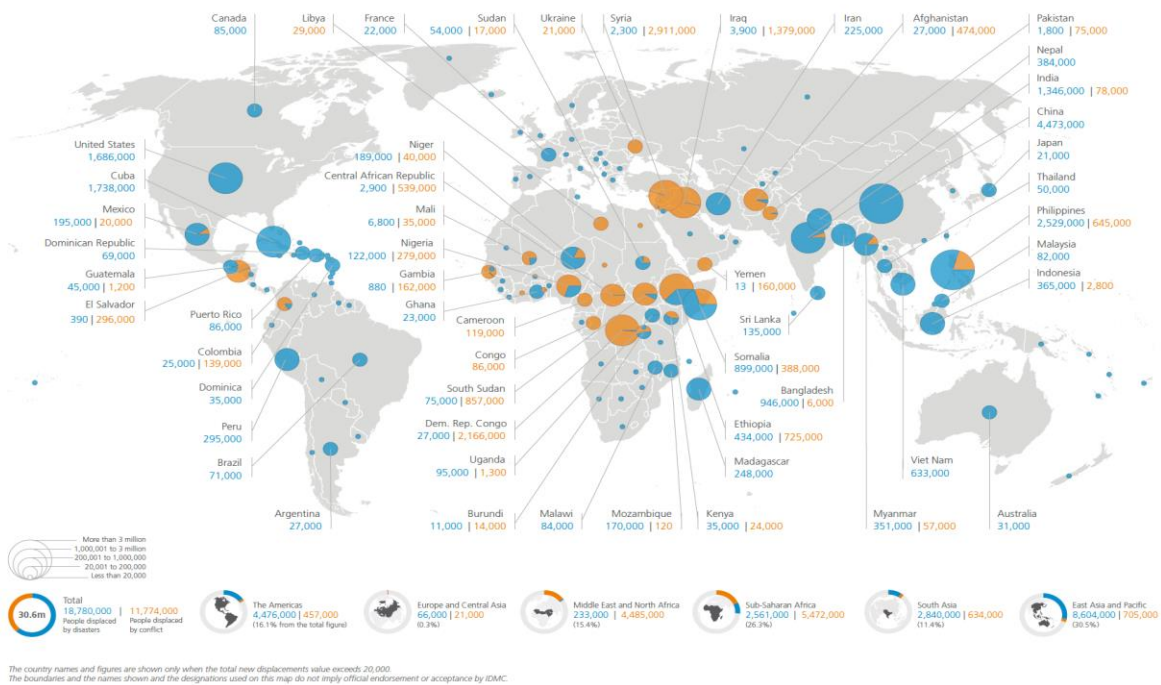


Figure 1. Results from the IDMC on new displacement in 2017 (Bilak et al., 2018, p. 2).

Along with the increasing number of people affected and of environmental changes, there is also an increase in countries impacted by climate change and rising sea levels, such as Egypt, China, Columbia, Senegal and Bangladesh (Myers, 1993). In the most recent publication by the IDMC, Bilak et al. (2018) found that the new environmentally-caused displacements in 2017 affected 135 countries (Figure 1). China, the Philippines, Cuba and the U.S. were identified as the countries most severely impacted by climate change and associated disasters (Bilak et al., 2018).



However, these statistics only consider those displaced internally, as very few EDP are recorded to have migrated further than their country's border (D'Aoust, 2012). Thus, these numbers highlight the influence of environmental factors on recent migration patterns.

## Canada's Role

Although Canada is not one of the countries the most affected, Canadians are feeling the effects of global warming and climate change. For instance, in 2017, 85 000 Canadians were displaced due to new environmental disasters (Bilak et al., 2018). These Canadians were displaced by multiple factors, including wildfires and floods. Specifically, British Columbia suffered the worst wildfire in the province's history, leading to 65 000 displacements (Bilak et al., 2018). In fact, wildfires in Canada have accounted for 78 000 displacements (Bilak et al., 2018). Other effects include the warming and acidification of oceans surrounding the country, the increase in precipitation, the increased risk of water supply shortages in the summer due to seasonal availability of freshwater, as well as the melting of ice in the Arctic (Environment and Climate Change Canada, 2019).

The Canadian government is also affected by climate change displacement through its substantial investments to help environmental disasters. Ranging from \$9.5 billion in 2008 to \$12.6 billion in 2016, the government has invested in environmental protection in order to prevent, reduce and eliminate pollution and other forms of environmental degradation (Statistics Canada, 2018). Along with these large national investments, the government also provides financial aid to other nations with environmental crises. Due to the fact that environmental disaster response is encompassed in larger aid categories, such as humanitarian assistance, it is difficult to determine exact figures. The funds allocated to humanitarian assistance, which provides material relief

assistance and services, emergency food aid, disaster prevention and preparedness, reconstruction relief, and protection and support services, totaled \$1.38 billion for the fiscal year of 2016-2017 (Global Affairs Canada, 2018). Other sectors offer more evident foreign aid costs towards environmental consequences, notably \$17 million in 2017 for flood prevention and control (Global Affairs Canada, 2018), \$117 million in 2016 for environmental initiatives (Canadian International Development Program, 2018), and \$130 million in 2010 to match private donations to help after the Haitian earthquake (Department of Finance, 2010). The Canadian government also has a disaster assistance response team, which is a military unit that has provided help during the tsunami in the Indian Ocean, the hurricane in Honduras and the earthquake in Turkey (CBC News, 2010). This unit is allocated an annual budget of \$500 000, constituting another foreign aid expense (CBC News, 2010). Thus, although exact figures are difficult to locate, the expenses that the Canadian government invests within the nation as well as in foreign aid demonstrates that Canada is already actively involved in climate change disaster and prevention responses.

Despite Canadians and their neighbouring country being affected by climate change disasters and degradation, the Canadian government currently does not offer any formal legal protection to those displaced due to environmental disasters. While the Ministry of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada does have a policy with special measures for its temporary residents (on work or student visas), citizens and permanent residents affected by a crisis (OECD, 2016), EDP who do not have Canadian family members are not offered any protection from the Canadian government, when fleeing an environmental disaster. On a similar note, there is currently a very limited international legal framework on migration caused by environmental disasters. In fact, the Paris Agreement (COP21) only briefly mentions the need for recommendations to avoid, minimize and address loss and damage from climate change (2015, para. 50). Another international

framework is the Nansen Initiative (2015), which has the goal of building consensus among countries in order to protect internationally displaced people from climate change disasters. Although the Nansen Initiative (2015) addressed EDP, it did not call for a legally binding international convention on disaster-displacement. Instead, the initiative encouraged organizations and governments to adopt best practices to promote the coordination of policies and action areas related to climate change (The Nansen Initiative, 2015). Nevertheless, Canada did adopt the Cancún Agreements in 2010, which promotes “measures to enhance understanding, coordination and cooperation with regard to climate change induced displacement, migration and planned relocation” (Becklumb, 2013, p. 2, as cited in UNFCCC, 2011, para. 14(f)). On a similar note, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (2010) urged countries to suspend deportations to Haiti, following the earthquake in 2010. As well, in August 2008, the Institute of Public Administration of Canada (IPAC) recommended that “the Canadian government [...] collaborate with [regional and international actors] on developing a policy to deal with anticipated ‘climate change refugees’” (Murray, 2010, p. 90). Therefore, although Canada does not offer any formal legal protection to EDP, the government is encouraged to help those affected by environmental crises.

In recent years, the Canadian government has begun to make temporary allowances for those affected and those who were already residing in the country: once after the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami and a second time in 2010, after the Haitian earthquake (Murray, 2010). In both cases, Canada suspended any involuntary deportation of migrants from the affected countries (India, Indonesia, Maldives, Seychelles, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Haiti), sped up family reunification applications for those who qualified or did not qualify for Family Class visas, waived processing fees for new applications, and waived the fee for the Right of Permanent Residence

visas (OECD, 2016). For those affected by the tsunami in 2004, the Canadian government fast-tracked 1 000 family reunification applications and suspended 4 000 deportations (OECD, 2016). In the case of the Haitian earthquake, Canada offered special measures for its temporary residents by allowing them to apply for a change or extension of their immigration status. In addition, following the disaster, Canada continued to suspend forced returns to Haiti (OECD, 2016). Therefore, although Canada has begun to make some temporary protection measures, following two large climate change disasters, those being displaced are not guaranteed any formal protection measures from the Canadian government.

In summary, this section helped to define EDP in relation to other important concepts, such as displacement, displaced people, the environment, climate change, and IDP. In addition, it identified not only the recent prominence of EDP through the use of statistics and predictions, but also through the fact that EDP are becoming a more prominent discourse subject within the Canadian government, when implementing policies and recommendations, as well as within the international community. These recommendations have led Canada to take initiative and offer temporary protection to EDP already residing in the country for two different environmental disasters, and it could happen again in the near future due to the Cancún Agreements and the recommendation of the IPAC. In addition to the statistics and contextual factors explained in this chapter, the topic of EDP has also been researched in academic literature. A brief overview of this literature will be explained in the following chapter to convey more information about EDP.

## Chapter Three: Background and Rationale

### Literature Review

This literature review highlights current research on topics related to this thesis. The structure of this summary will begin by presenting broad research fields and will end by focusing on more specific literature. As such, this literature review is divided into the following categories: (1) History of migration; (2) Debate over EDP terminology; (3) Climate change literature; (4) Political and security concerns surrounding migration; (5) Media representations of climate issues; and (6) Media representations of EDP and refugees.

#### i) History of Migration and the Classification of EDP

Before delving into the literature on EDP, it is important to understand the history of migration and a few key concepts in the sociology of migration. To begin, internal migratory observations were first conceptualized by Ravenstein (1885) after Dr. William Farr remarked that there were no definite laws on the subject. After analyzing the census in the United Kingdom, Ravenstein (1885) concludes several facts: that migrants generally proceeded a short distance, there was an absorption of migrants into towns, there existed a process of dispersion, each main stream had a compensating counter-current, people born in towns were less likely to migrate than those residing in rural areas, and women were more likely to migrate than men. Migration can be defined, as “a permanent or semipermanent change of residence [...] No matter how short or how long, how easy or how difficult, every act of migration involves an origin, a destination, and an intervening set of obstacles” (Lee, 1966, p. 49).

However, Ravenstein’s work is critiqued by today’s academics, as he did not create a categorical order for these migration observations (Lee, 1966). On the other hand, another

sociologist, Petersen (1958), adopted a general typology of migration, composed of five different classes. The first is *primitive migration*, stemming from an ecological push, as people are unable to cope with natural forces and the deterioration in the physical environment. This type of migration refers to wandering peoples, nomadism and rangers. The second and third classes are *forced* and *impelled migrations*. There are a few key differences between these two types of migration. Notably, impelled migration refers to migrants who maintain a level of power in deciding whether they will or will not leave. Examples of this form of migration include the migration of white servants to British colonies in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, who were bound by a contract and chose to extend their service indefinitely (Petersen, 1958). Another distinctive factor is that many impelled migrants eventually return to their country of origin. On the other hand, forced migrants do not possess the ability to control their migratory displacement, such as those forced into the slave trade or forced migration of workers (Petersen, 1958). The fourth type of migrant is classified as *free migration*, where people migrate for their own personal reasons, like the pioneer movement. Lastly, *mass migration* occurs when there is a social pattern and can no longer be justified by individual motivations, such as settlement and urbanization. In this thesis, primitive migration, and forced and impelled migration will be further explored.

Besides migratory classifications, there are also other concepts from migration literature that provide value to this thesis. One of these core concepts is the push-pull polarity. When someone migrates in order to achieve something new, this type of migration is termed *migration innovating* (Petersen, 1958). On the other hand, *conservative migration* occurs when there is a change in conditions, and people migrate in order to retain their assets (Petersen, 1958). In fact, Petersen (1958) draws on the push-pull polarity to complement these two types of migration. This polarity can be best explained by the point that there exists factors that hold people or attract people to a

place, and there are other factors that repel them (Lee, 1966). Petersen (1958) insists that push factors that cause emigration range from agricultural crisis to exploration; they are composed of a multiplicity of personal reasons and motives. Lee (1966) also mentions intervening obstacles, such as stages of the life cycle and physical barriers, which can act as factors that attract or repel individuals from relocating. As such, although environmental displacement may occur more frequently from sudden-onset disasters, there are other social and economic factors like social networks, opportunities and resource availability that determine whether someone may be pushed or repelled from using migration as an option (Islam & Shamsuddoha, 2017).

Kunz (1981) further developed these concepts by focusing on factors that affect refugees, or forced migrants, before and after they flee. He classifies refugees as either reactive fate-groups or purpose groups, all depending on their attitudes towards their displacement. Reactive fate-groups are generally composed of those forced to migrate out of desperation, such as refugees of war, revolutionary changes and/or exiles. In comparison, purpose groups are typically the reason for the cause of their displacement and are therefore harder to separate from voluntary migrants. Out of these two groups, EDP can be classified as a reactive fate-group since they are displaced in reaction to environmental events that make their environment inhabitable. Interestingly, Kunz (1981) recognizes that the line between political refugees and economic migrants can be blurred when people are displaced as a reaction to events.

## ii) Debate over Terminology

These blurry lines surrounding the classification of refugees are also apparent when attempting to define EDP within the anthropology, philosophy, environmental ethics, international law, international development, geography, policy-oriented, environmental sciences and environmental

sociology academic communities. As previously stated in Chapter Two, there exists a debate surrounding the definition of EDP. The cause of this debate is predominantly due to fears on migration which is an emotionally-charged issue, differing predictions, as well as a lack of discussion and consensus between ecologists and social researchers and scientists (Boano et al., 2008). In fact, Sahinkuye (2019) elaborated on this last point by stating that the lack of consensus surrounding the definition of these displaced people is largely caused by the absence of a philosophical evaluation of the term *environmental refugee* and the necessary protections for these people. Overall, the literature presented EDP in terms of whether they should be classified as refugees or as migrants. Environmental refugees, the first term used to refer to EDP, was coined by Lester Brown (Black, 2001) – although it was famously defined by Essam El-Hinnawi, as:

People who have been forced to leave their traditional habitat, temporarily or permanently, because of a marked environmental disruption (natural and/or triggered by people) that jeopardized their existence and/or seriously affected the quality of their life [sic]. By 'environmental disruption' in this definition is meant any physical, chemical, and/or biological changes in the ecosystem (or resource base) that render it, temporarily or permanently unsuitable to support human life (1985, p. 4).

However, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) currently defines refugees as individuals who have:

[A] well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it (n.d.).

This latter definition is employed by authors who argue that environmental refugees should be characterized as climate migrants, as their decision to migrate is voluntary (Bates, 2002; Kang, 2013; Masquelier, 2006; Ni, 2015). Ultimately, the UNHCR and IOM do not recognize



environmental refugees, as they are hard to differentiate from other displaced people and the implementation of legal status protection could potentially undermine the international legal framework protecting political refugees (McNamara, 2007; OECD, 2016). Castles (2002) also argues that the term *environmental refugee* is too simplistic and is misleading in the sense that it implies a noncausality – when it is in fact a complex issue, intrinsically linked to economic, social and political factors. For instance, Boano et al. (2008) state that there are also social and political factors that influence environmental displacement. Therefore, these authors claim that the term *environmental refugee* was invented in order to depoliticize the causes of the displacement of these people (Boano et al., 2008). Foresight (2011) argues that this environmentally deterministic approach ignores the influence of human agency in migratory decisions and outcomes. Thus, when environmental migrants leave their region, they must take into account various factors that pull them towards specific places. Examples of pull factors are job opportunities, utility and maximum profit when choosing their destination (Moriniere, 2010). According to the World Bank (n.d.), characteristics of the destination are the most important pull factors in their decision. These characteristics can be associated with politics, economics, or social pull factors (Boano et al., 2008; Mezdour & Veronis, 2012). In addition, there are other factors that make EDP more likely to relocate, such as having a higher education and a higher social status (Magallanes Reyes, 2015), despite the fact that climate change and natural disasters tend to affect those who are impoverished the most (World Bank, n.d.).

On the other side of the debate, there are authors who argue that climate migrants should be labeled as environmental refugees (Collins-Chobanian et al., 2010; Kovic, 2008; Magallanes Reyes, 2015; Mastaler, 2015; Mayer, 2013; Rai, 2013). These researchers call on the international community to protect and provide a healthy and decent environment. According to Mastaler

(2015), when an environment is uninhabitable, people should have a right to relocate internally or internationally. In fact, in 2016, the UN Secretary General called for the need of a global international framework in order to offer protections to these displaced people (OECD, 2016).

### iii) Literature on Climate Change and Migration

There has also been a lot of research on climate change migration in the past few decades. Therefore, this thesis draws on multidisciplinary fields from environmental sociology, anthropology, legal studies, political sciences, economics, geography, ethics, to international development, as all studies on this topic are intrinsically connected. According to Hannigan (2012), these fields of research are encompassed by four discursive realms – environmentalism and climate change, humanitarian aid, hazard and risk and safety, as well as international development.

Some anthropological and legal research focuses on the labels of survivors of climate change events. For instance, after Hurricane Katrina, many survivors in the U.S. refused to be classified as refugees, as they claimed that they were tax-paying citizens and that they loved America (Masquelier, 2006). On a similar note, while studying the sinking island phenomenon in the case of Kiribati, an island in the Central Pacific, Ni (2015) also discovered that the people did not want to be classified as refugees, as they found this classification to be in opposition with their cultural pride and dignity. Thus, the literature depicts stigma attached to the concept of refugees, which may oppose the identity of certain victims.

Another recurring theme in political, policy-oriented, population health, scientific and migratory literature on climate change migration pertains to the disasters that cause this migration. For instance, some people migrate due to “soil exhaustion, chemical contamination, lack of access

to clean water or inundation of towns or farms” (Urban, 2005, p. 67). In fact, the environmental sociologist, Bates (2002), classifies three different types of climate change: disaster, expropriation or wilful destruction (i.e. taking control over the lands of Indigenous people), and deterioration. From a more environmental and health perspective, other push factors can include outbreaks of infectious diseases after floods, water shortages, airborne allergens and heat waves (Afifi & Jäger, 2010), as well as other human health impacts like malnutrition, mental stressors and injuries or deaths (McMichael et al., 2010). These types of environmental degradation worsen the environment, and can push individuals to displace their families on a temporary (Miller & Douglass, 2015) or permanent basis, as these slow processes of environmental degradation are more likely to cause long-term migration (OECD, 2016).

In the particular case of Canada, the geographers Mezdour and Veronis (2012) found, after interviewing Haitian immigrants, that deforestation, rural depopulation and urban conditions all pushed the migrants to relocate. It is also important to note that there is a regional bias which influences the ethno-demographics of environmental refugees, as areas in Africa and Asia are more prone to environmental disasters than other regions (Bates, 2002). For example, in Bangladesh, internal relocation is almost impossible, as the entire country is exposed to thunderstorms and as a result, flash floods (Gaillard et al., 2012). This regional bias is otherwise known as natural disaster hotspots, which are characterized by “a specific area or region that may be at relatively high risk of adverse impacts from one or more natural hazard events” (Hannigan, 2012, p. 83). Additionally, developing countries generally have more of these affected regions, as they often experience climate change disasters, although they have a low adaptive capacity (OECD, 2016). Despite the consequences of living in these natural disaster hotspots, people still commonly migrate towards these regions, including low-lying urban areas (Foresight, 2011).

Environmental, economic and international development literature highlights how environmental degradation is linked to long-term challenges in development, population growth, as well as economic and social policy decisions (Afifi & Jäger, 2010). Miller and Douglass (2015) found, when studying flooding in Asia, that the cost of restoration, such as material losses, is a large issue for a country recovering from a natural disaster. These fields of research also cover the different low-cost investment measures that reduce the vulnerability of people in disaster-affected regions (Gaillard et al., 2012). An example of a low-cost investment is how the government of New Zealand is currently accepting 75 Tuvaluans under their legislation (Krishnamurthy, 2012). Although New Zealand accepts Tuvaluans solely based on economic reasons, this example illustrates how the government is already introducing a low-cost investment to help reduce the vulnerability of Tuvaluans, who will become increasingly affected by the sea-level rise (Krishnamurthy, 2012). As well, rural populations tend to migrate towards urban centres following disasters, which can cause problems of inadequate public infrastructure, such as sewerage, drainage and water supply issues in cities (Miller & Douglass, 2015); although by migrating towards urban centers, IDP become invisible, as they blend in with other poor urban residents (Bilak et al., 2018). However, if large international migration were to occur, Collins-Chobanian et al. (2010) argue that countries would be more overwhelmed economically. At the individual level, this type of relocation also affects those displaced because there is a slow and ineffective disaster response, which leads to a delay in the economic, social and physical recovery of these individuals (Bukvic, 2012). As well, there is little evidence that suggests that displaced people experience an improvement or restoration of socio-economic indicators (Bukvic, 2012).

Overall, Gaillard et al. (2012), who analyze environmental disasters from a geographical, environmental and international development perspective, maintain that these disasters are

complex issues, connected with multiple different factors, such as politics, economics, society and culture. Currently, multidisciplinary research on climate change migration issues tends to focus on the multiple stakeholders involved, learning and teaching about the issue, decisions surrounding capacity and choice, the implementation of initiatives, risk prevention through development and sustainability, as well as the impacts on livelihoods, access and conflict (Gaillard et al., 2012).

#### iv) Political and Security Concerns Surrounding Migration

Political and security problems are also highlighted in literature on environmental migration. Concerns involving security increased after 9/11 (Koser, 2009), as well as after Myers (1993) predicted that 150 million people will be displaced by 2050. These concerns portray climate change and migration as threats by linking them to the geopolitics of climate change, for example climate change is viewed as a “threat multiplier for instability in some of the most volatile regions of the world” (The CNA Corporation, 2007, as cited in Becklumb, 2013, p. 1). This is attributable to the fact that resource shortages and environmental degradation can unpredictably – and dangerously - increase social and political tensions, leading to violence and civil turmoil (Elliott, 2010). Warner and Boas (2017) state that this destabilization of international security leads to the implementation of aversive policies that limit the amount of refugee applications and help provided towards these victims. Some literature has hypothesized a possible link between forced migration from conflict and the environment (Afifi & Jäger, 2010; Black, 2001). For example, Black (2001) describes that in complex political emergencies, environmental issues could have an influence in creating tensions and hostilities, as degradation, such as overpopulation or resource shortages, can be an important root cause of conflict.

With xenophobia increasing in Western policies, the promotion of fearful images causes governments to increase the protection of their borders (McNamara, 2007). In 2007, the United

Kingdom became concerned that migration could change the ethnic composition of its population, which the government believed could lead to increased instability and conflict due to competition of scarce resources and the job market, impacts on the social infrastructure, cultural differences, as well as fear-related reactions altering politics (Elliott, 2010). This is an example of how widespread fears of uncontrollable migration flows are, where migration is portrayed as inherently bad and as a threat to the security and prosperity of rich countries in the North (Castles, 2010). Additionally, the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe also recognizes that environmental degradation and the pressures to migrate could fuel conflict (Piguet & Laczko, 2014). Nevertheless, although countries are preoccupied by the consequences of environmental migration, the literature highlights an evident gap in regional and international policies on this type of displacement (Piguet & Laczko, 2014). Despite these security concerns, Loebach (2016) highlights the case of Hurricane Mitch in Nicaragua, and how the U.S. and Costa Rica provided temporary protection to those who were already living in those countries. In fact, Hurricane Mitch in 1998 caused the largest outmigration, beyond the immediate region (OECD, 2016).

v) Literature on Media Representations of Climate Issues

As for media representations of EDP, Obokata et al. (2014) describe that the literature on this subject tends to focus on climate change instead of migration. However, when the literature does focus on representations of climate change issues, it tends to primarily analyze discourses from politicians, humanitarian NGOs and academics, as opposed to media (Obokata et al., 2014). Murray (2010) explains that this literature gap on media representations of climate issues is partly caused by actors (i.e. academics and activists) who challenge the idea of climate refugees. In fact, she insists that challenging the notion of climate refugees has allowed political actors to exclude these displaced people from refugee research and policies (Murray, 2010). Other authors argue

that the lack of media representations on environmental issues is due to the difficulty of finding experts, problems conceptualizing the issue as more than a singular event (Hannigan, 2014), short deadlines to write articles (Boykoff, 2007), and a difficulty in maintaining public interest, as the attention on this subject is often challenged by other factors like economics and politics (McComas & Shanahan, 1999).

When newspaper articles are printed, media representations are transmitted through language and the use of literary devices, such as metaphors (Jader, 2016; Ransan-Cooper, Farbotko, Mcnamara, Thornton, & Chevalier, 2015). In fact, journalists have a tendency to report environmental issues in an apocalyptic narrative, such as the tendency to use militaristic metaphors like attack, destroy, wipe out and contain (Hannigan, 2014) and hydrological metaphors like torrents, streams, tides and waves, as well as stating quantitative predictions of future migrants (Piguet, 2012). Media also commonly weaves a story when covering natural disasters, which results in painting villains and heroes, as well as characterizing the emergency as a static event – although natural emergencies seldom ever are (Hannigan, 2012).

Moreover, Hannigan (2012) found that, generally, the attention of the media on particular emergencies has no significant relationship with the severity of the disaster; instead, the location of the disaster plays a larger role in news coverage in North America. In this sense, disasters in North America and Europe are more represented in the news than disasters affecting developing countries, despite the fact that developing countries tend to have more natural disaster hotspots (Bilak et al., 2018). This could be attributed to the fact that industrialized countries often blame poor people in less developed countries for causing environmental issues through their development problems, such as overpopulation (Hannigan, 2014). This representation of “Third

World” victims translates into portraying them as faceless and nameless figures, without agency or a voice, as was the case for those affected by the Sri Lankan tsunami (Hannigan, 2012).

Besides discourse on attributed blame, Olausson (2009) notes themes of adaptation, where the news called on political action and postcolonial guilt, as well as sub themes of pity and passive victims. The representations of those displaced by climate change as victims are complex. Although they are typically represented as passive victims, EDP do develop strategies in order to cope and adapt to climate change (Piguet & Laczko, 2014). As Elliott and Paris (2006) found following Hurricane Katrina, the media initially portrayed Afro-Americans as victims that were stranded in an evacuated city, but this victimization was ultimately conveyed as pitiless and due to an unjust social system. However, this script changed drastically, as media began to portray this group of people as dangerous, dissolute and disease-ridden, which required the deployment of the National Guard (Gaillard et al., 2012). In fact, during and following environmental emergencies, social stratification based on ethnicity, race and class became much more apparent (Gaillard et al., 2012). Particularly, following a disaster, the army is generally painted as heroes whereas the citizens are portrayed as looters. However, Afifi and Jäger (2010) argue that these reports were largely exaggerated and dramatized.

In addition, research on media representations of climate change has found that news articles tend to portray a continuum of scientific certainty and uncertainty (Olausson, 2009). This means that some news articles focus on climate change uncertainty, whereas others mention climate change as a certain outcome. In particular, this uncertainty, or scepticism, around climate change is more commonly portrayed in local news, when the specific region is being affected by an



environmental conflict. Hannigan (2014) explains that this scepticism is experienced by the public themselves, who may believe the events are not as serious as described in local news.

vi) Media Representations of EDP and Refugees

Despite the frequency of media coverage on climate change issues, there are only three publications that specifically discuss the subject of EDP. As such, this literature review will also be complemented by highlighting relevant research on the representations of other types of migrants that pertain specifically to themes raised in studies on EDP.

Birkey (2014) published his master's thesis on media coverage of rising sea-levels affecting low-lying nations. He analyzed how different themes, notably politics, ethics, economics, questioned science, environmental ethics, and technology, were used in American newspapers (Birkey, 2014). Mann (2009) also published a master's thesis focusing on representations of Tuvalu, an island-nation in the Central Pacific, in Australian, American and Canadian media. In her results, she found a large amount of coverage with a pro-environmentalist agenda, focusing on global warming and climate change (Mann, 2009). However, she discovered that the media also covers other themes, such as debunking environmentalist theories, economics, immigration, fear of the *Other*, attributing blame, denial, national identity, and guilt over being responsible for climate change (Mann, 2009). Similarly, Farbotko (2005) wrote an article on media representations of Tuvalu. Themes concerning the island-nation were identified in the media, such as the vulnerability and marginalization they experienced while seeking refuge in Australia, the relationship between the two countries, and the way they were stereotyped for living in Tuvalu as it was considered "paradise" (Farbotko, 2005). Once these individuals were displaced, they were

instead associated with themes of tragedy, environmental displacement and disempowerment (Farbotko, 2005).

The idea of victimization is not a recent theme attached to the notion of refugees. When looking at political refugees for example, the media often focus on the helplessness of suffering residents (Bleich et al., 2015; Fotopoulos & Kaimaklioti, 2016; Herrmann, 2017; Jader, 2016; Ransan-Cooper et al., 2015; Szczepanik, 2016). These representations, frequently portrayed through the use of stories and images, evoke compassion from the audience, and call into question the morality and responsibility of countries and actors (Herrmann, 2017). Holmes and Castañeda (2016) characterize the victimization of refugees in their continuum of deservingness and undeservingness, as there exist differences between voluntary and forced, immigrants and refugees, and economic and political. These distinctions modify the perception of these groups accordingly. Whereas deservingness changes national policies to welcome refugees involuntarily displaced, those deemed undeserving are seen as unworthy of social, economic and political rights (Holmes & Castañeda, 2016). In Europe, there is currently a divide between being compassionate and the fear of differences towards Syrian refugees (Holmes & Castañeda, 2016). This divide highlights the crisis in Europe, as well as the need to call into question the responsibility of actors and systems (Holmes & Castañeda, 2016). On the other hand, undeserving displaced individuals are instead represented through themes of management, the focus being on the quantity of refugees arriving and the characterization of a 'crisis' (Fotopoulos & Kaimaklioti, 2016). In order to shift the responsibility to undeservingness, media sometimes dehumanizes refugees by characterizing them as passive, anonymous and devoid of agency (Szczepanik, 2016). However, Ransan-Cooper et al. (2015) found minimal reference to climate-change migrants as human security threats.

Lastly, Fiskio (2012) published an article analyzing the two main narratives related to the apocalyptic and speculative fictional visions of climate change. One of these narratives is the lifeboat narrative, which concentrates on the projected climate change and the climate refugees that will cross borders as a consequence (Fiskio, 2012). This narrative refers to the competition of survival and resources, the exclusion of others, the restriction of immigration, and racial purity (Fiskio, 2012). The other narrative that Fiskio (2012) discussed is the collective narrative, which insists that people, facing catastrophes, need a sense of purpose, community and solidarity in order to cope. As well, it is characterized by a welcoming culture and the responsibility of countries to aid displaced people (Fiskio, 2012).

## Research Objectives and Rationale

After conducting the literature review, it became increasingly apparent what I desired to research, as the literature review highlighted the apparent gap on media representations of EDP and a lack of analysis on this topic from a sociological perspective. Although literature on migration and climate change discourse exists, little is known about the representations of these concepts when they intersect. Currently, few studies, like Mezdour & Veronis (2012) and Murray (2010), have briefly discussed the subject of these individuals in the Canadian context. Therefore, it will be pertinent to gain more knowledge of EDP in Canada and to understand how EDP are constructed as a social problem in the public sphere. Since Canada has already made temporary allowances for individuals residing in the country at the time of the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami and in 2010, following the Haitian earthquake (Murray, 2010), it is imperative to analyze how these individuals were represented in the Canadian printed news media. Particularly, since according to Trumbo (1996), the goal of writing about global change for media is to define problems, diagnose causes, make moral judgments and suggest solutions. Although EDP are

arriving to Canada as migrants with other contributing motivators, this topic will become more important as global climate disasters worsen and evolve into a more prominent push motivator towards migration. Thus, it is important to analyze Canadian printed news media on environmentally displaced individuals and how they are portrayed.

As well, the concept of refugees is intriguing, as it is associated with ideas of humanitarian, ethical responsibility to provide aid, while at the same time, ideas of border controls and nationalism that fear migrants. These ideas are, in turn, transformed into attitudes, present in the Canadian society. With the growing concern of climate change and environmental disasters, the idea of EDP is becoming more prominent in environmental, geographical, policy-oriented and international legal studies.

In particular, this thesis seeks to respond to three objectives. First of all, according to D'Aoust (2012), EDP are often overlooked, as they are often unable to cross international borders in order to escape environmental events. Thus, the first objective of this thesis is to raise awareness of EDP. Secondly and more specifically, this research aims to analyze representations of EDP in order to analyze how EDP are constructed as a social problem to the Canadian public. This is important to identify, as the likelihood of more EDP relocating to Canada increases and therefore, this subject will become more topical. The final objective of this thesis is to attempt to analyze the extent to which Canadian media characterizes EDP within discourses of victimization and/or devictimization. This will allow a further analysis of how EDP are represented in eyes of the Canadian public through the media.

In order to meet these objectives, this thesis addresses the research question: *How does Canadian print media represent environmentally displaced people?* This question will be

answered by selecting Canadian printed media and analyzing articles published on the subject of EDP. A secondary question is: How do Canadian printed news media characterize environmentally displaced people within discourses of victimization and/or devictimization?

## Chapter Four: Theoretical Framework

EDP are becoming a social problem due to the increased attention on climate change effects that are causing these people to relocate. As Hilgartner and Bosk defined, a social problem is:

A putative condition or situation that is labeled a problem in the arenas of public discourse and action. But instead of emphasizing the stages of a social problem's development, we focus on competition: we assume that public attention is a scarce resource, allocated through competition in a system of public arenas (1988, p. 55).

As clearly illustrated in the literature review, the relocation of these people exerts a large strain not only on the displaced people's recovery (Bukvic, 2012), but also to the societies that welcome them (Collins-Chobanian et al., 2010). Therefore, their relocation is beginning to be seen as a potential problem to which Canada will have to find a solution. It becomes this important to focus on the representations of EDP and their displacement in public discourse.

Although this social problem could be researched using different methodologies and approaches, this thesis will focus on trying to understand how EDP are constructed as a social problem in the public sphere by analyzing how media characterizes these displaced people. The term media can be defined as a means of mass communication of a community, encompassing news and non-news, on a local and national distribution level (Bilchik, 2011). To clarify, news and non-news should be distinguished - whereas news includes newspapers, television, radio and news magazines, non-news refers to billboards, posters, magazines and newsletters (Bilchik, 2011). Media is an important form of communication, as it has a large influence on the distribution of knowledge over space and time (Innis, 2008). Its power can be argued by the media-dependency hypothesis, which postulates that the influence of media discourse is related to how open the public is towards meaning-generating experiences (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989). Despite this

hypothesis, Gamson and Modigliani conclude that the public “actively use[s] media discourse to construct meaning and [they] are not simply a passive object on which media work their magic.” (1989, p. 10) In this sense, the public negotiates the meanings portrayed in media. Newspapers, in particular, are influential because they create a structured situation where an audience receives certain cultural and symbolic notions, to which they cannot respond (Moore, 2005). As this thesis aims to understand how EDP are constructed as a social problem to the Canadian public, it is necessary to analyze media discourse since it exerts a large influence by conveying heavily constructed meanings, attached to symbolic and cultural notions.

It is possible to begin to understand the influence that media has on the construction of reality and on its response to environmental problems by explaining media’s power through the framework of social constructionism and the concept of symbolic interactionism. *Social constructionism* is a sociological framework, which states that most of the public’s knowledge is based on the social construction of reality (Stocchetti, 2011). By communicating and interacting with one another, it is possible to form a consensus. Thus, the social construction of reality can be defined as an “intersubjective consensus based on communication” (Stocchetti, 2011, p. 22), and it is through this communication that people are able to construct reality. These intersubjective meanings and structures form institutions, which in turn, shape the media that perpetuates meanings. Notably, one of these institutions is media. In this sense, not only does public consensus shape media coverage, but media also influences public consensus. In fact, knowledge is not only reliant on media, but reality itself is influenced by media (Stocchetti, 2011). Therefore, the framework of social constructionism can help to explain the influence and power that media can exert through the transmission of certain ideas and representations.

Similarly, *symbolic interactionism* is grounded on the idea that individuals act a certain way, based on the beliefs they hold about the person or thing they are interacting with (Snow, 2001). As well, these beliefs or meanings are constructed through the social interactions that individuals have with others. These meanings are not only socially constructed, but they are also modified through an interpretive process, consisting of the use of symbols, signification and interpretation, that human actors undertake in order to determine meanings and associate them to specific actors or artifacts (Snow, 2001). It is this interpretive process that helps construct reality. In addition, Absher (2011) argues that media can be studied, through themes and symbols in order to understand a community, as it allows researchers to discover how certain social problems are constructed in the public sphere. Thus, media projects certain symbols and norms that construct reality and consequently, the public relies on media in order to learn about their society and its reality (Jansson-Boyd, 2010). By explaining social constructionism and symbolic interactionism, it is possible to depict how the media constructs EDP as a social problem to the public by projecting certain cultural notions and representations.

Furthermore, a media analysis will allow me to discern specifically how newspapers portray *representations* of EDP. According to Stuart Hall, representations are the “production of the meaning of the concepts in our minds through language” (1997, p. 17). Thus, representations serve to connect language and meaning to culture. Furthermore, Fiskio draws on Gramsci’s concept of culture to argue that the cultural productions of media representation “have the capacity not only to interrogate the mainstream environmental movement, but also to express the complex relations of race, class, nation and modernity” (2012, p. 13). In addition, media representations are discursive social practices that help shape reality (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). According to Jørgensen & Phillips, social practices are “concrete, individual and context bound but [...] are also



institutionalised and socially anchored, and because of this tend towards patterns of regularity.” (2002, p. 18) In fact, journalists transmit media representations through language, the use of metaphors, abstraction, symbols and images (Jader, 2016; Ransan-Cooper et al., 2015). The use of these linguistic tools contributes to the circulation of certain representations, as journalists can shape narratives to emphasize particular ideas (Jader, 2016). Thus, media representations serve to portray a particular reality through the use of different symbols and linguistic tools.

Newspapers are also a structure of cultural power (Moores, 2005). In fact, power is present in media texts, as they produce the subjects and the objects we would like to know (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). Following the concept of *cultural hegemony* from Gramsci, Stocchetti (2011) states that the elite class controls the circulation of ideas. Robinson (2011) argues that politicians have been working, since the beginning of mass media, to control media and use its power to their advantage. This is evidenced by the fact that one company, Postmedia, owns the majority of newspapers in Canada and therefore, controls a large percent of media circulation (News Media Canada, n.d.). Not only do these organizations influence the production of certain ideas, but media also has the ability to affect its audiences’ attitudes (Stocchetti, 2011). These attitudes can consequently reinforce existing behaviours or steer the public to adopt new behaviours (Jansson-Boyd, 2010). Media can also provoke emotions and reflections in its audience, and it has the power to influence its readers’ cognitions (Kamenova, 2014). Jansson-Boyd (2010) argues that the consumption of newspapers exerts a large influence on the formation and maintenance of the public’s attitudes.

Although it is assumed that journalists base their articles on objective facts and verified events, they use different angles, while writing an article, to alter the context in order to provide a story

that will capture the attention of the public (Hannigan, 2014). These different news angles are also referred to as frames, and they consequently inject a constructed social meaning into the representations (Hannigan, 2014). In other words, frames can be defined as “select[ing] some aspects of a perceived reality and mak[ing] them more salient in a communicating text in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described” (Entman, 1993, p. 52). According to Gamson (1992), frames help to define problems by determining the issue, diagnosing the causes, evaluating moral judgments, and prescribing solutions and predicting its consequences. By drawing attention to information about a problem to make it more noticeable and memorable, frames increase the topic in salience, which in turn, conveys meanings that the public are more likely to store and remember (Entman, 1993). The meanings within frames guide the audience’s ability to process the information. Ultimately, frames identify a particular position, which help initiate a discussion and an interpretation of the data (Sitton, 2004). When frames are used in newspapers, they can also implicitly or explicitly highlight complex problems, allowing readers to understand why the problem is important, who is responsible for it, and what the potential consequences could be (McCombs et al., 1997). When applying this to the context of EDP, it is possible to understand how the media represent this issue through the way journalists frame its importance, the different actors’ responsibilities, and its consequences.

For the purpose of this thesis and to answer my research question, a frame analysis will be conducted in order to understand the representations of EDP and which frames are conveyed to the public. A frame analysis entails analyzing the main frame, or in other words the story line, as well as any subthemes in order to understand the representations and social meanings that they emit (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989). In addition to frame analysis, I will be conducting a critical

frame analysis. This differs from a regular frame analysis, as it identifies the way topics are framed, and particularly, “grasps at nuances of the frames through an in-depth, detailed, analysis of the different dimensions of a specific frame.” (Meier, 2008, p. 156) This type of analysis strives to address discursive power dynamics by examining the different representations that actors emit - whether these actors are the journalists themselves or sources used in media texts (van Der Haar & Verloo, 2016). In particular, critical frame analysis starts “from the general assumption that a policy (proposal) will always contain an implicit or explicit representation of a problem (diagnosis), connected to an implicit or explicit solution (prognosis) and a call for action” (Verloo, 2005, p. 22, as cited in van Der Haar & Verloo, 2016). The goal is then to essentially discover the problems and find the solutions for them in order to uncover the representations of those affected by climate displacement, who and what is responsible for this issue, as well as which actors are responsible to solve it (Meier, 2008). This type of analysis also has the ability to expose the inclusion and exclusion of certain aspects of the social problem, which are associated with the roles and voices of the actors in presenting the problem and offering solutions (van Der Haar & Verloo, 2016). Thus, while I will be able to analyze, using a frame analysis, the representations and meanings of the frames associated to EDP, a critical frame analysis will complement this first analysis by further examining the role and representations of the actors as well as the power elements present in media texts when conveying EDP as a social problem and when offering solutions to this issue.

Through the analysis of frames, I will be examining *media packages* (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989). At the core of these media packages, there is a central organizing idea, or frame, that conveys a meaning about a problem or event and attempts to characterize it. I will be able to discover these frames by analyzing condensing symbols and framing devices, which can be

conveyed through the use of metaphors, catchphrases or other symbolic devices (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989). However, frames are more than what is explicitly called to attention – they are also conveyed in the omission of certain information. By omitting certain details, the media also contributes to the construction of a social problem. For instance, when journalists omit the voice of certain actors from their news articles, they are excluding the perspective of that specific actor from discussions on the issue. In addition, Goffman (1974) explained that we are all actors, who, to create suspense, omit information in order to gain audience appreciation as well as sympathy for our difficulties. This clearly demonstrates the power frames have and the ability of media texts in choosing how to construct and present topics as social problems.

By analyzing these frames, I will be able to understand how media helps to construct the notion of *community* and *national identity* (Moore, 2005). In fact, certain symbolic resources are communicated through newspapers that conceive the notion of *nation* and reinforce the idea of community. When analyzing media and the notions of community and nation, it is important to first understand the connection between *print capitalism* and *(imagined) national identity*. Anderson (1983) was one of first researchers to discuss the influence that printed newspapers had on the rise of national consciousness. When newspapers began to be printed, consumers demanded that they be printed in vernacular languages, which helped unify multiple different dialects within one printing language (Anderson, 1983). As people were able to understand and read the same printing language, people became more connected, which helped create a unified whole – or an imagined community. As well, the relation between community and the frequent circulation of media can be captured by the term *banal nationalism*, as it is “the reproduction of national identities in the banal [...] flagging of nationhood” (Billig, 1995, as cited in Moore, 2005, p. 179). Billig believes that when journalists use specific words in their daily publications, albeit usually

unnoticed by readers, they reinforce the conception of nationhood and national identity (1995, as cited in Moores, 2005). An example of this would be references to the nation or the country, which lead to a constructed notion of community. These particular words, used habitually, are deictic expressions, and they consequently exert a large influence on the imagination of a nation and community (Moores, 2005). The concept of banal nationalism can be applied to EDP, as there is a shared sense of nationalism constructed in relation to environmental disasters. For instance, Fiskio (2012) discussed how the lifeboat narrative refers to the need to protect a nation's borders from hordes of EDP and therefore, the nation is selective about who they choose to allow to belong to it.

As well, these cultural symbols construct norms and define specific boundaries, such as creating imagined borders (Moores, 2005). This follows the work of Edward Said (1978), in which he uses the term *imaginative geography* to conceptualize the notion of a conceived boundary in a familiar spacial area, excluding unfamiliar territory. As such, the imagined territory is consequently in opposition to other people and other areas. Said (1978) also constructs the narrative of the powerless *Other* versus the dominating Western *Us*. In certain circumstances, the “arrival of the Rest in the West may [...] lead to an intensified polarisation of groups.” (Hall, 1992, p. 308, as cited in Moores, 2005) Consequently, there can be strong defensive reactions from the public, who are threatened by the idea of *Others* and want to protect their national and community identity (Hall, 1992, as cited in Moores, 2005).

By connecting *imaginative geography* with *banal nationalism* and representations of inclusion and exclusion, other theories can be explored that could help to explain the relationship between EDP and Canadian readers. Notably, one of these theories is the Theory of Minority-Group

Relations, which Blalock (1967) defines as: the larger the minority group, the more the majority group is likely to perceive the minority group as a power threat in terms of competition for resources and/or mobilization. However, Herda (2010) found that the actual size of the minority group does not influence the majority group's reactions as much as the perception of the size of the minority group. This is largely due to the fact that research (e.g. Alba et al., 2005) has demonstrated that people tend to overestimate the number of immigrants in their country, which causes misconceptions about these minority groups. In addition, these group identity theories explain that contact with minority groups can lead to a defensive reaction, such as perceived threats of competition (Quillian, 1996). This can trigger insecurity in the majority group, which presents the minority groups as being a danger to the majority group (Huysmans, 2006). This insecurity leads to blaming tactics, resulting in a dichotomy, where certain groups are friends or part of the *in-group* whereas others are considered enemies or the *out-group* (Huysmans, 2006). The culmination of perceived threats and insecurity translates in the securitization of these minority groups, triggering negative feelings surrounding the arrival of new migrants, such as discrimination in political and employment rights (Huysmans, 2006; Quillian, 1996).

By elaborating on the construction of cultural symbols and reality, it becomes apparent that media plays a large role on the public's attitudes towards current affairs. As such, media has the ability to influence the public's perceptions of EDP through the representations it conveys. These cultural symbols, and specifically frames found in newspapers, are also important to analyze in order to avoid making causal assumptions. Thus, by examining media representations of EDP, I will be able to analyze how those displaced by climate change are framed and whether the influence of an imaginative geography and banal nationalism produces discourses of victimization and/or devictimization.

## Chapter Five: Methodology

In order to understand media representations of EDP, I will be conducting an analysis of printed news media. This type of research analysis is most suited to help answer the research questions as well as to attain the objectives of this thesis. This thesis will entail an analysis of newspaper articles, with a specific focus on printed news articles. I chose to focus on printed media, as they are produced and recorded on a daily basis. By being published quotidianly, they record the representations of specific social groups over a period of time and across different locations (Bleich et al., 2015). Despite the surge of online news media platforms, Kruikemeier et al. (2018) found that reading print news leads to more learning than online websites because those who read print news were more visually attentive to the articles. As well, in a research conducted by Kantar TNS Canada, a global marketing and social research firm, it was found that 80% of Canadian adults read the country's newspapers during the week (Powell, 2016). It is also important to note that only 30% of adults read news exclusively through online digital platforms, such as websites and apps (Powell, 2016). Thus, it is evident that printed news still maintains a large influence on the Canadian population.

### Search Strategy

With the use of Factiva, a large global newspaper database, I established three important criteria or the search strategy. To begin, it is imperative to select key words to represent environmentally displaced people. However, when searching EDP in the database, it is apparent that this is not a frequent concept used by journalists. Therefore, I refer to the other terms frequently mentioned in the literature to classify those forced to relocate due to environmental disasters. As such, I chose to use the concepts *environmental refugees* and *climate migrants*. Since

the environment and climate are used somewhat synonymously, despite being different, *environmental migrants* and *climate refugees* are included in the search strategy. Therefore, the key words “*environmental refugee\**”, “*climate refugee\**”, “*environmental migrant\**” and “*climate migrant\**” are used individually to find newspaper articles on the subject. Additionally, since Canada is a bilingual country, it is imperative to analyze both French and English articles to fully begin to comprehend Canadian print media representations of EDP. Subsequently, the key words “*réfugié\* environnementa\**” and “*réfugié\* climatique\**” (which were self-translated) allow for more articles to be discovered. Nevertheless, there are no newspaper articles on the subject of “*migrant\* environnementa\**”. As well, when using the key word “*migrant\* climatique\**”, only duplicate articles that appeared from the other two French key words have been found. Therefore, the French translations for environmental migrants and climate migrants are exempt from this analysis.

The second search criterion focuses on the date of publication. The first step in establishing this criterion was to conduct a preliminary search in order to determine the prominence and popularity of the key words in journalism. By doing this search, the results highlight that climate change (and by consequence, EDP) has become a more prominent topic in recent decades. In fact, there is a limited amount of news articles published on the key words before the 20<sup>th</sup> century. As such, the decision to select a time range between January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2000 and December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2017 is three-fold: (1) to focus on recent representation of EDP, (2) to concentrate on the representations that were conveyed while the subject gained prominence, (3) to analyze if the frames varied over

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<sup>i</sup> Please note: the “\*” symbol is frequently used in databases to include all alternative suffixes (such as a environmental refugee or environmental refugees).



time. These reasons ultimately allow me to understand and interpret how the Canadian public currently views and has viewed EDP in past years.

The final criterion for this search strategy involves selecting which Canadian newspapers to analyze. In fact, this criterion was deemed necessary, as a preliminary search using the other two criteria – the key words and dates - and specifying the region of *Canada*, found a total of 684 articles from 121 newspapers. However, it would not be feasible to analyze 684 articles for this thesis. As such, only a few Canadian newspapers were selected, based on their circulation, influence and region. To represent highly populated regions in Canada, the Toronto Star, the Vancouver Sun, the Montreal Gazette and the Ottawa Citizen have been selected. Although the latter three fall under the umbrella of the same parent company, Postmedia, it is important to note that there were initially 61 articles from the Toronto Star and 69 articles from the three Postmedia-owned newspapers and therefore, the sample size is comparable. In order to encompass the rest of Canada, a national newspaper, I have selected the Globe & Mail. This national newspaper was chosen instead of the National Post, as the latter is owned by Postmedia. Since the Vancouver Sun, the Montreal Gazette and the Ottawa Citizen are also owned by Postmedia, I decided to include the Globe & Mail, as it is owned by Bell Globe Media, which is a different leading print media company in Canada. Therefore, when analyzing the five different English newspapers selected for analysis, it is evident that they all belong to the three main English newspaper companies, otherwise known as Postmedia Network Inc/Sun Media, Bell Globe Media, and Torstar Corp (News Media Canada, 2018). As for French publications, the most influential and circulated newspapers are Le Journal de Québec, La Presse, and Canada Newswire. I initially selected Le Journal de Montréal as well, however the articles from this newspaper are all duplicates from Le Journal de Québec. Therefore, I excluded this newspaper from this search strategy.

Thus, the search strategy is comprised of key words, a specific time range as well as Canadian newspapers (as summarized in Table 1). By applying this search strategy, a total of 189 Canadian (169 English and 20 French) articles on EDP were selected for analysis.

Table 1

*Search Strategy*

Key words	Time range	Newspapers
<i>“climate migrant*”</i>	January 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2000 - December 31 <sup>st</sup> , 2017	Globe & Mail, Vancouver Sun, Toronto Star, Ottawa Citizen and Montreal Gazette
<i>“environmental migrant*”</i>	January 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2000 - December 31 <sup>st</sup> , 2017	Globe & Mail, Vancouver Sun, Toronto Star, Ottawa Citizen and Montreal Gazette
<i>“environmental refugee*”</i>	January 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2000 - December 31 <sup>st</sup> , 2017	Globe & Mail, Vancouver Sun, Toronto Star, Ottawa Citizen and Montreal Gazette
<i>“climate refugee*”</i>	January 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2000 - December 31 <sup>st</sup> , 2017	Globe & Mail, Vancouver Sun, Toronto Star, Ottawa Citizen and Montreal Gazette
<i>“réfugié* environnementa*”</i> ,	January 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2000 - December 31 <sup>st</sup> , 2017	Le Journal de Québec, Canada Newswire and La Presse
<i>“réfugié* climatiqu*”</i>	January 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2000 - December 31 <sup>st</sup> , 2017	Le Journal de Québec, Canada Newswire and La Presse

Before performing an analysis of the articles found, I examined the results for any duplicates. This is especially important in the case of Postmedia newspapers in order to ensure that duplicates do not appear in the different Postmedia-owned newspapers. The process of searching for duplicates was undertaken by analyzing the title, the date of publication and the author of each article in order to find any identical titles, leading to the removal of 37 duplicated news articles.

Thus, by using the established criteria of key words, date range, newspapers and removal of duplicates, I selected a total of 152 Canadian (135 English and 17 French) articles on EDP for analysis (as summarized in Table 2.1 and Table 2.2).

Table 2.1

*Number of English Newspaper Articles after Duplicates*

Keywords	Globe & Mail	Toronto Star	Vancouver Sun	Montreal Gazette	Ottawa Citizen	Total
Environmental Refugee*	17	22	19	11	7	73
Climate Refugee*	12	22	13	5	9	52
Environmental Migrant*	1	2	1	1	1	6
Climate Migrant*	0	2	1	0	1	4
						135

Table 2.2

*Number of French Newspaper Articles after Duplicates*

Keywords	La Presse	Canada Newswire	Journal de Québec	Total
Réfugié* environnementa*	3	3		6
Réfugié* climatiqu*	6	2	3	11
				17

Throughout the data collection, there were other modifications to the sample of articles initially selected. Despite analyzing articles for any duplicates prior to the data collection, another two duplicates were identified. Although these articles initially appear to be different due to differing titles and dates, they were in fact identical. Another article was excluded during the research process, as the key words “climate” and “refugee” were used separately to describe different topics,

one focusing on climate change, and the other on political refugees. In sum, I analyzed a total of 149 Canadian (132 English and 17 French) articles on EDP for this thesis (see APPENDIX A for the full list of new articles).

## Analysis Procedures

As mentioned in Chapter Four, I am studying how EDP are represented in Canadian print media through frame analysis as well as critical frame analysis. In order to code frames in the newspapers, I decided to use the analytical tool NVivo (QSR International Pty Ltd, n.d.). I chose this software program, as it is easy to code the articles with NVivo by using several different frames, and to analyze all the quotes for each frame and subcategory. Before analyzing these frames, it is first important to address the fact that I have adopted a deductive approach for this research. This approach discovers frames deductively – meaning the frames are derived from the literature and established prior to coding (Matthes & Kohring, 2008). However, it was initially difficult to determine the deductive frames for this thesis, as there are only three publications on media representations of EDP (Birkey, 2014; Farbotko, 2005; Mann, 2009). I also decided to not only follow the traditional five news frames that are commonly used when analyzing climate change in the media: of conflict, attribution of responsibility, economic consequences, human interest and morality (Valkenburg & Semetko, 2000). This decision was taken, as EDP are more than climate change; this social group falls under climate change as well as migration. Instead, I will base my frames off a combination of the three publications on media representations of EDP, the five traditional news frames on climate change, as well as literature on media representations of other displaced people, such as political refugees and migrants. This amalgamation has led to several different frames, which will be coded in every newspaper article (APPENDIX B). Some

of these frames include contextual codes, such as the name of the author, the date of publication, the newspaper and the type of article.

Another aspect of the thesis, the tone of the article, is important to identify, as it will demonstrate the underlining meaning of the article. It can also help to identify underlying influences that affect the tone of news articles, such as newspaper ownership, economic incentives and political contexts (Dunaway, 2013). To clarify, the tone refers to a negative, positive, other or ambiguous valence of media portrayal (Bleich et al., 2015). Tone has a large influence on whether or not negative sentiments are directed towards other social groups, and it can also serve to fuel anti-group attitudes (Bleich et al., 2015; Sitton, 2004). It is also possible to identify ambiguous tones, which are difficult to decipher, as they could be positive and negative or be read from either perspective (Sitton, 2004). This will be possible by analyzing the choice of words used to represent various actors and topics in the newspaper articles. For instance, Macnamara (2005) highlighted that there exists multiple different indicators for analyzing the tone of a news article, including the narrative of the news story (i.e. the emphasis on certain meanings), the adjectives used as descriptors (e.g. illegal immigrants or starving children), metaphors and similes (e.g. floods of migrants), active or passive verbs, contextual factors (i.e. the credibility and views of the sources quoted), as well as other tonal qualities (i.e. emotional language that calls for solutions and actions or sarcasm surrounding climate uncertainty).

A second crucial frame is the description of the environmental problem. Not only is it necessary to highlight how the article characterizes the event(s), but it will also be beneficial to identify where the environmental disaster took place to understand the specific social group affected. As well, the natural disaster will be analyzed in order to comprehend the gravity of the event. A lot of

literature indicates the importance of analyzing the difference between sudden-onset and slow-onset disasters (e.g., Boano et al., 2008; Islam & Shamsuddoha, 2017; Yonetani & Holladay, 2013). Based on the literature, I identify sudden-onset disasters as storms (tropical, sand, wind), earthquakes, floods, volcanic eruptions, cyclones, tsunamis, forest fires, and dry mass movements (landslides). On the other hand, slow-onset disasters are characterized in the literature as droughts, desertification, ocean acidification and erosion, deforestation, inadequate resources (farming practices), exploitation of the land, voluntary fires, temperature rise, precipitation pattern change, and pollution. Nevertheless, there is some debate in the literature over whether the sea-level rise and the glacial melt should be considered slow- or sudden-onset disasters. I will be defining these two disasters as slow-onset disasters, as I found more literature characterized them this way.

A third code is how newspapers portray different actors while conveying their story. Therefore, the different types of actors mentioned will be observed, as well as the identification of these actors as being passive or active in the narrative. The difference between these two types of actors is characterized by the fact that reporters use quotations to highlight messages of dissent where (1) actors are viewed as active, when they speak directly through quotations, whereas (2) actors are viewed as passive, when they are indirectly referred to by the reporter (Klein et al., 2009). As Olausson (2009) found in her study, news articles on climate change tend to portray passive victims. Another way of characterizing these victims is by representing them as having agency and being resilient – or in other words, as being active (Popovski & Mundy, 2012). At this stage, I will determine if the actors affected by environmental disasters are represented as migrants and/or refugees. This will aid the analysis by observing whether EDP are characterized within discourses of victimization and/or devictimization; as being victims and deserving, or as being devictimized and undeserving.

Despite the fact that I am using the deductive analysis approach to find frames from the literature, Matthes and Kohring (2008) have criticized this approach for being limited to already established frames and its inflexibility of taking into account new emerging themes. In order to counter this criticism, a final frame, “key themes” will be established. This will be analyzed by reading each newspaper article and identifying major subjects discussed in it. This final frame will take into account any other major themes in the articles, such as ethics, economics, fears and denial which were found in the literature (Birkey, 2014; Farbotko, 2005; Mann, 2009), or more emerging themes unprecedented by prior media analyses research.

Lastly, I would like to note that during the analysis procedure, I over-coded the final theme “key themes”. In order to analyze the results, it was imperative to make the codes more comprehensive. Therefore, I merged certain codes together if they had a similar connotation and meaning, as most frames were coded too inductively. For the rest of the codes that had different meanings or connotations, I reorganized them to create overarching frames. These modifications allowed me to conduct a more effective analysis of the different frames obtained from my results.

In summary, this chapter has described the search strategy and the analysis procedures. Notably, I explained the selection process on how I decided that I will be analyzing 149 Canadian print news articles, as well as the approach that I will be using in order to conduct a frame analysis of these news articles. After choosing these methodological procedures, I was then able to begin the analysis of the news articles. The next chapter, Chapter Six, will present the findings as well as a discussion based on the results.

## Chapter Six: Analysis

### Part A: Results Pertaining Specifically to EDP

The first section of this chapter will be comprised of an in-depth analysis on the representations of EDP. Since the objective of this thesis is to understand how Canadian print media represents EDP, this first part will cover how news articles specifically represent EDP. As Canadian media focuses primarily on climate change and does not generally elaborate on EDP apart from them being a potential consequence, it is important to distinguish this specific analysis from a more global analysis of the news articles, which will take place later in Part B of this chapter. Multiple different themes and aspects emerged from the articles and they will each be described below, as follows: 1) Uncertainty Surrounding EDP Terms; (2) Definition of EDP; (3) EDP's Country of Origin; (4) Description of the Event(s); (5) EDP as Quantitative Numbers; (6) Security Concerns; (7) EDP as Active or Passive; (8) Tone of articles; and (9) Popularity of EDP.

#### i) Uncertainty Surrounding EDP Terms

One of the main goals of this thesis is to analyze how Canadian print media represents EDP, including the terms used to describe these people. As mentioned in Chapter Five, the key words used in the search strategy to find news articles on EDP were “environmental refugees”, “environmental migrants”, “climate refugees”, and “climate migrants”. Although the results are skewed by the key words used to find the articles, the use of certain key words can help shed light on the representation of EDP, such as the popularity surrounding the use of some key words over others. The results for this subsection are divided as the following: examining the popularity of terms used; and analyzing the uncertainty surrounding the terms used to characterize EDP.



First of all, EDP are most frequently represented as “environmental refugees”, as this term appeared in 77 news articles. In comparison, “climate refugees” was used in 66 news articles, “environmental migrants” in 12 news articles, and “climate migrants” in 8 news articles (see Table 3). Overall, it is apparent that journalists prefer to refer to EDP as refugees, as opposed to migrants. This connotation, albeit appearing harmless, illustrates a specific meaning, attached to the concept of EDP. In fact, refugees and migrants are not synonymous, and therefore the use of one word over the other depicts an acute representation of those displaced. As defined in the literature review, refugees have “a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinions and [are] unable or, owing to such fear, [are] unwilling to avail [themselves] of the protection of that country” (International Organization for Migration, 2011, p. 79), whereas migrants are people that made the decision to migrate for:

Reasons of ‘personal convenience’ and without intervention of an external compelling factor; it therefore applie[s] to persons, and family members, moving to another country or region to better their material or social conditions and improve the prospect for themselves or their family (International Organization for Migration, 2011, p. 61).

Consequently, the use of “refugees” calls for more sympathy, empathy and action than the term “migrant” would for readers. The sense that there are “refugees”, or individuals that are in dire need of help from environmental disasters and events, evokes different sentiments in the Canadian population in comparison to referring to them as “migrants”, who are commonly associated with economic reasons. The former term would then suggest that any environmental or climate migrant is not displaced based on environmental factors but based on the search for a better socioeconomic living. Despite the fact that Bukvic (2012) denounced this notion, as migrants do not see an

improvement in socioeconomic status after relocating, however this ideology is still often associated with the term “migrant”.

Besides the reliance on the term “refugees” instead of “migrants”, there was also a slightly more common use of the term “environmental” over “climate”. This is illustrated in Table 3, where the key words were coded based on how often each term was used in news articles each year. In fact, both “environmental refugees” and “environmental migrants” are used more popularly than their counterparts: “climate refugees” and “climate migrants”. Table 3 demonstrates how 91 news articles used the term “environmental” versus 77 news articles that used “climate” instead. Despite the frequency of journalists of referring to these individuals as being displaced from the “environment” over the “climate”, it became apparent that there was a change as of the late 2000s. This change is characterized by a larger concentration of the use of “climate” over “environmental”, which has continued to be effective until the end of 2017; however, it is also important to remember that 2017 was the last year that news articles on EDP were analyzed for this thesis. Future research could seek to analyze whether this trend continues in subsequent years.

This leads one to wonder: why was there this clear switch from the dominance of the term “environment” to “climate”? This could be due to the connotations and meanings that these terms hold. According to the Ministry of the Environment (1996), environmental, or environment, is the land, air and water, as well as any other form of external influence that impacts how humans, animals and vegetation live or develop. On the other hand, climate is a shortened form of climate change. It is therefore, as defined by the U.N. (1992), any change in climate, generally associated with human-made consequences, resulting in an alteration in the global atmosphere’s composition and climate variability. As mentioned in the first chapter of this thesis, these terms are similar in

the sense that the “environment” has a large meaning that encompasses a multitude of other terms, such as climate change. However, climate change emphasizes that there is a change to the environment, caused directly or indirectly by human actions. This reliance on the term “climate” over “environment” could be attributed to Canadians’ belief in climate change has been increasing steadily over the years (David Suzuki Foundation, 2014). In fact, the David Suzuki Foundation (2014) stated that Canadians became increasingly concerned about climate change in 2007. As such, prior to the mid to late 2000s, the climate change was still somewhat being denied by the public and therefore, the term “environment” would have been more popular. Nevertheless, following the change in public perception, a shift may have occurred in public perception due to the impossibility of ignoring the impact of climate change, as multiple disasters occurred in the 2000s, such as the tsunami in the Indian Ocean in 2004, Hurricane Katrina in 2005, and the Haitian earthquake in 2010. It was thus difficult to avoid associating these events with climate change since these disasters were more severe and occurred at more frequent intervals than environmental events.

Nevertheless, this shift between terms demonstrates an uncertainty over which words to use to designate those displaced. This stems from the fact that journalists seem to rely on all four different key words to describe EDP. Although the key word, “environmental refugees”, was used dominantly in the early 2000s, there was a transition in 2004, illustrating new, different terms to describe EDP, resulting in an uncertainty between naming them “environmental refugees” or “climate refugees”. The following year, there was also the addition to the use of “environmental migrants”, instead of “environmental refugees”. This ultimately led to diverse results in 2007, where “environmental refugees” was used in 28 news articles, “climate refugees” 11, as well as “environmental migrants” in one news article. However, this uncertainty became even more

evident in 2009, where the three former terms were used with the addition of climate migrants. This demonstrates that journalists are unsure whether to characterize these displaced (or future displaced) people as migrants or refugees, or as climate change- or environment-induced. In particular, 2015 saw a more equal coverage on each term used, as “environmental refugees” was used in 4 news articles, “climate refugees” in 5, “environmental migrants” in 2, and “climate migrants” in 2 news articles. This differs from the early to mid-2000s, when “environmental refugees” was primarily used to describe EDP, or in the later 2000s, when “climate refugees” was used more popularly. Although the reliance on two terms instead of four was illustrated in 2017, it is impossible to predict, given the results from Table 3, that there will no longer be a disparity in the upcoming years. However, if this trend persists in the next few years, it could lead to a stabilization of the term climate change-induced displaced people instead of EDP.

Table 3

*Amount of key words published per year in Canadian printed news*

Year	Environmental refugees	Climate refugees	Environmental migrants	Climate migrants
2000	2	-	-	-
2001	2	-	-	-
2002	1	-	-	-
2003	2	-	-	-
2004	4	1	-	-
2005	6	-	1	-
2006	4	4	-	-
2007	28	11	1	-
2008	2	3	-	-
2009	7	11	2	1
2010	6	7	2	-
2011	6	4	-	-
2012	-	2	-	-
2013	-	2	-	1
2014	3	3	1	2
2015	4	5	2	2
2016	3	7	2	1
2017	-	9	-	1

Another way that illustrates the uncertainty journalists have over the key words is how some journalists use them interchangeably within articles. An interesting example was Aulakh's news article, where she wrote: "a periodic influx of climate refugees, mostly from the island countries threatened by sea levels", as well as "social workers [...] help[ing] settle climate migrants – thousands from sinking island countries – adapt and integrate" (2015). This is intriguing, as in both cases, she is referring to those being displaced from islands due to the sea level rise. Despite the similarities in context, she used different terms when writing her news article. This example depicts how the terms are used interchangeably and synonymously in news articles, although the two terms hold very different meanings and representations.

Despite the disparity in the terms used to classify EDP, it is important to note that journalists are not the only actors experiencing this uncertainty. In fact, the literature (e.g., Bates, 2002; Castles, 2002; Masquelier, 2006) highlights extensively the indecision and debate over which term to use. As presented in Chapter Three, there exists a debate in academia, encompassing multiple different fields such as ethics, law, sociology and international development that focuses on whether to label those displaced as refugees or migrants. Besides the debate, the literature also illustrates that some researchers use the terms "refugee" and "migrant" interchangeably within the same article or paper. For instance, Murray wrote that the objectives of her article were to "explore five factors that could lead to the inclusion of environmental migrants in political and public discussion" as well as to "assess the level of awareness in Canada of environmental refugees" (2010, p. 90). As evidenced by the quotes, within two paragraphs, Murray (2010) had switched between using the term "environmental migrants" to "environmental refugees", which clearly illustrates how the researcher used these two terms interchangeably. In addition, the literature uses climate change and the environment interchangeably to categorize this type of displaced people.

An example of how these two terms are used interchangeably is shown in Birkey's dissertation, where she wrote of predictions "that 150-200 million people will become climate refugees" (2014, p. 8) and later, of the "[p]us[h] for [the] inclusion of environmental refugees" (2014, p. 17). Thus, this uncertainty is not only conveyed by journalists but also by academics in their publications.

Ultimately, the uncertainty that journalists and academics face over which term to use demonstrates that there is an evident call for a legal definition to classify EDP. Whether the legal definition employs the term refugee or migrant, or environmental or climate change, it does not matter as much as the fact that there exists an apparent uncertainty surrounding these concepts. By providing a legal definition to classify EDP, it will eliminate the multiple use of "environmental refugees", "environmental migrants", "climate migrants", "climate refugees", and environmentally displaced people. Without the multiplicity of synonymously-used terms, the use of a specific, singular term to encompass all other concepts previously employed will direct all discussion on the topic to a specific term used to designate EDP. Thus, when analyzing the prevalence of environmental displacement, it will become more evident on the surface whether this constitutes a social problem. As well, this could potentially help shift the debate over which term to use in newspapers and in the literature to other related topics that could help attempt to find solutions to the social problem at hand.

## ii) Definition of EDP

Another major theme that was framed in the newspaper articles pertains to the definition of EDP. The most frequent association with the definition of EDP refers to the problem with including EDP into the legal category of refugees. As Marc and Craig Kielburger wrote:

The United Nations Refugee Convention only extends to members of persecuted groups.

People driven from their homes by rising ocean tides or creeping deserts don't qualify for legal protection, which means many countries' doors remain closed and safe asylum is out of reach (2017).

Therefore, other journalists mentioned how other terms, like “‘environmental migrants’ [...] [will] come to replace ‘refugee’” (Blanchfield, 2009). The use of the word “migrant” instead of “refugee” was also described as being supported by the U.N. IPCC (Hood, 2007). Since EDP do not qualify as refugees that are granted protection, Canada is “not obliged to help [them]” (McLeman & Veronis, 2015). Moreover, journalists wrote about how it becomes difficult to associate the term refugeehood to EDP, as it could potentially be detrimental to political refugees, hoping to seek asylum. Margolis addressed this issue by writing that “the problem with the term climate refugee starts with the word ‘refugee.’” (2017) This was also frequently discussed within the debate in the literature over environmental refugees by academics and researchers who are against associating refugeehood to those fleeing from climate change (e.g., Castles, 2002; OECD, 2016). Not only are there issues with using the term “refugee”, but journalists also raised the fact that there exists a thin line between economic and climate factors. As the Globe and Mail published, “Africa will produce new economic and environmental refugees” (“Africa’s moment,” 2010). Interestingly, this news article referred to economic refugees, which, in itself, is a contradiction, as the term “refugee” is associated with desperate people who have a fear of persecution and are unwilling to return to their place of origin. Therefore, the notion that there are economic refugees is absurd since the idea that refugees are displaced for economic reasons discredits the term of *refugeehood*. Despite this interesting example, the literature (e.g., Castles, 2002; Moriniere, 2010) did highlight how these two factors are similar and therefore, it is difficult to separate the economic from environmental factors.

Within this same debate however, there are also newspaper articles that adopt the other side of

the debate. These articles call for the inclusion of the environmental aspect in the definition of refugees. An example of this would be when Hanley wrote “yesterday's report also called on UN agencies to study the need for an internationally accepted definition of "environmental refugee," since treaties recognize only political refugees as eligible for aid from the UN refugee agency.” (2007b). This was argued to be important, as the “[i]nclusion of the term ‘environmental refugees’ [is seen as necessary] to cover people ‘forced to abandon their lands and homes because of environmental devastation’” (O’Neil, 2003). An example of this call for the legal recognition of environmental refugees in Canada occurred in 2011, when there was a large amount of coverage, concerning the federal elections. As such, every article that mentioned campaign promises referred to how the Green Party of Canada was “[a]dvocat[ing] for the inclusion of 'environmental refugees' as a refugee category in Canada” (“Immigration,” 2011). Therefore, Canadian news media covered both the need for the legal recognition of environmental refugees, as well as the other side of the debate that insists on the economic influence on these people’s decisions to migrate.

### iii) EDP’s Country of Origin

Whether EDP are classified as refugees or migrants, it is still important to analyze the coverage of the location of the EDP in order to understand whether a certain group or country was specifically mentioned in association with these displaced people. In other words, this would highlight which areas of the world are commonly referred to as places from where EDP will be, or already are, displaced. The results obtained were very interesting, as the most common place associated with EDP was in fact “no location”. To contextualize, the location of EDP was coded, and in the case where no location was specified, this result was coded as “no location”. This means that articles commonly do not attach a location to displaced people, as evidenced in Table 4. In addition, the absence of association with a specific location was the most popular code for each



key word. Thus, no matter the key word used, it was more popular to characterize EDP without mentioning a location.

Table 4

*Amount of printed news articles that portray EDP as originating from each geographical location*

	Climate migrant	Environmental Migrant	Environmental Refugee	Climate Refugee	Total
No location	6	3	45	31	85
Africa	-	-	5	4	9
Asia	-	3	9	7	19
Oceania Islands	1	-	11	12	24
South America	-	1	6	1	8
Europe	-	-	2	2	4
North America	-	2	13	9	24
Arctic	-	-	3	2	5
Developing countries/Third World countries/the Global South	1	1	3	2	7

Despite the fact that “no location” was coded the most, EDP were found to be, overall, more portrayed as coming from specific places, countries and/or continents. In fact, the second most popular location is North America. One could argue that this is due to the fact that Canadian newspapers and the Canadian public will be more concerned about those in closer proximity to Canada or within Canada, as people affected from these areas would be more likely to be displaced in Canada. In comparison, people displaced from countries on the other side of the planet could be seen as a lower threat since it would be harder for them to relocate to North America. Environmental displacement will also directly impact Canadians, as EDP from Canada or the United States will be seeking refuge within the continent primarily due to the fact that these countries are connected. McLeman portrays this notion well, when writing in a futuristic way that: “Canada [will be] seeking to increase controls on the entry of Americans [...] because Americans

fleeing the result of climate change could become environmental refugees to Canada” (2007). As such, those affected or that will be affected by environmental events in North America appear more frequently in Canadian print media, as notions surrounding their arrival in Canada are commonly associated with these predictions.

Oceania islands were the third most common representation of where EDP are coming or have arrived from. This could largely be due to the fact that there is a large amount of coverage on the sea level rise and how Oceania islands will be forced to relocate. Many different island-nations are referred to in the articles, including Tuvalu. For instance, “the plight of Tuvalu islanders is just one heart-rending example of ‘environmental refugees’ – persons displaced, often permanently, from their homes owing to extreme weather events, such as floods, desertification and rising sea levels” (Scharper, 2010). This example illustrates the link not only between these islands and the rising sea levels, but also other environmental factors that could also cause displacement.

The fourth most common characterization associated with EDP was that they are coming from Asia. This is a rather interesting finding, as the most affected continent from environmental events and disasters is Asia, according to Bilak et al. (2018). Notable countries that were frequently mentioned in the news articles include Bangladesh, where “[a] sea level rise of just one metre [...] [c]ould inundate almost a third of [the country] and turn 30 million people into climate refugees” (Munro, 2006), as well as India, where “monsoon floods [have] affected 6.9 million people” (Kesterton, 2013). Whereas these areas are affected by floods and the sea level rise, other regions of Asia are afflicted with different environmental disasters. For example, Hume wrote that “the Asian Development Bank says 4,000 villages [composed of 400 million people] in China are threatened by expansion of the Gobi Desert” (2004).

Apart from these four main locations, South America was occasionally mentioned. Again, this could largely be due to the fact that South America is connected to North America and as such, EDP from that continent present a concern for Canadians. This was captured in the news article, where Jacobs wrote: “The U.S., more than Canada, [...] will have trouble protecting its borders from poor people fleeing weather-damaged countries in the Caribbean and Latin America.” (2005) This quote illustrates how environmental events in Latin America are of concern for Canadians, due to the proximity and the ability for those displaced to arrive by foot. There was also a characterization of EDP as coming from developing countries, “Third World” countries and the Global South. One can apply the concept of Edward Said (1978) on *Others* versus *Us* here, in the sense that EDP are considered to be *Others* versus the Canadian *Us*. For instance, Tseghay published: “While the inhabitants of Western countries are removed – at least somewhat – from the vagaries of the environment, the people of the developing world aren’t so lucky.” (2010) This quote illustrates how countries like Canada can cast a blind eye to climate change consequences, as they are not impacted as largely or as frequently as other parts of the world, south of the equator. In addition, Africa and Europe were mentioned in a few news articles, although these were far from being areas of the world that Canadian newspapers were occupied with.

iv) Description of the Event(s) leading to/causing displacement

Aside from the descriptions about the locations from which the EDP would be coming, EDP are typically characterized as being displaced due to specific environmental events. It is however important to note that in 45 cases, no specific event was associated with the description of EDP, as evidenced by Table 5. For example, De Souza did not associate a specific event when he described the prediction of millions of EDP: “[t]he authors also warned that dealing with climate change must be part of the solution since it could hurt developing economies and force up to 50

million people out of their homes by 2050 as environmental refugees.” (2006) Thus, these particular cases omit the reason that these people would be displaced, besides the evident climate change or environmental push factor.

Table 5

*Amount of printed news articles describing each type of environmental event affecting EDP*

	Climate migrant	Environmental Migrant	Environmental Refugee	Climate Refugee	Total
No event	3	1	25	16	45
Gradual	5	9	42	43	189
Abrupt	-	3	14	16	46

In other cases, EDP were described as being displaced due to sudden-onset and/or slow-onset events. The most popular association characterizes slow-onset events, as the reason for displacement. Not only is this the most frequent descriptor, but there are also a multitude slow-onset events mentioned as having an influence on EDP. Unsurprisingly, the sea level rise was frequently attributed to this migratory group. For instance, Doyle wrote: “the new ‘climate refugees’ – like [...] coastal peoples whose low-lying homes disappear beneath rising waves – will be permanently displaced” (2007). This could be due to the imminent threat about the sea level rise that will cause lots of people, living in coastal cities, to become EDP. Another common slow-onset event was global warming, which will lead to “a deluge of environmental refugees fleeing the ravages of [this event]” (“Canada’s cloudy crystal ball,” 2007). This gradual event ranged from any type of characterization of global warming, to the warming of the planet, and to GHG emissions. Among these popular slow-onset disasters, desertification was frequently attributed as a reason that force EDP to “fle[e] droughts” (Hume, 2015) and “the spread of deserts” (Gorrie, 2007). In addition, another cause for displacement referred to a lack of water, famine and crop

failures. This is best illustrated by Leake who stated that “[s]uch a change would destroy farmland and water resources and lead to mass migrations of ‘environmental refugees.’” (2007) Journalists also highlighted another slow-onset disaster, the melting of ice caps, that would be causing people to relocate. In fact, this is often featured as when “the ice caps melt[,] the oceans rise” (McDonald, 2006), meaning that the melting of ice will have a direct influence over the sea level rise. On the same note, melting ice caps will lead to the exposure of shoreline permafrost (Hume, 2004), meaning that “carbon and methane – both climate-warming gases – locked in the frozen ground might escape, feeding even more climate warming” (Munro, 2006). As well, destabilized weather was somewhat mentioned as another potential cause. This broad slow-onset event encompasses “harsher winters [and] greater precipitation” (McLeman, 2006). Furthermore, contamination was also explained as a slow-onset event that triggers displacement. This gradual event is caused purely by man-made consequences, such as pesticides (Mittelstaedt, 2003) and sewage pollution (Mittelstaedt, 2009). Similar to contamination, environmental degradation, and by extension deforestation, was somewhat described as a push factor for EDP, including “wealthy offshore investors who buy property in Vancouver because of environmental degradation back home” (McMartin, 2014). Lastly, journalists mentioned, albeit rarely, the influence of climate-related diseases. For example, Calamai characterized their influence by writing: “Large numbers of people could become ‘environmental migrants’, fleeing drought and climate-related diseases like malaria and cholera” (2005a).

Despite the more frequent association with slow-onset events, sudden-onset disasters are also attributed as causes for displacement. Out of all the different events described, floods were the most common sudden-onset disasters illustrated. As depicted by Woods, there are warnings “of climate refugees and biblical flooding” (2009). As well, storms were characterized as push factors

for EDP, including “tornados, and hurricanes and typhoons” (Simpson & Hamilton, 2007). In addition, earthquakes were somewhat mentioned as push factor for EDP. Another sudden-onset disaster was “wild fires [that] scor[e] the landscape [and] raise the number of environmental refugees in North America” (Hume, 2007). Interestingly, this sudden-onset event was exclusively described as affecting North America. Finally, Bronskill (2004) mentioned the influence that inundations have on the displacement of people. Thus, although sudden-onset events were not as frequently portrayed in Canadian news media, different disasters were nevertheless illustrated, such as floods, storms, wildfires, earthquakes, and inundations.

v) EDP as Quantitative Numbers

Another major frame throughout the newspapers refer to EDP in terms of quantitative numbers or descriptors. In other words, one of the most frequent topics about EDP portrayed them as this large amount of people migrating. Within this frame, the most noticeable way of characterizing EDP quantitatively was the reference to predictions. In fact, there are multiple different ways that Canadian newspapers mentioned these predictions, as well as the fact that the predictions themselves varied even within the same article. The most common prediction characterized EDP in terms of millions, but without providing an exact number or expected date of arrival. For example, “there is a real prospect of vast millions of environmental refugees as the ice caps melt and the oceans rise.” (McDonald, 2006). This example depicts this image of millions of EDP arriving and being displaced – without providing a date or an exact number – easily creating a sense of panic and fear in news media’s audience.

The other common way to represent EDP is as predictions in millions with more specific numbers and dates. It is important to highlight that the most popular prediction referenced was the

expected 150 to 200 million EDP by 2050. Thereafter, 50-200 million by 2010 to 2013 was another common prediction, followed by 200-700 million by 2050, 50-100 million by 2050, 75-250 million by 2020, and more generally, 50-200 million by 2050. Interestingly, for the few predictions about EDP arriving before 2050, most of the predictions were stated as if they would be realized within the next five years. Furthermore, similar numbers were mentioned for predictions in millions without an accompanying expected date, ranging from 20 to 700 million. For instance, Jones wrote that “estimated global climate change will [...] turn 200 million people into environmental refugees” (2006), without any indication of when these 200 million EDP are expected. Lastly, a couple of newspaper articles wrote predictions in millions about EDP by 2050 to 2100, but without specific numbers. Interestingly enough, EDP were also quantitatively compared to political refugees, as Scharper described: “In 2003 [...] the United Nations reported that for the first time in history, the number of environmental refugees had reached 25 million, surpassing the 23 million political and war refugees.” (2007) Contrary to the popular idea of panic and fear surrounding millions of EDP, this frame of comparing EDP to political refugees instead gives those displaced due to environmental events a sense of legitimacy in the opinion of the newspapers’ audience.

Although predictions in millions are the most common prediction associated with EDP, other predictions are also mentioned. For example, three news articles referenced EDP as arriving in billions. The majority of the time, this prediction was vague and had no expected arrival date. For example, Toronto Star published a news article that stated: “billions of climate refugees flee[ing] the rising waters in coastal cities, not to mention the other disruptions that will confront us.” (“Paris accord,” 2015) However, one article did provide a specific date and number for the prediction of billions of EDP. In fact, Barlow and Moist wrote: “In 2050, that number will rise to 1.7 billion.” (2009)

In addition, three articles quantified EDP in the thousands. In one of these instances, the article was referring specifically to Tuvalu and its citizens that will be displaced by 2055 (J. Griffin, 2005). In another situation, a journalist was writing about 88,000 displaced by the Fort McMurray fires in Canada (Lierop, 2016). In both cases, the news articles were describing specific groups affected and therefore, had more concrete numbers, albeit lower predictions than those that englobe potentially affected people in the entire world. On a similar note, there was a prediction of concrete numbers that explained that 25 million EDP were displaced in 2003 (Scharper, 2007). The third article that mentioned EDP in the thousands was written by Hume, who referenced a prediction that “new environmental refugees [will] grow by 5,000 per day” (2004).

The most important finding from all of these predictions, with the exception of the three cases about concrete numbers, is that the predictions are uncertain and constantly changing. One journalist captures this variability by stating that “[o]ft-repeated estimates of 150-200 million climate-change migrants by 2050 have been questioned as being unsubstantiated” (McMartin, 2014). He later wrote that the predictions about people “affected by climate change does not mean they will move, or fail to adapt” (McMartin, 2014). On one hand, the quantification of EDP can be used as a method to induce fear about climate change consequences on Canadians. On the other hand, it is difficult to concretize these numbers, as some predictions mention 150-200 million by 2050, whereas others anticipate 700 million by the same date. However, as EDP do not have any formal, legal recognition in the world, it is difficult to obtain concrete numbers. There are exceptions, notably citizens from “Tuvalu, the Polynesian island at risk of disappearing into bloated waters” (Kielberger & Kielburger, 2017), as well as the “88,000 environmental refugees [...] [from] Fort McMurray” (Lierop, 2016) that were displaced in Canada due to wildfires, since



it is easier to track the number of residents as opposed to unpredictable displacements, especially internal displacements.

Besides numbers attributed through predictions, EDP are also portrayed in terms of quantitative descriptors. In other words, there are certain adjectives and metaphors used to describe EDP qualitatively, without having to resort to unsubstantiated statistical predictions. Keung used “inflow of people fleeing extreme climate change” (2014) as a way to characterize a sum of people being displaced. On a similar note, the word *influx*, *large numbers*, *huge migrations* were also employed to describe EDP. Furthermore, the characterization of EDP in terms of “mass movements” (Martyn, 2007) was frequently used by journalists, as an alternative to statistical predictions. Another descriptor mentioned “hordes of climate refugees” (Wilson, 2010a) that will be displaced in the future. Therefore, multiple different adjectives are utilized to represent EDP as a large sum of people being displaced, regardless of whether journalists use the terms *influx*, *hordes*, *mass*, *inflow*, *large numbers*, or *huge migrations* to frame EDP in this way. As for metaphors, the use of the word *waves* was employed to not only emphasize a large sum of EDP, but also to play on the fact that some EDP will be displaced due to the sea level rise. In this sense, the word *wave* refers to the sea, whose levels will continue to rise. For example, Regg wrote of “predicted waves of ‘environmental refugees’” (2014) and Hume painted a picture of “the coming wave of climate change refugees” (2015). On a similar note, *flood* was employed as a metaphor to not only illustrate the large amount of EDP arriving, but to depict this image associated with a common environmental disaster – floods. For instance, Raoul wrote: “B.C. faces future flood of ‘climate refugees’” (2007).

To summarize, journalists frequently mention EDP in terms of quantitative numbers and more commonly, refer to them in predictions in millions of EDP that will be relocating. Ultimately, there is an uncertainty present in regard to the predictions used, as they differ substantially and therefore, illustrate conflicting views and statistics. However, journalists also turn to descriptors, such as adjectives and metaphors, to characterize EDP in terms of numbers – without needing to state a specific number.

vi) Security Concerns

Canadian newspapers also represent EDP as a security concern. This was done in a multitude of ways, including by associating them to conflict. As Porter quoted: “With millions of environmental refugees afoot in search of food and water, conflict is bound to ensue, said Richard Peltier, a U of T physics professor who was a lead author of a recent IPCC report.” (2007) This quote explains that on top of quantifying EDP, this large amount of EDP will bring forth conflict. In addition, the Toronto Star characterized EDP as “creating conflicts across international borders” (“Wake-up call on warming,” 2014). This is due to the fact that devastating climate change disasters, occurring in countries like China and Bangladesh, will inevitably cause international displacement. Large amounts of millions of EDP will then cause conflicts internationally. However, none of these cases contextualize the conflict or explain why EDP would trigger this consequence.

On a similar note, EDP were associated with being a threat. As per Scharper’s article, “researchers at the Pentagon have been tracking climate change for years, perceiving it as a severe security threat, as reported by Gwynne Dyer’s *Climate Wars* and Michael Nash’s recent documentary *Climate Refugees*” (2011). Thus, climate change, and by extension EDP, are

perceived to be a big security threat, according to the U.S. Government. Moreover, this threat is contextualized, as being a “greater threat to global security than terrorism” (“Climate crisis bigger threat than terror,” 2008). Once again, it is difficult to separate climate change consequences from the EDP themselves. Within this frame, there are also “menacing geopolitical forces at work” (Rogers, 2012) and “the disruption of the world economy” (May, 2010) that act as a consequence of the threat of climate change and its displacement. In addition, there are ways that this idea of a threat is conveyed that have been previously described in other themes. For instance, predictions of large amounts of EDP arriving can be used as a fear tactic. As such, any mentions, like the fact that there will be “200 million to 700 million ‘environmental migrants’ by 2050” (Blanchfield, 2009), emit threat concerns over the potential influx of EDP into Canada and the consequences that these people would trigger. Aside from predictions, there is also the threat of EDP arriving with climate-related diseases. As described in the section on environmental events, one of the slow-onset events is from exposure to climate-related diseases. Therefore, when “climate change threatens their survival in rural areas, people flee to cities; forced into crowded, squalid conditions where food and water are scarce and diseases flourish” (“An environment policy that hurts women,” 2010). Consequently, the predictions of large quantities of EDP arriving also cause other concerns over the potential for diseases to spread.

Lastly, EDP are portrayed as security threats, as there are concerns over illegal border crossings and illegal immigration. As De Souza summarized: “there's an increasing kind of illegal immigration from north Africa and we certainly believed that's tied into the worsening environmental conditions in parts of Africa.” (2006) However, the association of EDP as illegal immigrants tends to be conveyed as a futuristic issue – one that will likely occur in the future. For instance, Simpson and Hamilton (2007) predicted that “[t]he opening up of Canada's northern

border due to thawing in the Arctic Circle [will] create[e] new shipping routes in the North, giving the federal government new responsibilities for managing risks of terrorism and illegal immigration.” These two quotes demonstrate how EDP can be characterized as illegal immigrants that currently pose security threats and that will pose security threats in the future.

vii) EDP as Active or Passive

Besides analyzing EDP as security concerns, another frame analyzed during the coding process was whether EDP were portrayed as active or passive actors. It became apparent that EDP are most commonly referred to as passive actors, rather than active. In fact, only a few frames were found that characterized EDP as active actors. For instance, when they were characterized as active actors, they were commonly attributed as *invading* and as posing as a risk for entering the Arctic. Bronskill wrote: “Le Canada pourrait un jour être envahi par des ‘réfugiés climatiques’” (2004). However, EDP are more frequently posed as being active actors when they are fleeing environmental disasters. This is due to the fact that they are portrayed as victims of climate change that cause them to “abando[n] [their] home[s]” (Mittelstaedt, 2009), to pay “extortionate rates to people smugglers [...] [and] risk[ing] their lives” (Martyn, 2007), as well as “to flee their homes” (Scharper, 2010). These examples illustrate clearly that these EDP are trying to take control of their situation and they are actively doing this by trying to escape their situation.

Furthermore, EDP are also characterized as active actors when journalists interviewed them and gave them the opportunity to share their voices and stories. For example, Black wrote a news article about a “37-year-old [...] seeking refugee status, but not because he is being persecuted back home. Rather, he says, flooding and rising sea levels due to climate change are making it too dangerous for him, his wife and three children to return to Kiribati” (2013). Within this excerpt,

Black (2013) is able to contextualize the difficulty that EDP are experiencing as well as to give them a chance to communicate their emotions and opinions with the public. Nevertheless, within this same article, the displaced person interviewed was also in the middle of a “pending court case in New Zealand [...] [in order to] see[k] refugee status” (Black, 2013). This is another example of an active EDP, as the man from Kiribati is trying to take control of his situation by fighting in court about the definition and legal status of environmental refugees. As well, another example involves a quote from a Chinese immigrant in Canada that reads, “We think of ourselves as environmental refugees and political refugees” (Bula, 2016). By publishing this quote in a news article, Bula (2016) not only told the stories of Chinese immigrants in Canada, but the journalist gave these immigrants the chance to explicitly explain their experiences and thoughts. Although these individuals came to Canada as immigrants, they were able to actively acknowledge in the news article that there were many factors that came to play in their decision to move to Canada, including to escape the air quality in China.

Despite these characterizations of EDP as active actors, it was more frequent that journalists framed those displaced as passive. This stems ultimately from reporting on issues surrounding EDP, where they are more commonly referred to as a consequence of climate change and as quantitative numbers. As previously described, EDP are often portrayed in terms of quantitative predictions. Thomas illustrates this when he wrote, “I can look forward to as many as 700 million environmental refugees” (2009). These numbers do not contextualize the experience of EDP, nor does it demonstrate any action on the part of those that are/will be displaced.

Other popular ways of illustrating EDP in the media is by depicting them as victims. For example, Keung stated that there are “people driven away by climate-related disasters, including

the victims of the 2013 typhoon” (2014). Another way that news articles convey this notion of victimhood is by describing those that are dying over climate change consequences. As McKibben wrote, “heat waves like the one that killed 35,000 in Europe [will] becom[e] commonplace occurrences” (2009). Despite the representation of EDP as victims, there remains a large debate over the terminology of EDP. This debate revolves primarily around whether EDP should be legally recognized as refugees, such as calling for the need for a “resident status to climate migrants on humanitarian grounds” (Keung, 2014) or “avoiding the term ‘refugee’ entirely” (Hood, 2007). However, this debate, in itself, undermines the activeness of this social group, as their legal status rests completely on countries’ immigration policies and international conventions.

In addition, the media tends to state that EDP already exist and that they are affected by climate change. As an example, McDonald published, “[a]lready there are environmental refugees” (2008). However, this quote does not provide any other context to the fact that these people already exist. Since it is stated more as a fact, it does not convey the notion that EDP are taking action or being active. As for the description of EDP being affected by climate change, this refers to how the news media tends to depict this image of EDP being affected and as being a consequence of climate change. They are characterized as being affected by multiple environmental events, such as “[r]ising sea levels and the spread of deserts [...] forc[ing] [...] people to seek new homes” (Gorrie, 2007). Not only does the depiction of EDP as being affected and as being a consequence of climate change not characterize them as active actors, but it also makes EDP appear to be passive, as they passively allow themselves to be affected. Along with the current reality of EDP, the media depicts this image of EDP waiting for other countries and international conventions to help them. For instance, one news article illustrated: “In the days after a cyclone in May 2008, Burmese children at a refugee camp waited for aid” (“Global Hot Spots”, 2009). Besides the more

explicit portrayals of EDP waiting for help, other journalists illustrate this idea that “we live on borrowed time before we become climate refugees” (“More voices on climate conference,” 2015) or until we receive EDP. These situations convey the notion that there will be EDP in the future, but in the meantime, “people there [will] suffer harshly” (Tseghay, 2010). This is yet another way that media portrays EDP as passive actors, since in these cases, EDP are described as static actors, where they are not given the chance to highlight their experiences or voices. Thus, the media instead characterizes them in association with other more pressing issues, such as climate change and debates over the definition of refugeehood.

#### viii) Tone of Articles

Another important aspect that was noted throughout the research process is focused on determining whether the news articles are positive, negative, neutral or ambiguous. There was a large number of negative tone articles, constituting over one third of the articles analyzed. Certain indicators that presented the tone of articles as negative include adjectives and descriptors that portrayed EDP as an unstoppable “flood” as well as an uncertain, and possibly false, prediction. Besides these adjectives and descriptors, it is primarily the use of other tonal qualities and the narrative of the news story that represented EDP in a negative light; for example, as being security threats and being a catastrophic and apocalyptic consequence of climate change. The next most popular connotation associated with these news articles was neutral. Following the neutral articles, journalists also portrayed articles as being ambiguous – meaning that the articles conveyed both negative and positive connotations. Lastly, although journalists did not tend to write positive news articles about climate change and EDP, there were still a couple articles published with a positive tone. These articles conveyed EDP in a positive light primarily through the use of other tonal qualities and the narrative of the story, which relied heavily on emotional language. In fact, through

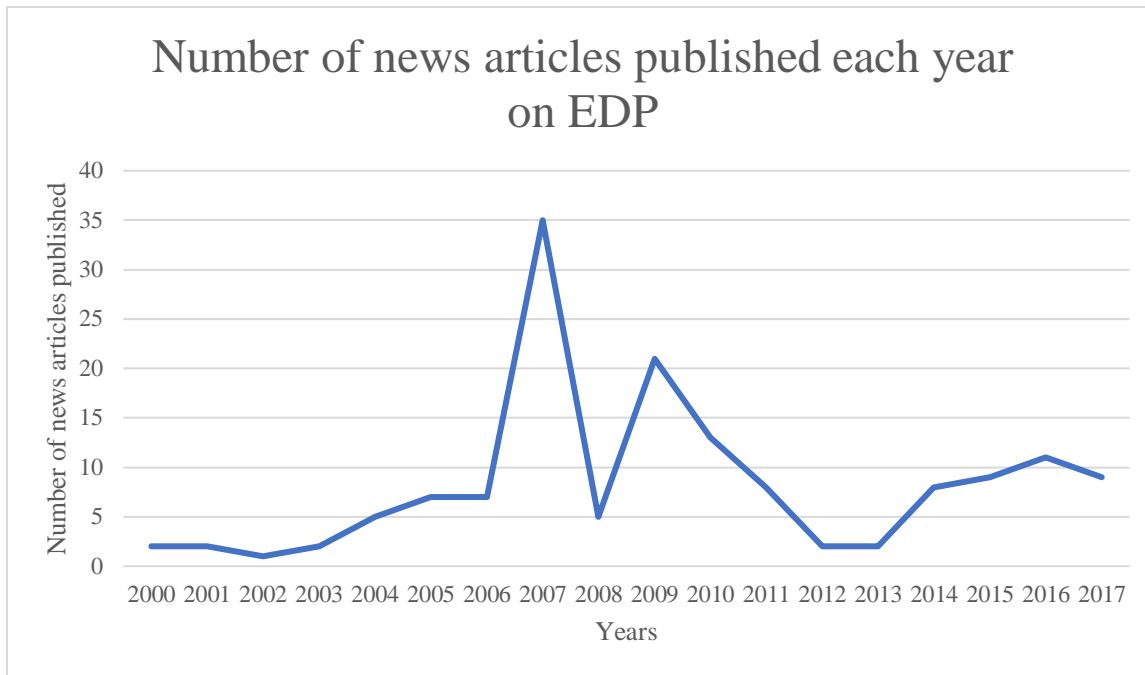
the use of emotional language, these news articles called for solutions and adaptation responses to climate change. In addition, a couple news articles wrote about EDP by using active verbs that focused on EDP's lived experiences, as opposed to passive verbs about how EDP will be displaced. Thus, although Canadian media did portray their representations of EDP using positive, neutral and ambiguous tones, the majority of the news articles represented EDP under a negative light.

#### ix) Frequency of EDP Coverage

Aside from focusing on the tone of the articles, there are other useful findings from the articles in which the key words were mentioned. One of those interesting results pertains to the amount of articles published each year on the topic of EDP. From 2000 to 2003, EDP did not receive much coverage, as illustrated in Graph 1. It was at the start of 2004, where the topic of EDP began to become more common. In 2007, there were a total of 35 articles published, and is the year that the most amount of coverage on EDP took place. Nevertheless, there were not a lot of publications on this subject the following year. It raises the question over why EDP received so much coverage in 2007 and 2009 but failed to be a prominent topic in 2008. Was this due to the recession in 2008? However, this was not the only sudden decrease in coverage found, as there was also minimal coverage in 2012 and 2013. Although, it is important to note that the articles published in 2011 were mostly related to the federal election and the different promises from the main political parties. The only section that pertained to EDP was: "Try to define an "environmental refugee."" ("Campaign 2011," 2011). This demonstrates that the only reference in the majority of publications in 2011 referred to the insistence of the Green Party to legally recognize environmental refugees. For the most part, the subject of EDP has failed to garner much attention since 2007 and 2009. Notably, 2010 and 2016 did feature more publications than other years. It is at this point interesting to try and understand why certain years saw more publications on this matter than others.



Graph 1



So why was coverage higher in 2007 and 2009? As Stoddart et al. (2016) explained in their study, the peak in 2007 was reflected globally, and can be attributed to several events, including the IPCC's release of their fourth Assessment Report, the Oscar for best documentary being awarded to the climate change film called *An Inconvenient Truth*, and the Nobel Prize granted to Al Gore and IPCC. This peak for coverage on EDP could then be largely influenced by the increased discourse on climate change. On a less positive note, 2009 saw a peak in climate change coverage due to Canada being called out for its poor performance at international climate meetings (Stoddart et al., 2016). In fact, several news stories reflected this lack of Canadian climate change initiatives (e.g., "Des centaines de rassemblements", 2009; Maathai, 2009; Purdy, 2009; Woods, 2009; Yaffe, 2009).

More importantly, what happened in 2008 and from 2012 to 2013 to illustrate a sharp decrease in published articles? Some tentative explanations for the decline in 2008 could be due to the Great

Recession. As Scruggs and Benegal (2012) found from analyzing public social surveys, the decline in public perception of climate change in the U.S. and Europe is most likely due to economic insecurity from the Great Recession. Therefore, it could be hypothesized that after labor market conditions improved, in 2009, there was an increase in public belief about climate change. As explained in Chapter Three, Gamson and Modigliani (1989) argue that media coverage is closely linked to public perception in the sense that not only does media influence the public, but the public also influences the subjects that news covers. This is largely due to the fact that news companies want to publish articles that are in line with their audience. As for the decline in 2012 and 2013, this could be influenced by the intensity of coverage on climate change. Although there may be more coverage and acceptance on climate change concerns, Canadians may be becoming acclimatized to this issue (David Suzuki Foundation, 2014). The oversaturation of climate change coverage spills over and affects coverage on EDP, as EDP are generally mentioned in relation to climate change. However, the Climategate scandal could perhaps be largely responsible for the lack of climate change coverage in the media after 2009, as argued by Leiserowitz et al. (2013). The Climategate scandal involved multiple leaked emails from British and American scientists that provided evidence that these scientists had been altering their results to make global warming appear to be worse than it is (Leiserowitz et al., 2013). This scandal ultimately had an effect on the public's in climate change science, which could have caused media to report less on this topic.

However, it is noteworthy to point out that news coverage on EDP has begun to rise since 2014 and 2015. This could be influenced by the current Liberal government, which has vowed to make up for the years where Canada did not fight climate change (Bryden, 2015). There has also been a lot of coverage of the federal carbon tax (Crête, 2017; Lierop, 2016; “‘Lock-her-up’ chants not our style in Canada,” 2016) and other government initiatives. Although not every climate change news

article mentions EDP, journalists do use the predictions on EDP to argue to the public about the urgency of climate change and the need to make changes. This upward trend, as opposed to the low years of climate change reporting in 2012 and 2013, will be interesting to continue to observe and analyze in future years and in future research, as this can also help understand how the public view climate change as well.

## Part B: A More General Analysis of the News Articles

This next section of the results is focused on a general analysis of the articles. This general analysis entails analyzing the entire article as a whole, since the article itself conveys certain frames that emit meanings related to EDP. In particular, the consulted sources and experts will be analyzed, along with the two major themes that emerged from the articles, notably climate change solutions and the political in the environmental.

### i) Consulted Sources and Experts

One of the frames analyzed relates to the sources and experts consulted in the news articles. This theme is analyzed for two reasons: (1) to observe who was being referenced by the media to help frame EDP, as well as (2) to analyze which experts were most commonly called upon as references. The most frequently cited actors are experts in fields related to climate change and migration. University professors are more frequently quoted than other experts, such as environmental activists, environmental scientists and representatives of environmental organizations. Furthermore, Canadian journalists rely on politicians and government officials to source information for these newspaper articles. These actors include Canadian officials from various ministries and departments, American politicians and government officials, American officials from various ministries and departments, Canadian politicians and government officials,

as well as politicians from other countries like Tuvalu and Kiribati. In addition, journalists sometimes turn to other sources for their articles, including oil company representatives, other journalists, lawyers, entrepreneurs, authors, movie directors and Canadians. Lastly, although EDP were mentioned in all 149 news articles analyzed, those displaced are very rarely used as a source for journalists. That being said, there are a few newspaper articles, where journalists interviewed individuals displaced from environmental events. It is also worth noting that each actor was only used as a source a few times – and there was no evidence that specific actors were used more commonly than others.

ii) Climate Change Solutions

Besides the sources consulted, throughout most of the news articles, there is an overarching theme concerning solutions to climate change and climate change consequences, such as EDP. This is conveyed two-fold: by stating concrete solutions, and by calling on a need for action and change.

The recommendations of solutions were in fact mentioned in 84 out of the 149 news articles analyzed. The most frequently discussed solution entails energy efficiency and renewable sources, encompassing wind turbines, power plants, rationing air travel, and decarbonizing and most notably, reducing GHGs. This last point, reducing GHGs, refers to the creation of a carbon tax, as there is a need to “pay carbon taxes now to prevent climate catastrophe or pay later for the consequences of failing to slow climate change” (“‘Lock-her-up’ chants not our style in Canada,” 2016). Other solutions proposed to reduce GHGs include finding ways to reduce pollution and stopping oil sand expansions. Overall, the reduction of GHGs is important in order to prevent worsening effects of climate change. This is summarized by Hanley’s quote: “Governments must

pour tens of billions of dollars more than they are into clean energy research and enforce sharp rollbacks in fossil fuel emissions if the world is to head off the worst of climate change.” (2007b)

Other solutions focus on remedies for the environment and ecosystem. These include keeping “warming [...] to two degrees” (Semeniuk, 2014), committing to “reforestation, rehabilitating degraded land, and desalinat[ing] [...] low coastal areas” (Kielberger & Kielburger, 2017), protecting coral reefs and animals, and caring for dry land in the Prairies. In addition, another preventative solution that was presented in articles is to increase funding and investments in certain sectors. Specifically, Canadian newspapers highlight a need to increase funds in order to “create low-carbon economies” (Maathai, 2009), enlarge the current emergency fund for disasters, offer “incentives [...] to encourage people to walk to work” (Ford, 2006), and more commonly, “aid small, poor countries” (“Nest egg against drowning,” 2008).

Journalists also call on this need for increased funding for other preventative measures, such as infrastructure modifications. Among these proposed building and infrastructure changes, discouraging building in certain areas, creating green walls to protect earth, increasing flood-resistant dykes, air-conditioned shelters, insulating houses, creating more green spaces, are common suggestions. As well, another frequently mentioned infrastructure change specifically concerns low residing places, since “coastal cities will [need to] protect themselves [by building] seawalls” (Berrill, 2010).

Along with proposed infrastructure changes, journalists also frequently suggest solutions for the agriculture sector. This solution proposes using crops to produce clean fuels, rebuilding the agriculture system, implementing a compost program, creating drought-resistant seeds, reforestation, new farming techniques, plant breeding, using greenhouses to grow crops, and

employing a nitrogen fertilizer. In particular, finding and creating drought-resistant seeds and crops are most prioritized by journalists. For instance, Mittelstaedt wrote of the time when “Illinois, at the heart of the U.S. corn belt, was sizzled by heat and drought, but many farmers still managed a decent crop thanks to seeds bred to give plants more resistance to drought.” (2007) Besides agriculture solutions, there are recommendations to solve water-related issues. For instance, journalists, with the help of cited experts, communicate a need for “a national water strategy” (“Paris accord,” 2015) in Canada, “full-time water conservation measures” (Simpson & Hamilton, 2007), as well as “universal access to water” (Barlow & Moist, 2009) for everyone.

There are also other recommendations made by experts and journalists. These include the need for new “technological innovation [that] will help solve climate change and spur growth” (Doyle, 2008), such as creating “geo-engineering techniques” (McKenna, 2008). Other solutions address the need for “reducing vast quantities of sewage [...] and turning waste into energy” (Cadman, 2009), as well as “breakthroughs in nuclear fusion or something totally new that would render hydrocarbons obsolete” (Lierop, 2016). Furthermore, news media mentions the need for more research on vaccines and food consequences, but more importantly, climate forecasting and “realistic assessment and planning” (Jacobs, 2005).

In addition, political changes are identified as a solution. These modifications include engaging in public debates to create solutions, making national efforts to reduce GHGs, preparing for changes, reaching a global agreement, implementing the Kyoto Protocol, planning evacuations for coastal cities, creating policies, strengthening governments in developing countries that are/will be most affected, and investigating why the government failed on climate change. Overall, these journalists generally refer to the need for governments to make changes by implementing “carbon

taxes' or 'cap-and-trade' systems, whereby industries' emissions are capped by governments, and more efficient companies can sell unused allowances to less efficient ones" (Hanley, 2007b), as well as the need for governments to implement new policies. For example, McLeman wrote: "There are any number of policy options available to Canada. Clearly, building adaptive capacity at home and abroad must be a priority" (2006). Similar to political changes, news media discussed a need for immigration solutions. These solutions encompass recommendations to move away from danger zones, to legally recognize environmental refugees, to invest in migration, to help victims of environmental events and keep them in their country of origin, or to anticipate migration due to climate change.

On another note, some journalists and experts approach climate change solutions with a different lens. Instead, they focus more on ways to adapt to the consequences that will arrive, as well as a need for a managed collapse of institutions. As for the first recommendation, journalists convey this notion of needing to adapt to new conditions by suggesting changing our daily habits and consumerism ("Le Pôle Nord fond," 2009). Moreover, there is also the suggestion of a managed collapse of social institutions, which is best summarized by Griffiths' article: "the central idea of managed collapse - that coping with climate change could mean revamping institutions and practices that we currently think have nothing to do with the environment - is worthy of serious consideration" (2007).

Although the call for solutions is not as common as concrete recommendations, this call for action is mentioned in over half of news articles, which clearly illustrates that it still garnered some attention from journalists. Different calls for solutions include calling on the public, the government (including political changes) and the media to make changes and/or draw attention to

climate change. The journalists, with the help of cited experts, characterize this need for action by highlighting different methods to call for changes. In addition, there is a call for a human rights framework, as well as this idea of moral obligation to make changes to the environment. Although, at times, journalists or experts quotes simply call on changes, other journalists did call for the public to stop pollution. Lastly, there is a somewhat frequent call about the earth needing protection, as well as the need to take action and to adapt to the consequences that may ensue from climate change.

### iii) The Political in the Environmental

Another recurring frame consists of the political in the environmental. In other words, this means that this overarching theme of politics is involved in environmental issues. Unsurprisingly, as Canadian news media was analyzed, the Canadian government is not only used as sources for news articles, but their policies, changes and speeches are also frequently mentioned. Certain common subthemes include the Green Party's electoral promise for the "inclusion of 'environmental refugees' as a refugee category in Canada" ("Immigration," 2011), the NDP party being for and against climate change mitigation at different periods of time (McDonald, 2008; Pedersen & Laframboise, 2015), climate change initiatives in British Columbia and Quebec (Delisle, 2005; Lierop, 2016), as well as discussions about the oil pipeline and with Inuit communities on climate change ("Climat," 2016; Kirkup, 2016). Whereas the media paints Prime Minister Justin Trudeau as being more open to climate change (Bryden, 2015), the former Prime Minister Stephen Harper was instead portrayed as "cancel[ing] major climate programs" (Hamilton, 2007) after being elected, "not show[ing] leadership in international affairs [on climate change]" (Ford, 2006), "refus[ing] to take action" (Zerbisias, 2011), and being "a traitor to the issue" (Munro, 2006). Overall, Canada is represented as a country where they are "lend[ing] a



hand -- [but] not much” (Israelson, 2014) and therefore, it “isn’t [meeting international standards], not by a long shot” (Zerbisias, 2011). The lack of action against climate change is attributed to several different reasons, including the fact that “too many are in denial” (Zerbisias, 2011) and that “oil prices collapse[e] [after initiatives are implemented]” (Torrie, 2000).

On a similar note, the second most referenced political frame is international talks on climate change, involving Canada’s role in these summits, agreements and protocols. This most commonly refers to UN climate conferences, including Kyoto Protocol, the Nansen Initiative, the Paris Accord and the Copenhagen Conference. Along with these deals and conferences, journalists also write about international concerns, such as the underlying warnings of climate change implications (“Wake-up call on warming,” 2014), as well as the fact that the Canadian government’s lack of climate change initiative, under the Harper government, was causing them to be represented as “the Darth Vader of the G8 in particular” (Woods, 2009).

Other notable mentions include other countries’ initiatives, the American government, Canada’s relationship to the U.S., and discussions surrounding refugees and migrants. When the media discusses other countries, journalists reference how these countries are fighting global warming (Hanley, 2007a, 2007b; Israelson, 2014; Woods, 2009), as well as initiatives that countries like Kiribati and the Maldives are taking in order to prepare for climate change displacement (Gormley, 2016; “Nest egg against drowning,” 2008). On the other hand, the American government is portrayed at times as being opposed to the costs associated with climate change initiatives (Mason, 2007). However, the U.S. also recognizes the global challenge of climate change – the former President Barack Obama was particularly represented as being concerned with “unchecked climate change” (Purdy, 2009). As for the relationship between

Canada and the U.S., although climate change talks between the two countries are mentioned (Purdy, 2009), journalists focus on the similarities of the two countries in the way they are both ignoring the impacts of climate change (Black, 2013). Lastly, as previously mentioned, there is a debate over the legal status of EDP in the media. This ambiguity is related to politics, as the Canadian government has the authority to define a clearer definition of which migrants they are welcoming into the country. This is linked to the fact that there are environmental implications in political matters, such as “food insecurity coupled with the changing climate in the fertile crescent region of the Middle East that includes Syria” (Pedersen & Laframboise, 2015). There are also challenges related to “industrialized nations brand[ing] climate-change refugees [as] ‘economic migrants’ and turn[ing] them away” (Martyn, 2007).

## Part C: Discussion

This section differs from the previous two, as it discusses the results in relation to the research questions. As such, this discussion will also be divided into different subsections. However, as opposed to Part A and Part B, this discussion will seek to begin to incorporate theory into its subsections. This ultimately leads to three key points of discussion: (1) Canadians’ perceptions of EDP, where the question on how Canadian print media represents EDP will be provided; (2) The victimization and/or devictimization of EDP, which will explain whether Canadian media victimizes and/or devictimizes EDP; and (3) Critical analysis of coverage on EDP that will seek to understand why climate displacement remains an unpopular and infrequent news story.

### i) Canadians’ Perceptions of EDP

To begin, the articles on EDP commonly have a negative tone to them and this may be due to the fact that EDP are largely represented as a consequence of climate change. With EDP being a

consequence of climate change, the media tends to evoke fear mongering in their portrayals. However, these fear tactics go beyond the representation of EDP as potential causes of conflict, as threats, or as illegal immigrants; this fear mongering extends much further in the way that media often does not associate those displaced with a particular place or a particular slow-onset or sudden-onset disaster. As such, the sole purpose for the reference of EDP in the news articles is to evoke a panic and fear in readers, and by association Canadians as a whole, in order to push them to take action towards the potential new arrivals – whether it is by calling for action on climate change or for increased military protections. Subsequently, this representation of EDP as a threat, invoking fear, causes this social group to commonly be portrayed as having no agency and as being passive in their plight. In addition, these fear tactics also extend to the media’s overreliance on predictions in millions and billions. These large estimates are a prime example of emitting fear, as these predictions are not only uncertain, but they characterize EDP solely in terms of the amount of potential displacement that could result in the future. Therefore, as previously mentioned, the media removes agency from the representation of these people and consequently, the only purpose of mentioning EDP in journalists’ news articles is to present them as a future consequence of climate change, and as “waves” and “floods” of these people that will be displaced in the future. The fear that the quantification of EDP invokes is even more apparent when analyzing news articles that mention EDP without mentioning any specific numbers – that there will be “huge numbers of environmental refugees” (Mittelstaedt, 2007), and/or without associating any specific dates with their arrival. These are prime examples of journalists using these statements in vague terms, which may be less credible in the eyes of the readers, but that illustrate the effect that quantifying EDP has – and that is to elicit fear.

However, although Canadian news articles tend to portray EDP as a consequence of climate change and, by extension, as sparking fear, it is important to note that this is not a new theme associated to migration and climate change migration. In fact, it also appears that the way news media portrays EDP does not differ from other types of immigrants or refugees. This is largely explained by the literature, for example, McNamara (2007) wrote about how there is a public fear concerning terrorism, especially after the 9/11 attacks, which translates to a fear of potential asylum seekers from the Middle East. As well, she argues that there have changes in the public's attitudes towards multiculturalism, as increasingly xenophobic policies are created in Western countries. These policies are partially implemented as a response towards the images and fear of increasingly large numbers of refugees and migrants (McNamara, 2007).

In addition, Huysmans (2006) states that this fear frames a dichotomy between friends and enemies. Therefore, the *outsiders* are seen as enemies in this case, and as Huysmans (2006) argued, the *insiders* will then blame these people for the environmental problems, which makes the cooperation between nations and the goal of common interests more difficult. This applies to EDP, as they are consequently seen as *outsiders*, and they will sometimes be blamed for the environmental disasters by the media. For instance, Hume wrote how “the [wildfires] in California [are] all the fault of the Sierra Club and namby-pamby ecologists who prevent the loggers from clearing potential fuel.” (2007) In this case, the blame is being attributed to a certain group of people, which becomes the focus during this environmental event – instead of those affected. Gladstone perfectly summarizes this point by writing: “Everyone blames everyone else. No one took responsibility to make the tough decisions.” (2014) Huysmans (2006) also describes how this fear translates in the securitization of immigration and refugees, further reinforcing constructed political identity. In order to securitize immigration and refugees, there needs to be credible claims

that argue how these *outsiders* present danger (Huysmans, 2006). Although these claims can take multiple forms, the media focuses on EDP in terms of numbers. In this case, this claim surrounding the influx of immigrants or refugees can incite ideas that argue that these people will destabilize the workforce, causing unemployment rates to spike (Huysmans, 2006).

The portrayal of this influx, or the idea of uncontrollable migration flows, is constructed as something negative that needs to be stopped (Castles, 2010), which invokes fear in the public and consequently, allows politicians to advocate for heightened security and border protections (McNamara, 2007). The need for increased border protections stems from the cultural symbols that construct the imaginative geography of a nation, which creates an opposition between those in the territory versus other those that are not (Moore, 2005; Said, 1978). Therefore, images of large amounts of these foreign people arriving can lead to strong defensive reactions from those residing within the imaginative geography, as they fear and are threatened by the idea of *Others* potentially attacking their constructed cultural identity (Hall, 1992, as cited in Moore, 2005). These numbers also cause the public to believe that there are more foreigners in their territory due to the frequency of this fear tactic in the media, although this is rarely the case (Christoph, 2012). Elliott describes that this fear is not only caused by concerns over the cultural identity of the nation, but it is also due to the public's fear of "anticipated competition for scarce resources or economic support (or jobs) [and] increased demands on social infrastructure" (2010, p. 182). Therefore, the literature has extensively found that fear and panic are often associated with migration.

The other main theme that was used to represent EDP is the evident uncertainty around descriptions of these people. This uncertainty is presented in a multitude of ways, including the lack of a common term to designate these people – whether it is in the form of a legal recognition or in the form of a universally accepted term in journalism, politics and academia. When analyzing

Canadian print media, it became apparent that journalists use different terms to characterize EDP since all the key words researched (“environmental migrants”, “environmental refugees”, “climate refugees”, and “climate migrants”) appeared multiple times in news articles. In fact, even within a same article, journalists also use to designate those displaced. This illustrates that these terms are used synonymously and interchangeably – although they all have different connotations. In addition, the theme of uncertainty surrounding EDP also extends to the predictions written about the arrival of these people, ranging from millions to billions. Therefore, Canadian print media tend to represent this underlying uncertainty surrounding the notion of EDP through the inconsistency of a singular recognizable term to conceptualize these people, as well as through ambiguity in predictions of their arrival.

Similar to how the literature identifies that displaced people are often viewed as threats, it also highlights the uncertainty surrounding environmental migration. The literature mentions that this uncertainty is in part attributable to the fields of science – instead of the field of migration. For instance, the Congressional Budget Office of the United States (2005) mentioned in their report about how climate is heavily influenced by variability in the Earth’s orbit and in its solar radiation as well as from other interactions with its atmosphere, oceans, glaciers, land and biosphere. The relationships between all these factors are complex and do not consist of a linear relationship of cause and effect. As such, climate patterns remain sensitive to any small fluctuations, which then affects scientists’ ability to accurately predict the fluctuations of the global climate (Congressional Budget Office, 2005). Consequently, climate research predictions are rough estimates of weather patterns. Thus, differing predictions of future climate change consequences occur, such as varying predictions of how many people are expected to be displaced by climate change. In the news articles analyzed, these themes of scientific uncertainty are not explicitly conveyed. Instead,

journalists have a tendency to use varying predictions and conflicting scientific research, which presents a larger, global image of scientific uncertainty.

In brief, this section had the goal of providing a summary of how Canadian print media represents EDP. Ultimately, it was found that the media tends to portray EDP negatively by using fear tactics as well as referring to them solely as a consequence of climate change. The media also represents EDP as undifferentiated masses, where much uncertainty surrounds the various predictions published in these news articles. These major themes can help to begin reflecting on how Canadians may perceive EDP and their potential arrival to Canada since media can help shape attitudes of its readers. More research is needed, however in order to focus more specifically on Canadians' perceptions of EDP.

ii) The Victimization and/or Devictimization of EDP in Canadian Printed News Media

Whereas the last subsection focused on answering the general research question of this thesis on how Canadian print media represents EDP, this subsection will instead focus on the secondary question of this thesis, which is - *How do Canadian printed news media characterize environmentally displaced people within discourses of victimization and/or devictimization?* This question permits a different lens than the broad research question in order to further the analysis on how EDP are represented in the eyes of the Canadian public through the media. Specifically, the way the media portrays EDP could help to either legitimize or delegitimize formal protections for them. The collective narrative and the victimization of these displaced people would perhaps illustrate the need for the implementation of legislation on a national or international level. On the other hand, devictimization, with themes of undeservingness and political issues, could potentially continue to delegitimize the need for formal regulation.

First of all, it is important to define victimization and devictimization to better understand how the results are framed for each of these concepts. Victimization generally refers to individuals who are victims of violent crimes or other violent and criminal acts, committed by identifiable perpetrators (Popovski & Mundy, 2012). However, climate-change victims differ from these victims, as the perpetrators are unidentifiable and the criminal justice system cannot offer relief to their situation (Popovski & Mundy, 2012). Instead, these refugees must turn to other countries, as they cannot persecute their government. Potential examples of victimization of EDP could be characterizing them as victims and as vulnerable, which are some of the key components of the definition of a refugee (van der Velde, 2013). The victimization of EDP can also be represented by various themes, such as the need for international protections and compensation, financial assistance and compassion (Ransan-Cooper et al., 2015). According to Popovski and Mundy, victimization occurs when there is a violation of the *secure behavioral space*. These authors defined the secure behavioral space, through an environmental science lens, as “a concept adapted from the original notion of safe operating space, proposed by Rockström et al. (2009), and one that could lead to the development of a more precise definition of human security in a future climate-constrained world” (2012, p. 7). As an example, a violation of the secure behavioural space could be water scarcity and sea level rise.

On the other hand, it is more difficult to define devictimization, as this term rarely appears in the literature. Despite limited definitions of devictimization, this concept can be defined as individuals who adopt various methods to secure their behavioral space (Popovski & Mundy, 2012). In addition, Chappell wrote that “if you devictimize a people[,] you strip them of their moral authority” (1995, p. 309). Therefore, by devictimizing refugees, the media would be withdrawing the need for compassion and assistance. Other strategies of devictimization include focusing on



corporate and state responsibility, and on the agency and resilience of the refugees (Popovski & Mundy, 2012). It is important to note that devictimization, similar to victimization, is not necessarily a positive or negative concept, as their effects vary depending on the situation. While viewing those displaced as security threats and undeserving can be seen as negative (Fiskio, 2012), other contexts that portray EDP as resilient and as having agency can be seen as positive instead. In fact, Popovski and Mundy (2012) highlight the latter situation, when writing about how some individuals will be forced to adapt and be resilient to environmental disasters, and will resist displacement, regardless of their economic, social and personal resources. strategies of devictimization.

After defining victimization and devictimization, it is possible to begin describing how Canadian media tend to portray EDP. As noted in the previous sections, the media tends to represent these people through frames, such as quantification, consequences of climate change, fear tactics and passive actors, which are all examples of discourses of devictimization. In fact, the media tends to devictimize EDP by referring to them in terms of quantitative predictions, which reduces them to a consequence of climate change. This is frequently conveyed in the media, as these news articles tend to write a sentence or two about EDP, while writing an article about climate change or a specific climate change event. For instance, Hamilton wrote a news article, where he only referenced EDP, when mentioning that “[w]e’re facing mass animal and plant extinctions, a dramatic spread in disease, major coastal cities submerged in water, and millions of environmental refugees forced to abandon their homes and villages.” (2007) This example illustrates how news stories devictimize EDP, reducing them to predictive numbers and as a potential consequence of global warming – without describing them or their stories. These numbers are then sometimes followed by describing those displaced as threats, using fear tactics.

For example, May discussed the importance to not “[i]gnor[e] credible warnings [...] [whether] they [are] apparently far-fetched terrorism scenarios or far more credible evidence of threats from climate change.” (2010) By reducing EDP to a potential threat risk, media devictimizes the stories surrounding the reasons why these people are or will be displaced. Lastly, the media contributes to the devictimization of EDP by focusing solely on the legal definition of EDP. These stories then exclude the experiences of EDP by referring to how certain organizations refuse to acknowledge them as refugees, such as “the UN’s [IPCC] at the Brussels meeting [when they] avoided the term ‘refugee’ entirely, referring to them instead as ‘environmental migrants.’” (Hood, 2007) Notably, these analyzed results are similar to existing research, for example the research by Szczepanik (2016) found that media tends to dehumanize refugees by characterizing them as passive, anonymous and devoid of agency. This dehumanization translates to their devictimization in media, which in turn, reduces the amount of emotions and empathy felt towards those displaced.

Although less frequently present in Canadian news articles, some journalists did convey the notion that EDP are victims by providing a platform and a voice to those displaced, as well as describing their displacements and decisions. In these cases, journalists gave EDP the space to explain their specific circumstances, which in turn humanizes them and can help to capture the attention and emotions of their audience. Black wrote, for example, about one displaced person, who is “seeking refugee status [due to] [...] flooding and rising sea levels [...] making it too dangerous for him, his wife and three children” (2013). The story of this displaced person helps to explain the context of why he is fleeing his situation, and it can resonate with an audience who is able to sympathize with the situation that the EDP and his family are facing.

There is also the fact that by referring to EDP in terms of environmental refugees and/or climate refugees, journalists are alluding to certain connotations, intentional or not. As previously

mentioned, the term “refugee” eludes that those displaced are *deserving* and *legitimate*. Not only does the term “refugee” promote their victimization, but some journalists even compare them to political refugees. By comparing them to political refugees, EDP are portrayed with a heavier sense of legitimacy, as political refugees legally convey notions of persecution and the need to flee dangerous situations to stay alive – which contribute to the victimization of those in need and in these cases, particularly EDP. For instance, Bula interviewed Chinese migrants, who refer to themselves as “environmental refugees and political refugees” (2016). This example illustrates how environmental factors can also be attached to traditional meanings associated with political refugees. In addition, journalists victimize EDP by depicting them as “victims of drought and food shortages” (McDonald, 2008) and as being “forced to abandon their homes and fields because of rising sea levels, or [...] extreme weather events” (Tutu, 2009). This victimization is exemplified when journalists discuss “estimates of the people who died around the world [...] because [of] global warming” (Calamai, 2005b). By covering how those affected are dying from global warming consequences, journalists are conveying the severity of the events as well as the fact that they are victims of circumstances out of their control – or as Calamai wrote “real victims” (2005b). Besides overtly stating that they are victims, other journalists focused on representing how EDP are in need of protection. Martyn went as far as comparing EDP to the Holocaust, when writing that if “industrialized nations [...] turn them away [...] [t]his will someday be looked back upon with the guilty horror we feel when we think about those countries – Canada among them – that turned away Jews fleeing the Nazi Holocaust.” (2007) Although this is an extreme example, it clearly illustrates how some journalists portray EDP as victims, sometimes unintentionally, by calling for their protection.

This idea of victimization is not a recent theme attached to the notion of refugees. In fact, when looking at political refugees for example, the helplessness of suffering residents is often portrayed in the media (e.g., Bleich et al., 2015; Herrmann, 2017; Jader, 2016). These representations, frequently portrayed through the use of stories and images, evoke compassion from the audience, and calls into question the morality and responsibility of countries and actors (Herrmann, 2017). For instance, Elliot and Pais (2006) initially found, after Hurricane Katrina, that those affected, particularly African Americans, were represented as victims since they were stranded in an evacuated city. However, the authors claim that this victimization was portrayed due to an unjust social system, as opposed to the actual environmental events. Holmes and Castañeda (2016) characterize the victimization of refugees in their continuum of deservingness and undeservingness, where the representation of deservingness can help to create national policies to welcome refugees involuntarily displaced. The victimization of migrants is also transferred to an audience by portraying EDP as developing strategies in order to cope and adapt to climate change events (Piguet & Laczko, 2014).

In summary, this section sought to demask how Canadian print media victimizes and/or devictimizes EDP. Not only were victimization and devictimization defined, but this section presented how the media both victimizes and devictimizes EDP. However, this analysis demonstrated that Canadian media tends to devictimize EDP more than they victimize these people.

### iii) Critical Analysis of Coverage on EDP

This final point of analysis differs from the other analyses on Canadians' perceptions of EDP, as the focus for this subsection is on critically analyzing the results. One area of interest pertains

to the question: *In a time where migration is a large point of discussion in politics and also in research, how come climate displacement is still a less popular topic?*

As noted in current literature, climate change and migration are two very central issues to the Canadian government. This is apparent by the recent introduction of the carbon tax, which stems from the idea that the Canadian government is aiming to reduce carbon emissions (Government of Canada, 2018). This is all related to fighting climate change – and therefore, this issue is currently a frequently mentioned issue. On the other hand, migration has been a dominant issue in the Canadian context, particularly since the Second World War ended, which led to the 1951 Refugee Convention (UNHCR, n.d.). In fact, in 2017, the government accepted 286 000 immigrants, of which over 44 000 were refugees (Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, 2019). These immigration acceptance levels account for 80% of the population growth and therefore, immigration remains topical in Canada (Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, 2019). As well, the number of accepted immigrants is expected to continue to grow to 340 000 by 2020 (Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, 2019), promising that immigration will continue to be frequently mentioned by Canadians and the media.

According to Hilgartner and Bosk (1988), the success of a social problem is measured by how much attention it receives. Therefore, it is particularly important to understand why EDP are less frequently covered in news media, as to begin to understand why EDP have been unsuccessful in drawing attention from the media and, by extension, Canadians. When hypothesizing why EDP are infrequently covered in Canadian news media, one needs to try to understand why these people are not viewed as a problem. *Non-problematicity* is a concept that tries to explain why certain issues may not be constructed as problematic (McCright & Dunlap, 2003). This concept, developed by Freudenberg and colleagues, originally focused on analyzing the manipulation of

information used to convey a negative environmental condition as non-problematic, whether it be outright manipulation or a more subtle reframing of the information (McCright & Dunlap, 2003). However, as presented in Part B of this chapter, this research did not find any particular sources or experts that played a significant role in framing EDP as non-problematic. In fact, the most popular source used were university professors who research climate change issues, such as climate science and geography. In comparison, anti-climate change organizations were rarely used as sources. Therefore, although there may be a subtle reframing of EDP as non-problematic, the source of this non-problematicity was not discernable from the news articles analyzed. Even though the findings of this research cannot explain the source behind the non-problematicity, it can hypothesize its cause.

From the results obtained in the media analysis, it is possible to understand the non-problematization of EDP by analyzing the fear surrounding migration and climate change. It is first important to highlight that although there is not a lot of coverage on EDP, when EDP are mentioned in news articles, they are frequently portrayed as security concerns or other descriptors/frames are used to provoke fear and a moral panic in readers. However, the fact that EDP are commonly represented with fear provoking discourse does not explain why they do not receive more news coverage. Instead, I argue that the reason why climate change migration is not a frequent news story is due to the fact that fears attached to EDP are in line with climate change coverage as well as migration, instead of the issue that EDP themselves present. Therefore, the problem is not attached to EDP; instead, it is climate change and migration as separate topics that are problematized.

In fact, the link between EDP and climate change was very prominent in the news articles analyzed. As presented in this chapter, EDP are almost always represented as a consequence of

climate change. In other words, EDP generally feature as a potential consequence to climate change inaction, and journalists typically write very few sentences about the people that have been/will be displaced from climate change events. Since EDP are most commonly referred to as being a consequence of climate change, they may be solely viewed as a problem in relation to climate change. In this sense, Canadians may believe that once climate change is solved, its side effects, including environmental displacement, will also be resolved. Thus, EDP could be viewed as non-problematic, as they, themselves, are not the issue, but rather it is their cause for displacement that is the problem. In this sense, the fear conveyed in the news stories about EDP may actually pertain to moral panic surrounding climate change and the consequences of inaction, as opposed to the arrival of EDP themselves.

Despite my attempt to understand and present a possible reason why EDP are portrayed less frequently and as non-problematic in the media, even though they are commonly associated with fear and panic, it is impossible to argue anything with certainty. As such, although EDP may be presented with underlying security and fear frames related to climate change instead of being attached to EDP themselves, this reasoning only focuses on one side of this concept. Since migration is also commonly associated with fear tactics, it is difficult to believe that some of the fear attributed to the arrival of EDP is not linked to the existing panic of migration. In fact, when EDP were conveyed as security threats, several frames commonly associated to migration emerged, including characterizing them as a “refugee crisis” (Pedersen & Laframboise, 2015), as “creating conflicts across international borders” (“Wake-up call on warming,” 2014) by “lining up at [...] border[s]” (Cook, 2006), as traveling across the Mediterranean in boats (Martyn, 2007), and as an “increasing [...] illegal immigration” (De Souza, 2006). On the other hand, security threats surrounding climate change tend to be more frequently characterized as a “greater threat to

global security than terrorism” (“Climate crisis bigger threat than terror,” 2008), “apocalyptic alarmism” (Hume, 2015) due to an “irreversible path towards [...] ‘Planetary Purgatory’” (Hamilton, 2007), a consequence that will “tur[n] our wheat fields into dust bowls and our descendants into climate refugees” (Ward, 2016), as well as animals, plants and regions “which fac[e] extinction [...] caused by global warming” (K. Griffin, 2007). Therefore, EDP are portrayed under the lens of security frames commonly used when referring to migration as well as these frames associated with climate change. Therefore, there is more variability with the types of security threats associated with EDP since they both stem from migration concerns as well as climate change threats.

Even though it may be impossible to answer this question on the root causes of the non-problematization of EDP and the moral panic surrounding these people, one thing that is certain is the fact that EDP are not a popular topic in news media. This could be due to the fact that the problem of EDP remains relatively unknown. As Mamuji and Kchouk (2017) found, news media report only a few climate change disasters a year, influencing their audience to concentrate on the covered events, and consequently, other events, especially gradual events like droughts and flooding that affect the most amount of people, are less reported. Thus, the underreporting of EDP may simply be attributed to the fact that they are not actively in the consciousness of Canadians at this point. This is a key point of the media-dependency hypothesis, which states that media discourse is related to how open the public is towards certain meanings and experiences (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989). As such, since the public may not be as concerned with future consequences, the topic of climate displacement is not as present in the Canadian culture or symbols and therefore, media may be choosing to focus on other news stories that may resonate more with their audience.



One last possible answer to the infrequency attached to EDP news coverage could stem from the fact itself that frames conveying fear induce panic in readers. Huysmans (2006) explains that this fear is caused by the perceptions that the public has of the *outsiders* as well as the insecurity (i.e. fear and danger) that these *insiders* may feel. According to Hilgartner and Bosk (1988), the over-bombardment of readers with messages of similar problems can lead to the de-dramatization of the problem. Therefore, journalists may not frequently mention EDP since it could potentially cause a fear overload by describing similar problems, most notably climate change and migration. In other words, journalists may not want to cause too much stress in their audience, even though their goal is to convey conflict and drama. By excluding these people, it also ignores the complex life experiences of refugees and immigrants (Karskens, 1991). In fact, Huysmans explains how this insecurity unifies immigrants and refugees as a “collective dangerous force” (2006). This could also help explain why EDP are more commonly portrayed as numbers and predictions, instead of as actors with their own stories. Since predictions, especially the ones mentioned in news articles on EDP, are unpredictable and uncertain, they could convey less fear, whereas news stories about certain EDP or more specific stories, such as the looting that occurred after people were displaced from Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans, could cause more fear.

To summarize, it is difficult to explain why EDP are being less frequently covered and seen as non-problematic in Canadian media, especially considering the rising popularity of issues surrounding migration and of climate change issues. This last section attempted to hypothesize why EDP may receive less coverage in the media, notably by describing how EDP may only be viewed as an extension of the problem of climate change and the problem of migration. I also hypothesized that EDP may be less frequently covered due to the fear associated with their portrayal— whether this fear stems from climate change, migration or EDP themselves. More

research would be needed in order to fully understand the different layers and facets that are causing the underreporting of EDP. It may be impossible to separate EDP from climate change and migration, as they are so intrinsically connected and therefore, it could be difficult to understand and analyze whether the problem and/or fear stems from climate change, migration, or from the concept of EDP itself.

## Chapter Seven: Conclusion

Although climate change and migration are currently prominent issues in Canada, EDP are not a common topic of discourse. As presented in the results, there were only 149 articles published on EDP in some of the most popular Canadian newspapers in the past 17 years. Therefore, it remains that EDP are not frequently written about in Canadian print media in comparison to climate change and migration. However, when EDP are represented, they are commonly associated as being (1) threats (through fear mongering), (2) a future consequence through predictions, and (3) an uncertain presence.

For the first point, this thesis demonstrated how the fear of climate change migration is conveyed to readers through media news articles. It is interesting to note that this fear also extends to both climate change and migration as separate topics. These fears then, to a certain extent, increase discussion surrounding climate change and migration. In fact, Spencer (2014) explained that journalists tend to focus more on writing news articles about topics that generate the most amount of conflict and drama, as these topics will be more likely to attract the attention of readers. Therefore, the fear, or the moral panic, incited through the representations of climate change and migration provoke more discourse on these topics, as they will continue to plague Canadians. However, despite the fact that fears can contribute to increased media coverage on topics like climate change and migration as separate topics, this call for news coverage on the fear of the arrival EDP continues to be rare and infrequent.

Another common finding from this thesis is that EDP are commonly represented as a future climate change consequence, typically through the use of predictions. News media most frequently describe EDP in terms of quantitative numbers: arriving in the thousands, millions or billions.

However, some news articles also convey EDP, using qualitative descriptors about predictions by using words, such as *floods* and *large masses*. However, by portraying EDP as quantitative numbers, these news articles are reinforcing the notion that EDP are threats and therefore, inciting fear over the potential arrival of these people.

The final main theme that emerged during this thesis is that news articles about EDP commonly mention the uncertainty surrounding their presence. This uncertainty includes the amount of different terms used to designate these displaced people overall as well as within a single new article. The uncertainty surrounding EDP was also presented by citing differing predictions about the relocation of these people: some predictions state that millions of EDP would arrive, whereas others mentioned billions. Thus, the uncertainty surrounding EDP, in terms of the term used to designate these people as well as the differing forecasts, may be contributing to their infrequent coverage in the media.

To summarize, in the past six chapters, this thesis has discussed and analyzed media representations of EDP in accordance with the objectives of this research. In fact, this thesis has three main objectives, the first about raising awareness of EDP as a social phenomenon. This objective was accomplished throughout this thesis since it extensively reviewed EDP, their representations in Canadian media as well as their emergence as a social problem. The second objective of this thesis that sought to understand how EDP are currently constructed in the public sphere was also realized by analyzing the media representations of these people. Notably, the three main findings described above as well as the other results discussed in Part A and B of the analysis (in Chapter Six) served to answer the main research question of this thesis: *How does Canadian print media represent environmentally displaced people?* Finally, the third objective of this thesis was to analyze whether Canadian media characterizes EDP within discourses of victimization

and/or devictimization. This objective served to answer the secondary research question: *How do Canadian printed news media characterize environmentally displaced people within discourses of victimization and/or devictimization?* While they are occasionally victimized by being represented as dying and as being “victims” of climate change, Canadian media overall tends to devictimize EDP. Based on these findings, it is evident that EDP are more commonly devictimized by the media since they are frequently referred to as security threats, as causes of conflicts, and as predictions. Therefore, in the past six chapters, this thesis has been able to meet all three objectives of this research, and to answer the main research question and the secondary research question.

### Limitations of the study

However, this research is not without limitations. Notably, there are certain limitations related to the methodology and the analysis of this thesis. For instance, I developed the coding scheme by myself, without an external expert opinion. Therefore, the frames that I chose to focus on for this thesis may not accurately depict the representations of EDP especially since I specifically focused on these frames. Not only did I develop the coding scheme myself, but I also was the only researcher who analyzed the news articles. As such, there is a potential lack of intercoder reliability. In other words, the results I found may be influenced by what I intended or wanted to find. I made efforts to avoid this limitation throughout the thesis by basing my findings off direct quotes and supporting the presentation of the results and my arguments with quotes from the news articles.

It is equally important to note that there were limitations with the sample selected. In particular, the search strategy that I developed could have skewed my results, such as the key words selected. Using different key words to describe these people, especially since there is a lot ambiguity around

the terminology of EDP, may have presented different results. As well, analyzing news articles from the National Post, the other leading national newspaper besides the Globe & Mail, may have also presented differing results. For instance, the National Post tends to be a more conservative newspaper, which may have conveyed different or more overt representations. The National Post was excluded from the search strategy in order to analyze various different media companies, as opposed to a large representation of Postmedia newspapers. However, by excluding the National Post, it limited this study to a single national newspaper, which relied heavily on the news coverage and the representations conveyed in Globe & Mail news articles.

Another limitation of this study is that it focused solely on analyzing printed news media. In doing so, I excluded social media platforms as well as online blogs and websites. However, since I decided to focus my thesis on the analysis of media representations of EDP between 2000 and 2017, it would not have been feasible to analyze online media forms in addition to newspapers. I also decided to focus on newspapers, as online media platforms were not as popular in the early 2000s and therefore, it would have been difficult to justify a partial analysis of this type of media, starting from when online blogs and social media began to rise in popularity. That being said, an analysis of online media could have presented alternative findings, especially considering the widespread misinformation on these platforms (Jang & Kim, 2018). The analysis of this misinformation, or “fake news”, could have found a larger focus on other frames used to describe EDP.

A final limitation pertains to the difficulty in deciphering EDP from other factors, such as economics and politics. In fact, the literature (e.g. Castles, 2002) highlights that it is impossible to separate environmental factors from these other factors. As found in this research, EDP are not only invisible in their news coverage, but also in the news articles that they feature in. EDP are

represented most commonly as a climate change consequence and therefore, it was difficult to analyze these people as a topic, separate from the overall narrative of the news articles. In fact, this challenge caused me to recode the news articles, as I originally used the coding scheme to analyze the articles as a whole. I then had to review and re-analyze the news articles to specifically concentrate on representations of EDP, instead of the large narratives that focused on other climate change issues (i.e., technology, GHGs, carbon tax, etc.) or political factors (i.e. international conferences on climate change). By recoding the news articles, I may have further skewed the results in the sense that I was specifically looking for any context associated specifically with EDP, as opposed to climate change mitigation or politics.

### Future Implications and Steps

Despite these limitations, this research helped to highlight that although infrequent, Canadian media is beginning to include EDP in their climate change coverage. This research is also the first to analyze media representations of Canadian newspapers on all EDP. Although this research provided a first analysis on how Canadian media portrays EDP as a social problem to the public sphere, more research is needed on this topic in order to confirm these findings. In particular, research could focus on the rise of populism regarding the topic of migration (Schain, 2018), and whether and/or how the frames in news media have been shaped accordingly. In addition, since research on EDP tends to focus on low-lying island nations in Oceania from an Australian perspective, I recommend that future research should concentrate on other nations and their representations of EDP, as climate change impacts are affecting every country.

It would also be beneficial to target future research on representations of EDP on social media platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter, as well as online blogs and websites – especially since the public is turning to these platforms to be updated on current events (CIRA, 2019). However,

caution should be paid when analyzing these online platforms, as there has been a rise of misinformation, particularly online (Jang & Kim, 2018). Therefore, future research will need to consider the effects that misinformation could have on the distribution of news, which in turn could affect the meanings that the public interprets as well as how the public interprets these news stories.

In addition, besides analyzing media representations of EDP, future research should concentrate on collecting more data on EDP. In fact, the lack of available data on EDP proved to be an obstacle during the research phase of this thesis. The limited amount of data that exists concentrates particularly on IDP, as it is easier to collect data on internal displacement within a nation. However, if future research were to collect more data on IDP as well as those displaced internationally, these findings would help to concretise that the relocation of EDP is a social problem. The results from these studies would also serve to underscore the need for formal legal protections for these people, regardless of whether states recognize these people as refugees or as migrants. In order to be able to legislate these protections however, states will first need to determine a legal definition for EDP. As highlighted throughout this thesis, there is currently a large debate over the terminology of EDP, as either refugees or migrants. While research is concerned about the definition of EDP, there has not been any consensus in the academic field. A consensus over the definition of EDP would particularly help to minimize the uncertainty surrounding the definition of EDP since the use of various terms further divides current research. Therefore, a consensus over the definition of EDP as well as additional data on these people would help states to begin to legislate formal protections for those displaced.

Lastly, as a result of analyzing Canadian print media representations of EDP, those displaced are often not conveyed as individuals with differing life experiences and journeys. Instead, EDP are more frequently represented as quantitative predictions, such as forecasts of upcoming *floods*



of migrants or refugees that will be arriving. I propose that future research should concentrate on conducting further qualitative studies in order to elicit some of these lived experiences and journeys directly from EDP. This type of research will offer a perspective that focuses more on the victimization of EDP and their voice, as opposed to the already large focus on the devictimization of EDP and the threats that they represent.

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## Appendix B

### *Example of Coding Scheme*

Name of article	
Author	
Date of Publication	
Newspaper	Ex: Toronto Star or La Presse
Type of article	Ex: opinion, editorial, news
Tone	Ex: positive, negative, ambiguous (positive and negative – inconclusive) or neutral  Ex: through metaphors, narratives, verb tenses, descriptors/adjectives
Location of environmental disaster	Ex: Canada, Arctic, Pakistan, Tuvalu
Sudden- or slow-onset disasters	Ex: tornado, flood, drought, temperature rise
Actors	Ex: refugees, migrants, politicians, scientists, governments, United Nations, human right activist groups/organizations, Canadian citizens, other countries (who are talking about the disaster)
Passive/active	Ex: dehumanized, protest, having a voice, only in numbers, refugee, migrant, characterization on a big disaster, use of pictures of the disaster, refusing to be labeled as refugees, national pride, refusing to be displaced
Key themes	Ex: policies, environmental disaster, security issue, call for international help, large influx of numbers, scientific predictions, human rights activism, protests, blame attributed to governments, politicians speaking about the disaster