Good for Business:

Portrayals of Businesses and Syrian Refugees in Canadian Media

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1. Abstract

Though the Syrian refugee crisis drew attention from media outlets across the world, it caused a unique reaction in Canada. The release of the photo of Alan Kurdi in 2015 provoked a wave of sympathy across the country, ultimately resulting in the resettlement of thousands of Syrian refugees in Canada over the next four years. As soon as the resettlement of Syrian refugees was announced, businesses across Canada began to make their involvement in resettlement public, primarily positioning themselves as members of the community who only sought to do their part. Given the popularity of this type of media coverage, this study aims to determine how businesses and refugees were portrayed in these articles and if their depictions were consistent with previous research. Using ethnographic content analysis to find underlying patterns, a sample of eighty news articles were analyzed across a four-year period. Though the findings of this study reflect previous research on humanitarian depictions of refugees in Canadian media, they also reveal widespread depictions of Syrian refugees as net economic contributors, a characterization previously associated to immigrants in Canadian media. The association between refugees and economic prosperity was also actively promoted by businesses during this period, as well as other actors such as government representatives and NGOs. Though the association of refugees and economic benefits in this case may have been caused in part by the popularity of the Syrian refugee resettlement program in Canada, it may also represent the potential for a more positive representation of refugees in Canadian media.

Keywords: refugee, business, entrepreneur, media, deservingness, humanitarian

2. Introduction

On September 2nd, 2015, a picture of the body of a young boy who had drowned on a Turkish beach started to make the rounds in international news. Despite the fact that the photo of Alan Kurdi drew attention from across the world, it seemed to hit a nerve in Canada. Once the information that his Canadian aunt had attempted to sponsor his cousins before attempting to sponsor Alan and his family to Canada became public, many Canadians began to wonder: given the circumstances, could they have done more to help him? Despite a previously hesitant response from the Canadian public to the Syrian refugee crisis, the photo of Alan Kurdi ended up provoking a political reaction.

In a small manufacturing town in Ontario, another Canadian had been following the crisis in Syria, growing increasingly concerned that not enough was being done. Eventually, he pulled out a calculator to estimate how much it would cost to privately sponsor around fifty refugee families. “I approached it like a business” Jim Estill explained in an interview with CNN three years after his initial calculation. “Although everyone gives me credit for it, I have 800 volunteers, so it’s more like running a business (…) more like what I do with Danby appliances. I don’t actually do anything, I have people who do everything” he finished (CNN, 2018, 00:01:19 – 00:01:59).

Soon like the picture of Alan Kurdi, the story of the CEO from Guelph who helped resettle fifty Syrian families in his hometown started making the rounds for entirely different reasons. Jim Estill may still be one of the most famous cases of business involvement in refugee resettlement in Canada, but he was far from the only one (Valiante, 2016). Once the federal government announced the resettlement of 25,000 Syrian refugees in Canada, many businesses stepped

forward, offering training, employment, in-kind donations and various services to help resettle refugees. Media coverage followed, as encouragement from government and other policy actors increased, urging members of civil society to help resettle Syrian refugees in Canada.

Stories about businesses helping refugees enjoyed broad popularity during this period, however, to date no research has been done on the media coverage businesses received or on the depiction of Syrian refugees featured in articles with businesses. Using ethnographic content analysis to discover underlying concepts, this paper aims to examine the depictions of businesses and refugees in Canada during the first Liberal mandate by analyzing a sample of newspaper articles from the same period. How were businesses and refugees portrayed in these articles? How do these portrayals fit in the larger scholarship of refugee portrayals in Canadian media? What narratives are present and how did they reinforce or weaken previous narratives on refugee resettlement in Canada? In the following pages, I will argue that though the depiction of refugees during this period reflects previously documented humanitarian depictions of refugees, refugees were also presented as potential economic contributors, which presents a departure from previous scholarship on this topic.

Why study this topic?

Businesses or business owners who offered to help refugees during the Syrian refugee crisis received wide coverage in the media for their efforts. While well-known corporations such as Starbucks, IKEA and UPS received additional media attention for their initiatives, no study has been made of the type of media coverage they received or indeed, the basic facts of their involvement. Examining this phenomenon in Canada adds an additional layer of complexity, as

its recent history of refugee resettlement and its reaction to the Syrian refugee crisis made Canada unique among Western nations (Garcea and Kikulwe, 2019). This study also examines to a certain extent how Canadians, governments and businesses themselves saw the role of private enterprise in what was widely considered to be a collective exercise of refugee resettlement in Canada (Winter et al., 2018). The themes of humanitarianism and economic development regarding refugees have been examined before, but never including third party organizations who are neither government entities nor community resettlement organizations. Though this study does not examine quantitative data regarding refugee employment, it does examine the depiction of refugees in media in a unique way: as economic contributors. Refugees and businesses were portrayed as closely related during this period, which in turn facilitated a rarely seen representation of refugees. Rather than being portrayed purely as sympathetic victims, refugees were also portrayed as economic actors with natural ties to entrepreneurship, either as entrepreneurs themselves or as a source of skilled employment labour to other entrepreneurs. In the first chapter of this study, I will provide an outline of the current literature concerning refugees in media, the impact of the Syrian refugee crisis in Canada and the literature available on the media depiction of businesses in academic literature. In the second chapter I will present my methodology and my results, elaborating on the portrayal, challenges and contributions of each actor in the media depiction of the collaboration between refugees and businesses. In the third and last section of this paper, I will discuss the meaning of my results and contextualize them within the current academic literature to suggest new areas of research.

3. Literature Review

The literature surrounding this topic is complicated, as a disproportionate amount of research exists on media depictions of refugees compared to media depictions of businesses. Furthermore, the media depictions of refugees in this study are nuanced, requiring a fuller examination of the literature involved. I will begin this literature review by defining terminology related to both refugees and businesses before examining the structure and processes of media. This will be followed by an examination of refugee depictions in media and by an overview of the practices that may motivate businesses to become involved with refugee resettlement in Canada.

a) Defining refugees and businesses

The most widely accepted legal definition of the term 'refugee' is found in the 1951 UN Refugee Convention, which stipulates that a refugee is a person who has fled their own country and will not or cannot return due to "to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion" (*The 1951 Refugee Convention*, 1951 p. 14). Relatedly, a person who has claimed asylum, but has not been granted refugee status is referred to as an 'asylum seeker'. Though the Convention is an accepted legal principle in 145 countries, in practice the interpretation of who is considered a 'real' refugee is distorted by governments and media alike. Indeed, in most western states the term refugee is often confused for a moral label strongly related to concepts such as 'deservingness' (Holmes and Castaneda, 2016).

For the purpose of this study, I define the term 'business' in legal terms as "an individual (or corporation) who, for the purposes of gain or profit, is carrying on a commercial or industrial

undertaking of any kind or providing professional, personal or other services (…)" (Dukelow, 2006, p. 59). Though it is possible for a business to be non-profit, I chose to exclude non-profits as businesses in this analysis to distinguish them from non-profits active in the resettlement process. I also include in my analysis of businesses the term 'company', which is generally understood to be a legal entity that allows groups of individuals to engage in the activity of business. Throughout this essay, I will also refer to business owners, as they often represent their businesses in while being interviewed by journalists.

b) How media works and how it affects refugee policy

Media are generally defined as the platforms, tools and organizations that communicate content to the consumer (Lister, 2009). Despite the fact that journalistic standards purportedly uphold a 'neutral' view of news, media in practice proposes a certain view of an issue or story in order to communicate. According to Van Dijk, media are a means of "ideological production" that through the continuity of their own rules and practices, reproduce shared beliefs that maintain the dominance of the elite (1991, p. 32). The reproduction of these beliefs, while not precluding opposition, are in turn maintained by a "bottom-up complement" of members who also maintain the system (Van Dijk, 1991, p. 34). On the other hand, for Hall news media is "a sort of social educator" in the manner that it conveys meaning to the consumer, through its emphasis, style and rhetoric (Hall, 1975, p.11).

Due to its consumer format, media presents narratives and issues in a way that are meant to attract consumers, presenting information in a way that is understandable by the public. The way media communicates meaning and importance is in part through the structure of its

communication, which allows researchers to analyze media documents through these same structures. Format, frame, theme and discourse are all interlocking concepts present in media documents that allow consumers to understand what is being communicated. Format is the method of communication, which affects the cadence, writing and timing of communication. As Altheide and Schneider point out, a consumer can usually quickly understand the differences in format by its method, for instance a clip during a newscast versus a sitcom (2013). Framing affects how the issue presented is portrayed, and what information will or will not be included. One such example would be the treatment of refugees as a security issue versus a humanitarian one. Themes are "mini frames" that are recognizable to the consumer (Altheide and Schneider, 2013, p. 52). In the case of refugees in media for instance, a common theme is the struggle of resettlement. Finally, discourse represents the larger context in which any topic is addressed, or the underlying limits that define certain topics and give media messages meaning. Ultimately, as Altheide and Schneider explain, "discourse and frame work together to suggest a taken-for-granted perspective for how one might approach a problem" (Altheide and Schneider, 2013, p. 53).

What is the effect of media representation on refugee policy? Some argue that because media may be the only source of information many consumers have regarding refugees, its influence is stronger on this topic than others (Krishna-Hensel, 2018). In Canada, past studies have shown how refugee depictions in media have influenced government policies regarding refugees either as a justification for change, as in the case of the arrival of Tamil refugees by sea in 2015, or as validation for other policies, as in the case of the legitimation of migrant labour programs through the representation of migrant labourers (Medianu et. al, 2015; Bauder, 2006).

Due to a variety of reasons, chief among them the historical and economic conditions of the Global South, most media representations of refugees are made in relation to migration towards the Global North (Johnson, 2011). The discourse around refugees in Western states constructs itself around the identity of the refugee, depicting refugees as the 'other' to the identity of the state (Bauder, 2008b). A theory useful to many in the study of media, othering is the practice of depicting certain figures in a socially subordinate position in order to normalize the opposite identity, in this case the identity of the state (Silva, 2016). Due in part to the legal and humanitarian aspect of refugee claimants, most othering in the media of western states is based on the so-called 'deservingness' of refugees (Kyriakides, 2017). Refugees who are not deserving are portrayed as having claimed refugee status for economic rather than humanitarian reasons and as having cheated the legal mechanisms of the state. So-called 'bogus' refugees are often also tied to matters of security, having infiltrated the state for possibly nefarious reasons (Holzberg et al., 2018). Conversely, refugees who are deserving are portrayed as victims of tragic circumstances, circumstances that are tragic enough to warrant the intervention of the state.

Though the depiction of refugees as vulnerable seems on its face to be preferable to their depiction as fraudulent claimants, in fact their victimized representation presents a more complicated phenomenon. In past research, depictions of refugees as victims has been split into typical humanitarian depictions or human interest depictions. Sometimes associated with lower quality, celebrity or 'soft' news, the human interest frame is a type of framing that uses individual stories or emotions to present a topic in news (Hickerson and Dunsmore, 2016). One of the most common frames in media, human interest framed media pieces claim to show the 'real face' of refugees (Semetko and Valkenburg, 2000; Figenschou and Thorbjornsrud, 2015). Showing the

complex humanity of refugees through media representation has been difficult however, as research shows that media tend to present refugee suffering without context or historical circumstance, rendering refugees somewhat "faceless" as a result (Johnson, 2011; Malkki, 1996).

Despite the fact that they may provide a more complete emotional representation of refugees, past research has also shown that human-interest pieces may or may not reduce the complexity of the story being presented. In a study by Figenschou and Thorbjornsrud, while the human-interest frame did decrease complexity in stories published in Norway and in France, the opposite was true for stories from the United States (2015). In American human-interest stories featuring irregular migrants, personal stories featuring human emotions also provided complex information on the nature of irregular migration (Figenschou and Thorbjornsrud, 2015). This is also consistent with a study completed by Sarah Steimel, who also analyzed human interest frames around refugee stories in the United States (2010). Though she found the portrayal of refugees as past and future victims to be common, Steimel also found that human interest stories of victimhood in the United States were centered on the refugees' common pursuit of the American Dream and their struggle to resettle in America. Similarly, in one of the only studies examining the depiction of Syrian refugees in the United States, Bhatia and Jenks discovered that the shared (or not shared) pursuit of the American Dream was a way of legitimizing Syrian refugees in American media (2018).

c) Refugees in Canadian media

In Canada the depiction of refugees is also built on deservingness, with depictions of deserving and undeserving refugees presented in very different ways (Watson, 2007). However,

distinguishing the humanitarian depiction of refugees and the positive association of economic immigration in Canadian media can be difficult, especially because immigrants and refugees are sometimes confused in media coverage (Lawlor and Tolley, 2017).

In their ten-year longitudinal study of media frames related to immigrants and refugees, Lawlor and Tolley (2017) sought to distinguish Canadian support for refugees versus Canadian support for immigrants. They found that articles related to refugees were more strongly associated to negative tones and frames, as they were more closely associated to frames on security and therefore on the validity of refugee claims. Meanwhile, immigrants were associated to more positive tones and frames, as they were more strongly associated to frames featuring net economic benefits, and therefore less likely to be framed as a drain on the welfare state.

In studying the overall humanitarian depiction of refugees in Canadian media, Harald Bauder sought to discover how the humanitarian immigration of refugees was valuable to the Canadian state if it was not associated to economic gain (2011). He found that as a nation widely lauded for its acceptance of refugees, most media coverage of refugees in Canada revolves around specific humanitarian depictions of them which in turn allows the Canadian state to construct an identity as a "liberal and compassionate nation" (Bauder, 2008b, p. 85). Using Hegel's theory of 'negation', Bauder theorizes that Canadian identity is formed in contrast to the suffering of refugees, who are then encouraged to become Canadian. This effectively creates a cycle in which refugees are still depicted as the 'other', but in a sympathetic way, only to become part of the nation in the end (Bauder, 2008b). In further research comparing Canadian media coverage of Syrian refugees to German coverage of the same topic, Bauder found that this same cycle did not

reproduce itself in Germany. There, despite significant public sympathy, Syrian refugees were always depicted as 'others' compared to the German state (2016).

While 'deserving' humanitarian coverage of refugees is predominant in Canada, occasionally the complete opposite is depicted, with refugees as 'undeserving' and therefore a threat. The most striking media depictions of refugees who are considered 'undeserving' are media stories covering the arrival of so-called 'irregular migrants' by boat. A rare occurrence, the arrival of migrants by ship is often sensationalized by the media, despite the fact that it only used to happen (on average) every ten years (Medianu, 2015). Though these depictions are often extreme, they help underline the difference in depictions of refugees as 'deserving' versus 'undeserving'.

In part, the depiction of these events can be attributed to the increased securitization of humanitarian immigration in Western states (Watson, 2009). Defined as the rhetorical process of constructing an 'objective' threat necessitating an extraordinary response, securitization is the mechanism through which unauthorized humanitarian migration becomes a security threat (Munster, 2012). Responsible for many of the contradictory asylum policies in Western countries, the securitization of migration has left Western states attempting to both control their borders and honour long-standing asylum laws. Frequently racialized and vilified, in these cases the othering of refugees is done in a negative way to legitimize the state (Greenberg and Hier, 2001; Gilbert, 2013). However, it is also common for the state to be criticized as ineffective in the face of what is a security threat. Just as uncontrolled humanitarian migration is portrayed as a threat on multiple levels, so too are the "bogus refugees" described by media as being threats to the

security, economy and health of the nation (Bradimore and Bauder, 2011; Esses et al., 2013; Mannik, 2014).

In a reflection of the 'legitimacy' of controlled humanitarian migration, these "bogus" refugees are also depicted as being a threat to the Canadian refugee system by "queue jumping" over refugees who follow the law (Krishnamurti, 2013, p. 140). Lastly, media coverage depicting these incidents also tends to possess a "hierarchy of credibility" among sources, allowing individuals like government officials to be featured for longer periods despite the state being criticized for its ineffectiveness (Bradimore and Bauder, 2011, p. 641). These were the modern historical dynamics present in Canada – and in Canadian media - before the beginning of the Syrian refugee crisis.

d) Syrian refugees in Canada: context and media coverage

The Syrian refugee crisis began in 2011 at the start of a civil war between the forces of President Bashar Al-Assad and a collection of armed opposition groups. At that time, thousands fled to countries surrounding Syria, such as Lebanon, Turkey or Jordan. While the majority of Syrian refugees remained in those countries, as the conflict escalated some continued their journey to Europe hoping to claim asylum or reunite with family there (Holmes and Castaneda, 2016).

The arrival of even larger numbers of Syrian refugees in 2015 caused significant political tensions in Europe. Refugee resettlement had presented political challenges for the European Union (EU) in the past, but the influx of migrants at this time was putting additional pressure on asylum laws like the Dublin Regulation (Heisbourg, 2015). Countries located at high traffic points

of entry like Greece and Italy demanded help from their fellow member states. Still others who were politically opposed to immigration refused to accept any refugees at all. Ultimately, the EU's most populous country, Germany, decided to accept more than a million Syrian refugees, initially without much internal disagreement (Holzberg et al., 2018). Soon Australia and the United States would also agree to resettle a number of Syrian refugees in their own countries, however ultimately Australia would only agree to accept 12,000 and the United States 10,000 (Mercer, 2017; Bhatia and Jenks, 2018). Eventually, after initially accepting to keep resettling Syrian refugees during the Obama administration, the American resettlement program was cut short with the election of President Donald Trump, who ended their resettlement by executive order in 2017 (Aswad, 2019).

In Canada, the initial political reaction to the crisis was tepid. The Conservative government led by Stephen Harper had initially promised to resettle 1,300 refugees, before raising that number to 10,000 in January of 2015 ("Harper Suggests Canada Will Do More", 2015). Though opposition politicians attacked the government's position on Syrian refugees as not being comprehensive enough, as the country entered a federal election in the fall of 2015, discussions around how to proceed included a range of approaches including military intervention rather than a large scale resettlement plan (Wallace, 2018; Payton, 2015).

On September 2nd, 2015, the picture of three-year-old Alan Kurdi on a Turkish beach made headlines around the world. Though in most Western countries it attracted lots of attention, in Canada it launched a political reversal. Polls conducted in the week after the picture was shared showed that 54 to 60 percent of Canadians believed that Canada should be accepting more Syrian

refugees (Grénier, 2015). In Rebecca Wallace's study on the framing of Syrian refugees in Canadian media, conflict frames were shown to decrease precipitously in the fall of 2015, replaced by an increase in the 'family' frame – largely attributed to the death of Alan Kurdi (2018).

Syrian refugees suddenly became a pressing issue for Canadian voters and though the Conservative Party tried to come up with a more ambitious resettlement plan, it eventually lost the election to the federal Liberals led by Justin Trudeau. Their promise? The resettlement of 25,000 government sponsored Syrian refugees before the end of 2015. In the end, the number of refugees was split among various resettlement streams, and with some modifications, the plan was accomplished (Garcea and Kikulwe, 2019). Ultimately as part of the first wave of resettlement, 14,994 government assisted refugees, 8,954 privately sponsored and 2,224 blended visa office-referred refugees were resettled in Canada by the end of February 2016 ("Canada's Syrian Commitment", 2017).

Since the federal election in 2015, Syrian refugees have been a popular topic in Canadian media. In 2015 Syrian refugees were voted the most popular news stories of the year and four years later media outlets were still interested in how resettled Syrian refugees were doing (Garcea and Kikulwe, 2019; Taylor, 2019).

Due perhaps to the media attention brought to the so-called 'European migrant crisis', most research on Syrian refugees in media is focused on depictions of refugees in Europe or on social media (Aswad, 2019; Holzberg et al., 2018). Indeed, including two other studies on American representations of Syrian refugees, according to my research fewer than a dozen studies have been conducted on this topic in North America.

Of those studies, three have been conducted on the representation of Syrian refugees in Canadian media. Using the same Hegelian framework of sublation as Harald Bauder, Winter et al. analyzed media depictions and discussions concerning Syrian refugees in Canada and Germany (2018). Comparing Canada, a proud multicultural country, to Germany, a "classic ethnic nation", they sought to determine if there was sublation in the media coverage of refugees in both countries (Winter et al., 2018, p. 17). Using critical discourse analysis, they evaluated the refugee related content of one national newspaper from each country from September 2015 to January 2016. Consistent with the traditional outlooks of both countries, they found that while Germany was debating the merits of humanitarian migration, Canada was already discussing what it could offer Syrian refugees as a country. However, despite their feelings of generosity towards Syrian refugees, Winter also found that the way Canadian media spoke about Syrian refugees was quite paternalistic, portraying them only through their suffering (2018).

Another study conducted by Tyyskä et al. (2018) produced similar results to Winter, but with an additional finding. Again, using critical discourse analysis, as well as feminist and post-colonial theories to guide their analysis, Tyyskä et al. analyzed a variety of Canadian print and video content from September 2015 to April 2016. Similar to Winter's analysis, they discovered three primary themes across platforms: Canadian values (as a positive representation of the compassionate Canadian nation), paternalistic representation of Syrian refugees as faceless and lacking agency in the face of hardship and lastly, the portrayal of Syrian refugee men as threatening (Tyyskä et al., 2018). Describing the Canadian nation's approach to refugees as having a 'saviour' complex, Tyyskä makes the link between the securitization of migration and the gendered representation of Syrian men. As Muslim refugees in particular are portrayed as

threats in the context of the securitized threat of migration, so too are those security threats gendered and orientalised (Tyyskä et al., 2018).

Contrary to the two previous studies, Rebecca Wallace (2018) conducted a frame analysis of Canadian print media products published between January 1, 2012, to December 31, 2016. After finding six primary frames – conflict, citizenship, services, family, religion and human rights – Wallace concluded that the media was more likely to focus on the legitimacy of refugees as compared to immigrants, confirming previous findings by Lawlor and Tolley (2017). Like Tyyskä she also observed an interest from the public in the religious beliefs of Syrian refugees. However, unlike both Tyyskä and Winter, Wallace was able to observe the shift in frames from before the photo of Alan Kurdi to after its release. While the other studies described the effects of the release of Alan Kurdi's picture, Wallace was able to describe the difference in coverage before the national humanitarian values were activated, from a conflict frame to a family frame (Wallace, 2018).

e) Refugees and businesses in media

Businesses and refugees are not often studied together and the majority of academic literature reflects this, as most of the academic literature available on businesses and refugees concerns the economic success of refugees in resettlement (Gericke, et al., 2018; Lamba and Krahn, 2003; Nakhaie and Kazemipur, 2013) and the likelihood of immigrants pursuing entrepreneurship in Canada (Bauder, 2008a; Baldacchino, 2010; Marger, 2001). In addition, both international and Canadian academic literature concerning refugees is more focused on the

actual economic flourishing of refugees rather than their depiction in media as economic contributors.

Contrary to media depictions of refugees, in the scholarly literature concerning businesses, there is little research concerning the depiction of businesses or even of individual entrepreneurs in media. The majority of literature in this area concerns the depictions of business leaders that are considered unique, such as women executives or maverick business owners (Eikhof, 2013; Anderson and Warren, 2011). When it comes to the public engagement of businesses in charitable events, scholarly articles are more likely to focus on the method of fundraising (Longmore, 2016), the impact of the fundraising on the cause (Burt and Mansell, 2017) and the impact of charity on the profits of the company (Plewnia and Guenther, 2017). Despite this gap, there is a small amount of research concerning the depictions of Syrian refugees as entrepreneurs and the promotion of self-reliance among refugees in general. In an article titled '#Refugees can be entrepreneurs too!' (2020), Lewis Turner examines the depictions of Syrian refugees living in the Zaatari refugee camp on social media. With the camp social media accounts run by aid workers, Turner concludes that the depiction of Syrian refugees as 'especially' entrepreneurial is a racialized depiction of a 'superior' refugee. Compared to African refugees by aid workers, according to Lewis, the images of the Syrian entrepreneurs are a representation of a successful "Levantine" archetype, a sort of successful independent refugee (2020, p. 139). In 'Panacea for the refugee crisis? Rethinking the promotion of 'self-reliance' for refugees' (2018) Evan Easton-Calabria and Naohiko Omata examine the historic promotion of self-reliance among refugees, a phenomenon they largely attribute to the preference of donors of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for cost-effective programs. In the end they conclude that

the promotion of self-reliance among refugees is more to the benefit of others than the benefit of refugees themselves.

f) Public Relations and Corporate Social Responsibility: what motivates businesses to engage publicly with refugees?

Despite the lack of research in the media depictions of businesses, there are many studies on the practice and impact of Public Relations (PR) and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) by companies that may shed light on this topic. Though not directly related to the depiction of businesses in media, the study of PR and CSR relates to the effects that business communications can have on profitability or image and therefore speaks to the motivation of businesses to publicize their involvement with refugees as well as the way they may choose to involve themselves (Fatemi et al., 2015).

Separate from the practice of journalism, PR is defined as a "process" where practitioners research, define and communicate in order to address a problem (Clark, 2000). Distinguished by its use of "two-way communication", public relations is the practice of strategic communications in managing a relationship with a community (Clark, 2000, p. 365). Indeed, some practitioners argue that public relations may even be defined as "community relations" (Clark, 2000, p. 367).

Though it has a similar process, CSR is distinct from PR in that it is premised on the idea that companies should provide a type of stewardship to society that requires them to respond to social issues (Clark, 2000). Communications may be a part of CSR, but it focuses more on the social impact of company actions. In the past, research has found that the use of CSR by

companies builds a foundation of trust between consumers and a company, leading to better engagement between both parties (Hung-Baesecke, 2016).

Interestingly, though there is more analysis concerning the reception of CSR by consumers and members of the public, there is little research into the interpretation of these practices by media (Lee and Riffe, 2017). This is despite the fact that many businesses rely in part on the media for the maintenance of their reputations (Cahan et al., 2015). Research by Tench et al. examined the perceptions of media professionals in the U.K. towards CSR through a survey. They found that despite the fact that most media professionals were either merely accepting of CSR coverage or cynical towards it, they were more likely to cover acts of CSR in a positive way (2007). Relatedly, when studying the effects of CSR 'fit 'on news coverage, Lunenberg et al. found that when CSR was more consistent with a company's core activities and values, news coverage was more likely to be positive (2016).

Despite the lack of research on media perceptions, PR and CSR are relevant to this analysis because the engagement with and advertising of companies' involvement in supporting refugees can in part be explained by these practices. Support for immigration and multiculturalism is fairly high across Canada and communicating those values is probably important for Canadian businesses seeking to manage community relationships (Bilodeau et al., 2012). Furthermore, aside from the communications aspect, support for refugees might also be considered a part of the CSR strategy for many Canadian companies. In short, though little research is available on the effects of public support for refugees on Canadian companies, many business strategies may motivate companies to engage in public displays of support for refugees.

4. Methodology

The method of analysis used in this study is ethnographic content analysis, a type of qualitative analysis outlined by Altheide and Schneider in their book *Qualitative Media Analysis* (2013). Ethnography, the immersive method most often associated with anthropology, is the study of "a people and their culture" (Altheide and Schneider, 2013, p. 24). Similarly, ethnographic content analysis calls on the researcher to immerse themselves in their data in order to understand it on a cultural level and to describe their findings in a cultural context. In the case of media analysis, this means understanding how media is produced. Formats, journalistic standards, interview methods – all aspects of the media production process affect how meaning is communicated.

While quantitative content analysis uses a pre-set code to analyze and test data, ethnographic content analysis embraces a method of "constant comparison and constant discovery" (Altheide and Schneider, 2013, p. 26). This means that documents are compared to each other throughout the analytical process, and documents on related or even opposite topics are sought out to find similarities and differences. A coding protocol to classify data is part of this process, but it is flexible, with new codes added to it over time as the researcher discovers new themes or frames. Rather than emphasize a rigorous and exclusive coding process, ethnographic content analysis relies on the discovery of concepts throughout the process of data collection, coding and analysis. As Altheide and Schneider describe it, in ethnographic content analysis instead of the coding protocol being the primary instrument, the researcher is (2013).

Benefits and Limitations

The main benefit of ethnographic content analysis is its flexibility, descriptive analysis and restricted attention to the documents included in the sample. Though ethnographic content analysis is similar to grounded theory, it is more concerned with describing findings consistent within the sample of documents and then situated within a larger cultural context (Altheide and Schneider, 2013). Furthermore, it does not seek to create the coherent basis for a theory, but rather to discover overarching concepts that may be used to build theories later on.

I chose to use ethnographic content analysis as a methodology in part because of the lack of research on this particular topic. Using previous research, a quantitative content analysis could only have been performed on the portrayal of refugees in my sample, as there is no previous research on the refugee-business or business owner relationship in media and therefore no larger theory to test against. I also found that the depiction of refugees in my sample was different in some ways than in previous scholarship and I wanted to use a method that would allow me to explore that nuance without necessarily creating a new testable hypothesis. Lastly, after exploring some of the data, I strongly suspected that the methods around media production played an important part in how the subject was presented. Ethnographic content analysis allowed me to explore that aspect further in my analysis.

Process and analysis

To begin my search, I chose the method of progressive theoretical sampling to build my sample. As the name implies, this type of flexible sampling allows the researcher to 'progressively' select documents based on their emerging understanding of the data at hand

(Altheide and Schneider, 2013). Not every article referring to businesses and Syrian refugees provided enough data for my analysis. However, some articles that were different from what I was originally searching for provided a larger understanding of the topic later on.

After reading several articles on the topic in question, I determined that the best unit of analysis would be individual articles published in national, provincial or local news outlets. To collect my sample, I searched for published articles containing the words 'syrian refugees' and 'business' between August 2015 and September 2019 in the news database *Eureka* (or 'réfugiés syriens' and 'entreprises' in French). These dates are the approximate length of the first mandate of the Liberal government led by Justin Trudeau, elected at the end of the federal election in the fall of 2015 (Mayrand, 2016). I chose this period of time (including the previous electoral period) because of the importance of Syrian refugees in the Liberal mandate. After becoming a contentious issue in the federal election of 2015, the resettlement of 25,000 Syrian refugees became a central part of the platform of the federal Liberal party and in part due to the resettlement deadline they had promised, it was one of the most urgent issues during their first year of government (Garcea and Kikulwe, 2019). Even towards the end of the mandate, the federal government along with many Canadians, continued to take an interest in how this cohort of refugees was doing (Taylor, 2019).

Thematically, deciding which articles would be part of my sample was a challenge. Though there were some articles focused exclusively on Canadian businesses engaging in 'classic' resettlement activities such as sponsorship, I wanted my sample to capture as many facets of the

business-refugee relationship as possible. The interactions between businesses and refugees during this period was varied and consequently, so was the media coverage.

For example, many articles featured businesses in a supporting role, as a prominent member of a community that was coming together to help resettle a refugee family. However, some of these articles rarely had more than a few sentences concerning businesses' themselves. They might have provided an interesting look at resettlement in general, but most did not provide enough data to analyze the representation of businesses and refugees. For these reasons, I only included articles that had substantial paragraphs referring to businesses and their involvement. Despite the fact that they are not strictly businesses, I decided to include articles that featured Chambers of Commerce, as they represented the wider business community and frequently possessed a spokesperson from a specific company.

Initially, I was surprised to find many articles covering Syrian refugees establishing businesses in Canada, often with the help of other business owners. I decided to include these articles, as they provided another interesting representation of refugees, as well as a different version of the refugee-business relationship that I had not seen before. Conversely, many articles focused on what refugees had lost during their journeys to Canada. 'Businesses' were almost always the third item in a list that started with 'home, family, friends (...)'. Though these also presented a certain kind of refugee representation associated with businesses, I decided to exclude them because of how little data they provided on the subject as a whole.

For the sake of continuity of format, I chose to exclude articles that were not typical investigative-interviewee stories, such as long form articles or editorials. I also excluded press

releases from companies who had chosen to support refugees. As a classic PR exercise, these types of articles are exempt from journalistic standards and possibly merit their own separate analysis. It should also be noted here that the *Eureka* database favors sources from well-established national, provincial and local newspapers in Canada. Like any database, *Eureka*'s reach is finite, and my sample should not be considered exhaustive.

At the end of my sampling, I was left with eighty unique articles for analysis spanning the time period I had selected. I constructed a loose protocol for the first ten articles as recommended by Altheide and Schneider, and then proceeded to code each article, modifying my coding protocol as I went. I coded quantitatively for some values like dates, titles, regions, and authors. Because this is a fairly new subject in academic literature and the aim of ethnographic content analysis is to generate multiple types of data, I also coded quantitatively for types of businesses, types of sponsorship and contributions. My other codes were restricted to themes found in the articles themselves, in order to track frames, overall themes and discourse.

5. Results

My general findings in this sample were in part principles that could be applied across several articles, however I also found that unique in-depth representations of individual businesses and refugees were prominent during this time period. In particular, I observed a strong association between refugees and economic benefits in these depictions, despite the fact that refugees were also depicted in a traditionally humanitarian manner. Other actors, though primarily businesses, participated in this portrayal by associating refugees to economic benefits such as the increased availability of skilled employees and the future possibility of businesses founded by refugees. Surprisingly, there were very few references to non-humanitarian othering in this sample, with nearly no references to differences in religion or indeed, any references to any resistance to refugee resettlement in Canada.

The following are a few of the general principles that I found that could be applied to most articles across this sample.

Structure, tone and style

Despite being on different topics, individual articles followed a similar structure. Each article featured a central narrative with a series of interviews, usually featuring business owners, refugees, representatives of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), or representatives of government. Though they sometimes fluctuated in prominence, the articles almost always featured this same set of sources. They also had a very similar frame: fifty-eight articles in this sample coded for the human-interest frame, followed by the conflict frame for five of the articles. Defined as pieces that examine the motivations or emotions of subjects in order to stir the

reader, human interest pieces center the emotional experiences of subjects (Harcup, 2014). Business owners remembering their immigrant parents, refugees rebuilding their lives – many of these topics were examined in-depth accompanied by highly descriptive interviews, by journalists in a local context and journalists themselves also used deeply emotional language to describe the situations around them. Refugees were frequently described as 'bewildered', businesses as 'hopeful' and resettlement organizations are 'ecstatic'. Their interview structures also tended to follow a clear pattern, with refugees reflecting first on their journey to Canada and businesses on their motivation for helping refugees.

Resettlement phases

The articles in the sample were distributed along a timeline of different phases: preparation (August 2015 to November 2015), arrival (December 2015 to March 2016) and resettlement (April 2016 to September 2019)**.** The preparation phase was the beginning of the overall resettlement process but occurred before refugees actually arrived. The arrival phase marked the literal arrival of Syrian refugees, while the resettlement phase marked the resettlement activities of refugees' post arrival, until the end of the mandate. These phases may exist in part due to the availability of sources to journalists during these specific times. In the preparation phase for instance, journalists favoured interviews with businesses that were preparing for the arrival of Syrian refugees. The sample itself has an even distribution along the first two periods, but then heavily favoured the long-term resettlement period, which is to be expected considering the fact that it is the three years following the first refugees arriving in

Canada. Of the eighty articles in the entire sample, sixteen fell within the preparation period, twenty-one within the arrival phase and forty-three in the final resettlement period.

Regional differences

Regionally, the topics and responses were pretty consistent across Canada. However, there were differences on how this topic was covered in the Maritime provinces, in Quebec and to a lesser extent Western Canada. In the Maritimes refugees were closely related to the economic fate of the region and in some cases, to the survival of small communities (Rankin, 2015). Business owners, residents and municipal politicians worked closely together to make their communities more inviting (Moar, 2015). The Maritimes were the only place in Canada where explanations of the concept of 'tax base' and quality of local services were explicitly tied to the success of refugee resettlement (Fabian, 2015).

Media coverage of this topic in Quebec reflected the unique political and societal realities of resettlement in that province. Quebec's provincial government took an early and aggressive role in bringing employers and refugees together, in collaboration with industry groups like Chambers of Commerce (Gaïor, 2015). Compared to the rest of the country, NGOs in Quebec (in this case resettlement agencies) were very protective of refugees and had no qualms about being adversarial with the provincial government or indeed with potential employers. In fact, in the entire analysis, Quebec was the only place where I encountered resettlement agencies that chastised employers for being overly enthusiastic about hiring refugees right away. "Too soon! Too soon!" exclaimed one resettlement director as he explained that the newly resettled refugees needed time to familiarize themselves with their new environment before seeking work

(Trahan, 2016). Lastly, articles written in British-Columbia and Alberta were more likely to mention affordability as a problem, British-Columbia in housing and Alberta in relation to a downturn in the oil industry ("Calgary charter Enerjet offers to fly Syrian refugees", 2015; Craigie, 2017).

Following this overview of my findings, here is a more in-depth look at the quantitative information and qualitative themes attached to the sources given the most prominence in my sample. The two most important figures were businesses and refugees, followed by NGOs and government actors. The following sections will examine their overall portrayal, their challenges and their contributions.

Businesses: promotion, contribution and leadership

Of all the interviewees who were featured in this sample, businesses were featured the most often, on fifty-eight occasions out of the available eighty. The portrayal of businesses in this sample depended in part on the reasons that businesses gave for their involvement and the role they assumed at the urging of other actors in the resettlement process. Based on this, businesses were depicted as humanitarian, charitable and competitive in their engagement with refugees and as essential partners in the resettlement process, mainly based on what they could provide in terms of contribution.

In articles featuring interactions with government representatives, businesses were entreated to donate money to contribute to resettlement costs and to hire refugees as soon as possible. "It goes beyond government to include every single Canadian to come forward and contribute according to your means" said Immigration Minister John McCallum at a fundraiser

where he urged corporations to donate to support refugees (Skura, 2015). A speech given by Yves-Thomas Dorval, president of the Quebec Employer Council, praised the "mobilization" of the business community at that time, but nonetheless warned business owners that "providing the refugees with their first work experience in Quebec is the business community's 'responsibility'" ("Quebec businesses urged to hire", 2015). In the early resettlement period, businesses were encouraged to "do their part" and "step up" to the challenge (Gaïor, 2015). However, later in the resettlement process businesses were also described has "leading the resettlement effort" or "taking it upon themselves" to help out as part of a larger community effort ("Enterprise SJ launches", 2015; Tansey, 2015). Businesses echoed those messages, saying that they also felt a wider responsibility to help refugees resettle, some describing it as supporting the governments' decision and others describing their responsibility in function of the wider communities' responsibility towards refugees.

When asked to describe their motivation for helping refugees, businesses were portrayed as being motivated by a variety of factors. Nearly every business was described as being involved due to the need to respond to an "urgent" humanitarian crisis that had "touched the hearts of our employees" ("Syrian refugees 'happy'", 2015). In addition to humanitarian motivations, businesses or individual business owners were also portrayed as being motivated by questions of identity, either as part of a community or as individuals. As citizens of a city or municipality, some business owners characterized their involvement with refugees as a desire to "give back to the community" after they themselves had benefited from community support ("Syrian refugees get jobs", 2016).

A few businesses tied their support for refugees to patriotism, either by identifying refugee resettlement with an idealized history of Canada or by praising Canada as a great country that had a long history of resettling refugees (Valiante, 2016). Finally, some explained the way they contributed by referring to their own personal skills as business owners ("Vancouver real estate magnate offers up building", 2015).

One special category of business owners who cited identity as their motivation were former refugees or immigrants. Twenty-four of the business owners featured in this sample were immigrants and refugees who reflected on the hardship of resettling in Canada as a way of describing their desire to help Syrian refugees ("Syrian refugees welcomed to Winnipeg", 2016; Daley, 2017). Of the twenty-four articles featuring a former immigrant or refugee business owner, fifteen were exclusive profiles of the business owners themselves, describing their personal story of resettlement in Canada.

While businesses were portrayed as enthusiastically welcoming refugees, they were also portrayed as modest about their contributions, with some referring to their contributions as "easy", "obvious" and "simply the right thing to do" (McGarvey, 2018; Pottie, 2015; O'Flanagan, 2015). However, this modesty did not stop many businesses from attempting to mobilize other actors, particularly other businesses. Some business owners used subtly competitive language, placing themselves in a superior position to other businesses by "challenging" other businesses to "get involved" (Bickis, 2015; Pottie, 2015). Though these 'challenges' were generally to the wider business community, they sometimes became very specific ("Calgary charter Enerjet offers to fly Syrian refugees to Canada", 2015). On one occasion, a business owner openly "encouraged"

his colleagues in the local construction association to hire refugees while he hoped that he was "setting an example for other companies" (Monk, 2015). In some cases, hiring refugees was even portrayed as the hallmark of a savvy business owner, tapping into a phenomenon that made their employees and customers happy to see (Keung, 2016; "Local restaurateur eager to hire", 2016).

Despite being occasionally competitive with each other, the primary challenges described by businesses in this sample were related to the resettlement of refugees and they usually articulated what specific type of challenge according to the resettlement period they were depicted in. In the early days of resettlement for example, businesses involved were primarily concerned with the urgent arrival of Syrian refugees, some making statements to the media the very week Syrian refugees were first supposed to arrive about the need for housing or material donations (Skura, 2015). Further on in the resettlement process most businesses described their concerns over the challenge of getting refugees their first jobs in Canada or helping them get recertified in order to work in their careers of choice (Keung, 2016).

Other than the challenge of resettlement however, most business owners actually portrayed the arrival of refugees as a remedy to another challenge: economic growth. In framing the resettlement of refugees in this manner, businesses were often the first interviewees to tie refugee resettlement to economic benefits. In fact, three business owners interviewed in this sample even went so far as to characterize Syrian refugee resettlement as a "win-win" for Canada and refugees in this sense (Pottie, 2015; "Quebec businesses urged to hire Syrian refugees", 2015; Moar, 2015).

On several occasions, businesses spoke with anticipation when it came to hiring refugees. The difficulty of finding 'good' employees or employees with particular skills was emphasized in eighteen articles, along with two articles that described the stories of Syrian refugees who had saved businesses from shutting down because of a lack of skilled labour (McGregor, 2016; Cornell, 2018). One employer, noted refugee proponent Mohammad Fakih, even characterized hiring Syrian refugees as an "investment", while emphasizing the low cost of training ("Local restaurateur eager to hire", 2016). In addition, as highlighted later in the narrative of the 'natural refugee entrepreneur', a smaller number of business owners predicted that Syrian refugees would start their own businesses soon and justified their support of refugees as an investment in future job creation (Tetanish, 2015).

In spite of their clear orientation towards economic concerns, the type of support businesses provided in this sample varied widely and often in function of the resettlement period that it was given in. In the early days of resettlement, businesses provided material or monetary donations, while towards the end of the resettlement period businesses provided mentorship and support to newly established business owners. In this analysis, overall business support for refugees fell into seven categories: in-kind donation, advocacy, monetary donation, sponsorship, employment and mentorship. The most popular method of support was employment, followed by in-kind donation. The rarest was a combination of sponsorship, employment and mentorship, made well-known during this period by CEO Jim Estill (Bickis, 2015). In this sample only two business owners pursued that strategy.

Regardless of the type of contribution they made, businesses emphasized that the aim of their contributions was to successfully resettle refugees, in order to ensure that refugees could function well in Canadian society. However, despite their contributions they would also emphasize that their contribution was merely the beginning of the larger resettlement effort. They spoke of resettling refugees "well", "helping them integrate" and "making a hands-on effort" to help (Monk, 2015; Monteiro, 2016; "Local restaurateur eager to hire", 2016). "This isn't about the money," said Jim Estill in November 2015."It's about landing people properly and integrating them (…)" (Bickis, 2015).

Refugees: struggle, suffering and resilience

Though refugees were referred to throughout this sample, individual refugees only appeared in about half of articles (thirty-five) and appeared chiefly in the arrival and later term resettlement periods. However, when individual refugees did begin to appear, all of them were portrayed in an in-depth way by the standards of previous research. The fifty-eight refugees identified in this sample were always mentioned by identifying characteristics such as names, ages, profession and family composition.

In line with the concept of deservingness, refugees in this sample were most often portrayed in a combination of three ways: as having suffered, as being grateful and as being hardworking or entrepreneurial. Though two of these portrayals are consistent with depictions of refugees as deserving, the last depictions are more consistent with depictions of immigrants in Canadian media.

The suffering of refugees was an important part of refugee portrayal and some version of it appeared in nearly every article. In every case, refugees were depicted as desperate or being given few choices. Even in articles where refugees did not appear, businesses, NGOs and governments would refer to the suffering of refugees in an abstract way, using phrases such as “I can’t imagine what those people are going through” (“Enterprise SJ launches”, 2015). In articles featuring in-depth interviews with Syrian refugees, depictions of refugees suffering were much more detailed, sometimes with descriptions from refugees themselves. Even when journalists would occasionally describe the stories that refugees relayed to them in articles, they also favoured language that communicated hardship, such as saying that a family had “fled” Syria rather than having left (Klingbell, 2016) or that a Syrian refugee’s business had been “decimated” instead of lost (Keung, 2016).

When refugees themselves detailed their experiences of leaving Syria, their emphasis was also on their lack of choice in the face of grave obstacles. Refugees “had never planned on leaving their home” but “had to run away from the war” in order to live in neighbouring countries where they “faced a lot of restrictions” (Craigie, 2017; Xing, 2016; Keung, 2016). Upon arrival, journalists underlined how little refugees owned and the lack of choices available to them. "We suffered a lot," said Kevork Jamkossian, a quote chosen by a journalist interviewing a Syrian refugee just as he stepped off a plane for the first time (“Syrian refugees 'happy'”, 2015). All of these descriptions, especially those emphasizing the forced aspect of relocation, contributed to the general portrayal of refugees as desperate and in need of protection by the Canadian state.

In conjunction with the depiction of refugee suffering, refugees were also portrayed as being very grateful, with only one refugee out of the fifty-eight ever describing something like homesickness (“Syrian Refugees Open Aleppo Kebab”, 2019). Though the difficulty of resettlement was sometimes mentioned, the gratitude of refugees being resettled in Canada was contrasted to previous suffering, portraying Canada as an end to this suffering (“Syrian refugees welcomed to Winnipeg”, 2016). Canada was alternatively described as a “paradise” where Syrian refugees could “start again” in a place where “the streets were safe” (“Syrian refugees 'happy'”, 2015; Cryderman, 2016; Hampshire, 2016).

In addition to gratitude, refugees were also depicted as eager to start work once they arrived in Canada. In the same articles that depicted refugees as having suffered on their way to Canada, refugees also expressed a strong desire to begin working and starting to rebuild their lives. Some refugee subjects offered to work for free, while others were described as “eager to get back to work” and as liking “hard work” (White-Crummey, 2016; Klingbell, 2016).

However, in tandem with these depictions, Syrian refugees were also portrayed as naturally entrepreneurial and as more likely to start businesses in Canada. Before Syrian refugees arrived in Canada, journalists quoted sources like NGO spokespeople, business owners and even random community members on the entrepreneurial spirit of the refugees to come (Fabian, 2015; Hampshire, 2016). This fact was also situated within the history of the country, in particular by business leaders, who evoked the history of past refugee business owners to justify their beliefs (Cryderman, 2016). This effect continued when Syrian refugees arrived and seems to come to a narrative conclusion in the form of profiles of refugees starting their own businesses

after having lived in Canada for a certain period of time. In some ways, this seems to be an opposing narrative to the usual portrayal of refugees as suffering and helpless in the face of a benevolent Canadian nation. Refugees starting their own businesses were portrayed in an empowered way, as savvy businesspeople who possessed the skills and knowledge to succeed (Klingbell, 2016).

Nowhere is this portrayal more prominent than in profiles published in the later resettlement period, after some Syrian refugees had lived in Canada for several months. Due to the time period, some of these businesses they had founded had already become successful (Carter, 2016) and some have just started out (Klingbell, 2016). Interestingly, the majority of the businesses were in the food industry, usually restaurants, catering or larger food production. Similar to previous articles covering the employment needs of Syrian refugees, the subjects in these articles are asked about their journey to Canada and they reflect on everything they left behind in Syria. Subjects are described as “trying to bring the businesses they ran in Syria to Canadian customers” (Cryderman, 2016) and “quickly starting businesses” at their arrival in Canada (Sanders, 2017). For some of the refugees in this sample, “entrepreneurship is the only career path he knows." (Klingbell, 2016).

Though there are some similarities to earlier profiles of Syrian refugees, it is clear from the themes used in these particular profiles that these refugee families stand out compared to the others. Their skills are emphasized more, and their innate qualities are contrasted to those of other refugees. In a profile of the well-known Haddad family, a journalist describes the family as not having “arrived in Antigonish with nothing. They brought with them something of

immeasurable value: 30 years of experience running a highly scaleable business." (Mason, 2017). This sentence is evidently a contrast with other refugee families, who are frequently described as having arrived in Canada with nothing (in fact, that is how the Haddad family described itself). The financial independence of the Haddad family a year later is noted in another article, while a fellow refugee business owner is described as having arrived in Canada a refugee, but is now a business owner (Davie, 2017).

In addition, the refugees profiled in these articles also presented themselves differently than refugees who were seeking employment. Though many of them described their businesses as a way to support themselves until their credentials were recognized or their language skills were improved, they also described their businesses as a source of “belonging” and “resiliency” (McEwan, 2018). One refugee entrepreneur described her business as a way "to support myself and get on my feet and start moving forward” (Klingbell, 2016). Though some also described the difficulties in finding a job, or even getting a loan for their business, the sense of empowerment and independence is striking compared to previous articles. "We Syrians are such a hard working people, we love to work and earn our own money and build ourselves even in the worst circumstances” espoused one business owner (Carter, 2016). Unusually, these profiles are also the only occasion that I encountered descriptions of sadness after arriving in Canada (“Syrian Refugees Open Aleppo Kebab”, 2019).

Similar to Canadian businesses, the overall challenges of refugees were also framed as those of resettlement. However, contrary to businesses, the resettlement challenges of refugees

were closely tied to their own goals for resettlement, which were primarily the learning of a new language, becoming employed and re-starting the careers they had left behind in Syria.

The most important challenge refugees were presented with throughout this sample was the challenge of language acquisition, often because it was portrayed as the largest challenge to becoming employed. "I want to teach my kids the value of working. The problem is language. I don't know how to get myself out there because of language" said Abu Nokta, a recently resettled painter (Xing, 2016). Refugees throughout this sample emphasized their desire to practice their English and refugees who were employed pointed to their jobs as a source of practice (Tchir, 2016; Keung, 2016).

Of the employed refugees, most were not working in their career of choice or the former career they were qualified to work in back in their homeland. In this sample, refugees were frequently described by their past careers in Syria and the challenge of becoming re-certified or re-embarking on their former careers was often brought up challenge often brought. While employers and NGOs alike reflected on the process that refugees would have to go through to start their careers again, refugees also presented themselves as determined to re-start their careers. "I will go to school, take courses, and again I will be a teacher" said a described "determined" Syrian refugee working in a restaurant ("Syrian refugees get jobs in Toronto", 2016).

In that same vein, the main contribution refugees were portrayed as wanting to make was economic, in the sense that they expressed a desire to work and in particular, to no longer depend on the state. "The Canadian government has helped so much. (...)" said one refugee,

"but, I don't want to rely on its stipend" (Xing, 2016). Others expressed a desire to "commit" to a particular employer or community after being helped by them (Monk, 2015). For example, though most businesses founded by Syrian refugees during this time were just beginning to develop, in one case several articles reported on the promise of Tareq Haddad, a Syrian refugee who founded a successful chocolate factory, who offered to hire local residents in the community that had helped get the factory off the ground (Tattrie, 2016).

In addition to becoming financially independent, a small number of refugees mentioned wanting to care for others now that they were resettled. One refugee answered that he liked his job, because it allowed him to care for his family (Valiante, 2016). Rita Khenchet, a former broadcast engineer who started her own catering business in Calgary wanted to care for other Syrian women who "come here with no skills, no education, nothing, because they spent the last five years in the camps (…)" ("Syrian refugee starts catering business", 2016). In another case a newly arrived Syrian refugee offered to care for her community by sharing culture and "wants the people in her new country to know a little about what it means to be Syrian -- not war, but food" (Carter, 2016).

NGOs: support, conflict and advocacy

NGOs (which in this study included resettlement agencies, immigrant service agencies and local private sponsorship groups) appeared routinely in articles about businesses and refugees. In fact, with representatives of NGOs appearing in thirty-five articles each, they appeared more often than any level of government in this sample, equal with refugees. In this case they were portrayed as promoters of refugees, but also as experts in matters of

resettlement. As promoters of refugees, NGOs often praised the “hardworking” nature of refugees and further promoted the idea of refugees as contributors to the national economy (Tchir, 2016). “It's proven that when refugees come here, they come with a more entrepreneurial spirit. There's a different type of work ethic. Families come, businesses grow, opportunities grow" said one NGO spokesperson (Fabian, 2015). However, they also promoted the idea of refugees as deserving victims, speculating on the suffering they had endured.

In their role as resettlement experts, NGOs would often be asked to assess initiatives undertaken by businesses or larger communities. In this capacity they were very encouraging, praising businesses who had engaged in refugee resettlement and encouraging communities to engage more with refugees.

Relatedly, the main challenges of NGOs in this sample related to the promotion of refugee support and hiring, something that they frequently collaborated on with businesses. Businesses who wanted to contribute to refugee resettlement would consult or defer to NGOs in media articles. In turn, some NGOs relied on businesses to attest to the effectiveness of certain programs they developed, like hiring programs (Monk, 2015). However, sometimes in certain articles NGOs and businesses would disagree. Though they both spoke about refugees in ways that portrayed them as an asset to the community, NGOs were more likely to acknowledge the barriers refugees would encounter within the community and they were more likely to acknowledge that the welcome Syrian refugees were getting was not the welcome all refugees got. This sometimes put NGOs at odds with the business they were collaborating with, as their

comments would come across as more realistic and less enthusiastic than those of the businesses featured alongside them.

This sometimes led to the perception that the main contribution of NGOs in this sample was to legitimize the involvement of businesses. However, despite this conflict, it was also clear from coverage that NGOs were primarily concerned with helping refugees, by aiding them directly or by advocating for them, which sometimes put them at odds with businesses and with government representatives. Similar to businesses, but contrary to governments, NGOs were also portrayed as helping refugees find jobs or start businesses, usually by mentoring them.

Government actors: absence, criticism and private sector collaboration

Surprisingly, despite the key role certain levels of government such as the federal government had in resettling Syrian refugees, most levels of government only appeared sporadically in this sample and in very specific ways. Government representatives only appeared in twenty of the eighty articles profiled in this sample and often they appeared at press conferences, not as interviewees. In this sample, the federal government was only portrayed in the early days of refugee resettlement and was portrayed as anxiously preparing for the arrival of Syrian refugees, in this context by involving businesses and the wider Canadian public in the resettlement of refugees.

Though other provincial governments appeared very little in the entire sample, the exception to that rule was the Quebec provincial government, who appeared in every article featuring the province of Quebec. However, despite this frequency, it too was almost solely

depicted as preparing for the arrival of refugees by encouraging businesses in particular to hire refugees (“Quebec businesses urged to hire Syrian refugees”, 2015).

Naturally, based on these types of depictions, governments considered the largest challenge of resettlement to be the involvement of both private industry and larger Canadian society in general. Unlike NGOs for instance, governments were less likely to praise communities for their support of refugees and more likely to urge businesses and communities to “come forward” and contribute to the resettlement of refugees (Skura, 2015). They were more likely to emphasize the larger resettlement difficulties refugees would face, including difficulty in finding employment and housing if businesses and other Canadians did not get involved.

Consequently, overall, the main contribution of government representatives in this sample was in the promotion of relationships between businesses and refugees. Later in the resettlement process, references to the direct support that governments gave to refugees were made, however these contributions were often framed in a negative way. Refugees would often refer to government support as something that they wanted to rid themselves of by becoming more independent (Xing, 2016). Journalists would often emphasize when refugees or their businesses were accepting government money or not. In one instance, at the opening of a new refugee owned grocery store, a journalist casually mentioned "there's no government money in this enterprise" (Chiu, 2018).

6. Discussion

Results and how they relate to the current literature on Syrian refugees in Canadian media

This analysis aimed to understand the portrayal of refugees and businesses in Canadian media during this period, as well as identify what narratives were present and where they fit in current research on this topic. In this case, the results of this study presented a portrayal of businesses as key partners in the process of resettlement, contributing in a variety of ways, but consistently promoting the potential economic contribution of Syrian refugees. For their part, though the past suffering of refugees was a key part of their depiction in media, refugees were also presented as self-reliant individuals who were economically beneficial to the country, even in the midst of the hardship of resettlement. While NGOs and governmental representatives were present in the media depictions, they were rarely primary subjects and were for the most part present in articles in order to support the central portrayal of refugees and businesses. In my opinion, the strongest narrative present in this sample involved the portrayal of refugees as economic contributors, either as the naturally entrepreneurial refugee or as the skilled employee, both predisposed to contributed economically because of their identities as refugees. The second most important narrative would be the positive portrayal of the involvement of businesses in resettling refugees. The involvement of businesses during this period, in addition to the messages of NGOs and government representatives, provide support to the idea that businesses could play a wider role in refugee resettlement because of their status in communities and the resources available to them.

The findings of this study both support and contradict the findings of several other studies that examined the media depictions of Syrian refugees in Canadian media during a similar time period. Rebecca Wallace's study of the framing of Syrian refugee related issues from January 2012 to December 2016 concluded that conflict framing around refugee issues decreased precipitously after the release of the photo of Alan Kurdi and that the family frame increased in its place (2018). She also found that news coverage shifted to topics related to families, language training and education around the time that the Liberal government's goal was achieved, as Syrian refugees began to be resettled in Canada. This is consistent with the findings of this study, which concluded that the articles included in this sample were overwhelmingly human-interest pieces that focused on the activities behind refugee resettlement during a similar period of time as Wallace's findings. However, contrary to Wallace, who discovered a small but consistent number of religious frames during her period of study, religion was only mentioned in this sample twice, both times in an insignificant way.

This study also supports certain findings of Tysskä et al.'s research on Syrian refugees in Canadian media from September 2015 to April 2016 (2018). Similar to that study, this analysis found that Syrian refugees were depicted in a desperate way and in need of protection from the Canadian state. However, contrary to Tysskä's findings, this study did not find that male Syrian refugees were depicted in a threatening manner consistent with gendered and racialized undertones. In fact, this study found quite the opposite – that the coverage of Syrian refugees in conjunction with businesses had no references to security threats, or even terroristic threats, which is an exception in the depiction of Syrian refugees in media.

In Tysskä et al.'s research, the increased pressure on private citizens and the private sector to involve themselves in the resettlement of refugees is interpreted as a sign of increasing neoliberalism, in which private actors are expected to take on service roles previously undertaken by the welfare state. Do the conclusions of this study support a similar hypothesis? It is certainly interesting to note the prominence of businesses in this sample and the way in which businesses were portrayed by government representatives and other subjects as essential actors in the resettlement of refugees. Part of this could in fact be due to the fact that employment is a central part of resettlement, however it is equally interesting to note the lack of government representation in this sample, despite the fact that all levels of government played a large role in resettling Syrian refugees. This is perhaps an interesting question for further study.

Though on its face the results of this study appear to contradict those of Lawlor and Tolley's conclusions due to its association of economic benefit and refugee resettlement, in fact to a certain extent it supports their conclusions (2017). Firstly, though Lawlor and Tolley's research showed an important divergence in the frames and tones associated with immigrants versus refugees, their research also showed that the depiction of immigration was dynamic over time. Despite the fact that during their ten-year analysis immigrants were associated to more positive frames associated to their portrayal as economically beneficial, this may not exclude waves of refugees resettled during historically 'popular' resettlement program to also be tied to this depiction. Despite this hypothesis however, the fact remains that this positive association between refugees and economic benefits remains rare. Indeed, during most of my research I did not find any scholarly research to support this topic.

Lastly, this study also supports some of the conclusions made by Winter et al. regarding the depiction of Syrian refugees in Canadian media as compared to German media (2018). Though like Tysskä et al.'s study, Winter also found that the portrayal of Canadian values was at the heart of a mobilization to help protect Syrian refugees, Winter's study also examined the negation and sublation of Syrian refugees at the heart of media depiction in Germany and Canada. Were Syrian refugees in this sample sublated? Based on Bauder and Winter's description, one could argue that the depiction of Syrian refugees as future Canadian entrepreneurs is probably a type of sublation. However, this is probably another topic for further study.

Distinctions, significance and fostering further positive depictions of refugees

As the overview of previous research indicates, the results of this study are unusual compared to previous media depictions of refugees and in particular, Syrian refugees. Previous studies have found that media depictions of refugees' rest solely on familiar concepts of deservingness, which also fall within modern concepts of the securitization of the state and the distinctions of humanitarian migration compared to other types of migration in Canada. This explains half of the results of this study: Syrian refugees were not treated as security risks or as bogus refugees probably because they entered the country in a legal way, consistent with the Canadian states' rules concerning asylum. Furthermore, they were also depicted as past victims who were deserving of Canadian protection, thus making the Canadian state – and Canadian values – look benevolent as a result (Bauder, 2011).

More than that, however, the key difference in the depiction of refugees in this sample is how positive and distinctive it was. Syrian refugees were sometimes portrayed as victims, but also as empowered economic contributors, either as workers or entrepreneurs. As alluded to previously, this type of depiction is usually reserved for immigrants, who are portrayed in Canadian media as economically beneficial (Lawlor and Tolley, 2017). Certainly, the strong political reaction that prompted the resettlement of Syrian refugees could have contributed to this characterization. A majority of Canadians were already eager to welcome Syrian refugees: their portrayal as resilient workers could be attributed to accessing a positive narrative already somewhat present in Canadian media. After all, Canadian media is known to confuse refugees and immigrants (Fleras, 2011). Could this confusion simply have simply extended itself into a more positive arena? Perhaps by investigating previous popular resettlement periods, such as the resettlement of Vietnamese refugees, this type of depiction could perhaps be tracked to show popular support for refugee resettlement.

One of the key lessons to be learned from this study is that though refugees were invited to discuss the struggles they encountered during their refugee experience, journalists were not solely concerned with depicting their suffering. The economic angle allowed refugees to be depicted as resilient and empowered. In many cases the hardship that Syrian refugees had experienced was portrayed as an asset, something that made them bolder and tougher. This sample shows that while refugee suffering can be included in media coverage, it does not necessarily need to create a faceless narrative as previous studies have shown.

In addition to lessons about the depictions of refugees, there are also policy implications that could be tied to this study. Though the media as well as other government actors claimed that Syrian refugees would be good for the economy, it was the involvement of businesses that led to this claim having additional credibility. Fifty-eight individual businesses were identified in this sample and they were enthusiastic in their involvement with Syrian refugees. Though governments have a variety of considerations to take into account when they agree to resettle refugees, businesses in this case would not have engaged so publicly if they did not believe that they would receive a favourable response among consumers. We can perhaps deduce from this that under certain circumstances it may either be beneficial or a good sign overall, when third party entities such as businesses enthusiastically support the cause of refugee resettlement.

Limitations and recommendations for further study

The limitations of this study are chiefly related to the lack of available content from previous studies. There have been no studies on business involvement in refugee resettlement or even the depiction of businesses in media. Thus, no quantitative content analysis could be executed on this topic in order to confirm or refute theoretical assumptions. Further, this study was not undertaken in the pursuit of developing a theory, such as in the methodology of grounded theory. Rather, it may provide additional theoretical support for another study with additional data (Altheide and Schneider, 2013). In addition, the sample size used in this study is quite small compared to some studies such as Wallace's (2018). A larger study with a larger sample and previous content available would produce firmer conclusions.

As this is an initial look at the depiction of the involvement of businesses in the resettlement process, the areas of future research are plentiful. In the realm of media analysis, more research could be undertaken on the representation of businesses in the realm of CSR in a multicultural Canada or on the perception of the role of private industry in matters concerning larger societal projects. In addition, more studies could be undertaken in the representation of refugees in media, specifically on positive representations of refugees in media or on entrepreneurial refugees in Canada. Despite Harald Bauder's studies on the sublimation of refugee identity in Canadian media, there are few other studies on positive refugee representation in Canada suggesting alternative theories. In addition, to date there have also been no specific studies on the human interest framing of refugees in Canada, though they have been undertaken in Europe, Australia and the United States (Figenschou and Thorbjornsrud, 2015; Steimel, 2010; Gale, 2004).

In the area of refugee related studies, more research could be done to understand the real-world impact of business involvement in refugee resettlement, especially in the context of private resettlement in Canada, where businesses may be more involved with refugee resettlement as providers of resources such as in-kind donations in the community. Though there have been studies on the impact of social networks on refugee resettlement, none have been made on the potential impact of businesses in the social network of refugees. Finally, though there were only two business owners identified in this study who undertook private resettlement in addition to facilitating employment and mentoring, these models of business-led resettlement could be studied further to discover their impact and potentially, their popularity.

7. Conclusion

During the resettlement of Syrian refugees in Canada, many businesses publicly volunteered to contribute towards the resettlement of said refugees in Canada. These contributions were usually covered by various media outlets, who depicted businesses and refugees in a certain way during this period. This study aimed to discover how refugees and businesses were depicted in Canadian media during the Syrian refugee resettlement period, how those depictions were related to the larger scholarship on refugee portrayals in Canadian media and what narratives were present in the overall research. Through ethnographic content analysis, businesses were found to be portrayed as important resettlement partners when it came to the resettlement of refugees, however they themselves played a role in depicting refugees as positive economic contributors, as both a source of future employees, but also as potential future business owners. Most of the depiction of refugees in this case was commensurate with past research on the representation of refugees in the sense that refugees in this sample were mostly portrayed in a humanitarian and sympathetic light. However, the depiction of refugees as potential contributors to the economy was an unusual one and, in the past, was closely associated to positive depictions of economic immigrants. This type of depiction allowed refugees to be portrayed not only in a more positive way, but also in a more complex way overall.

Future work on this topic could start by first identifying businesses that have engaged in helping resettle refugees and perhaps also analyze how they are depicted in media. However, in terms of the depiction of refugees in Canadian media, future scholarly work could also pursue a broader look at the representation of refugees as positive contributors to the economy.

The knowledge contributed in this study serves to confirm some past research on the depiction of Syrian refugees in Canadian media during this time. However, it also opens the door to future research that may identify other instances in which refugees have been portrayed in Canadian media in a more positive way. While the strong characterization of Syrian refugees as economic contributors may reflect the positive opinion Canadians had of them at the time, it may also reflect a more nuanced depiction of refugees in Canadian media overall, that has yet to be discovered.

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