THE SECURITIZATION OF REFUGEES: A CRITICAL MEDIA DISCOURSE ANALYSIS
OF THE REPORTING ON SYRIAN REFUGEES IN CANADA

by

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Abstract

While immigration had become securitized pre-9/11, the terror attacks on that day accelerated the moral panic in society to new levels creating greater fear of mobility and its perceived relation to threats against national security. Following the outbreak of civil war in Syria in 2011 we have seen one of history's largest movements of externally displaced individuals seeking asylum globally. Canada has become a destination for a great number of individuals claiming refugee protection from the threats or perceived threats they face at home. This work seeks to examine, through employing a critical media discourse analysis, the effect to which reporting on the issue of Syrian refugees in Canada within two national newspapers has contributed to either the further securitization or desecuritization of this issue.

Keywords: Securitization; Desecuritization; Syrian; Refugee.

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Introduction

While the tragic events on September 11, 2001 were perpetuated solely against the United States, the ongoing effects of those events reach far beyond the borders of the country in which they occurred. Despite there being no distinct link between this terrorist attack and issues surrounding migration, popular media and political discourse was extremely successful at securitizing immigration and refugee issues; tying threats and fear intrinsically together with this issue. While the securitization of refugees existed prior to September 11, 2001, it is evident that this event marks a clear acceleration of fear surrounding the settlement of asylum seekers (Rygiel, 2012, p. 213).

In 2011, civil war broke out in Syria, which has resulted in over eleven million individuals being displaced globally (National Post, 2015a). As the countries bordering Syria bear the brunt of the challenge of assisting the Syrian refugees, Canada worked to settle thousands of these asylum seekers. Criticized as slow to react to this global issue, Canada remained largely withdrawn from providing any significant support until the middle of 2015, nearly four years after conflict arose in Syria. The significance of this date is that it conveniently coincided with a fiercely contested election campaign, the longest this country has ever seen.

On September 2, 2015, the world was made acutely aware of the tragedy facing the Syrian asylum seekers as media outlets published the tragic image of the lifeless body of three-year-old Alan Kurdi as he lay on the shores of Turkey. This hit especially close to home as it was reported that the Kurdi family was attempting to reach family and claim asylum in Canada, bringing the issue of Syrian refugees to the forefront of the 2015 Canadian federal election. Furthermore, there is a strong case to be made that Liberal Party, who claimed a majority government, headed by Justin Trudeau, won significant support in response to its strong

commitment to settling 25,000 Syrian refugees by year's end (a goal that was delayed two months, yet ultimately met). This paper seeks to explore the reporting on issues surrounding Syrian refugees with regard to a Canadian context within two of the country's largest national newspapers. The Globe and Mail and the National Post (publication selection and justification will be outlined in the methodology section to follow). Through applying a critical media discourse analysis, this paper will examine the extent to which these publications have contributed to the continued securitization of refugees, a trend which has been identified in the existing literature, or whether there has truly been a shift in the public discourse towards desecuritizing this issue.

Methodology

An academic and theoretical ground, and basis for the research of this study, has been achieved through completing a review of the existing literature. Further, through reviewing works completed in the area of the securitization of immigration and refugees, there was the opportunity to examine areas lacking in study. From this there may be the potential to guide further research.

This work employs a media discourse analysis on the reporting of issues regarding Syrian refugees and federal governance within a Canadian context in two Canadian newspapers: The Globe and Mail and the National Post. Discourse analysis allowed for the critical examination of the meaning and interpretation behind the discussion of an issue (Buitrago, 2013, p. 4). Utilizing this methodology allowed for understanding how the media “frames” the reporting on a given topic (Buitrago, 2013, p. 4). While framing is a complex issue, the result is effective as readers process the messages “with the least effort possible, by using mental short-cuts and filters” (Buitrago, 2013, p. 4). As a result, there is a clear link between public opinion, media discourse, and public policy (Buitrago, 2013, p. 4). Analysis of discourse presented in the media offers valuable insight into the power and influence these agencies have over the public, and also the degree to which they are directed by public opinion. Author Sybille Reinke de Buitrago utilized a critical media discourse analysis when examining the reporting on jihadist terrorism in Europe. It was found that the media played both an active role shaping public opinion on the subject while also passively being influenced by public and political sentiment (Buitrago, 2013, p. 3).

The Globe and Mail and National Post were chosen based on the criteria that they are both Canadian national newspapers, which are distributed and report across the country. Further they were selected on their historical political leanings. The Globe and Mail is widely regarded

as supportive of Centrist policies and values. The National Post, on the other hand, more favours right wing Conservative governments and practices. Through selecting two national publications with different political preferences, there was the opportunity to observe and examine the influence of bias within reporting on Syrian refugees in Canada. Articles were selected and examined in three distinct groups: pre-election, election campaign, and post-election. The pre-election time period was from January 1, 2015 until August 3, 2015, the day before the federal election was called in Canada. The second period of analysis was from August 4, 2015 to October 22, 2015, the day of the federal election in Canada. The third and final period ranges from October 23, 2015 until the writing of this work in July 2016. Articles were selected at random during these periods to avoid any bias in selection. The articles were read and analyzed looking at two primary criteria; Syrian refugees and federal governance. The first subject, Syrian refugees, examined articles and determined if the reporting on this issue is either positive or negative. This was determined through analyzing the discourse used when describing issues surrounding those fleeing Syria in search of asylum. The second subject, Canadian federal governance, examined if the article was either supportive or critical of the current federal government or its policies. As this analysis is of the government at time of publication, it is important to keep in mind that the pre-election and election period articles will examine their support and criticism of the Harper Conservative government, while the post-election articles will be concerned with Trudeau and the Liberals.

Critical discourse analysis is not without its criticisms. Two primary limitations of this methodology are the “breadth of concern” and the “depth of concern” (Matusov & Duyke, 2012, p. 609). The former argues that this methodology places too great a focus on the single discourse being examined, while ignoring broader social discussions (Matusov & Duyke, 2012, pp. 609-

10). The latter is a criticism that contends that discourse analysis fails to take into account the lived experiences and biases of the author (Matusov & Duyke, 2012, p. 610).

This work addresses the breadth of concern through analyzing two media publications who, historically, possess markedly different ideological leanings; with The Globe and Mail favouring Centrist policy and the National Post being predisposed towards Conservatism. Further, this paper alleviates the criticism of a lack of depth through analyzing not one individual's work, but the work of a myriad of authors. Through examining discourse influenced by a number of personal lived experiences the impact of any one author's biases is diluted.

Applying a critical discourse analysis of media reporting on an issue provided the opportunity to examine the connection between power and language and their impact on public policy (Marko, 2013, p. 203).

Literature Review

Through a review of the writings on the securitization of immigration and refugees, this work includes an overview of what the literature offers about the process of securitization and its impacts. This affords a comprehensive backing for the analysis to which this process occurred during the media coverage on the securitization of Syrian refugees in the three phases of the 2015 Canadian federal election: pre-election, during the election, and post-election.

Globalization has been a driving force in the securitization process

Global migration numbers are at an all-time high, and continue to climb. According to the United Nations, the number of global migrants has swelled from 222 million individuals to 244 million in 2015 (Nations, International Migration Report, 2016, p. 1). The increase in global migration is believed to be as a result of an increasingly neoliberal globalized world, which promotes the free flow of goods and services across borders, but restricts the movement of migrant workers (Helleiner, 2013, p. 1508). Policies against mobility in the global north, however, are highly prejudiced on the basis of race and economic status, as tourist and business travelers from more developed countries are permitted easy entry, while those from less prosperous countries face greater restrictive requirements and are thus forced into unauthorized entry means which often pose great risk to their health and safety. Increasingly, individuals in the global south are becoming displaced as a result of the conditions created by greater economic globalization (Helleiner, 2013, p. 1509). This irregular travel not only harms the safety of the migrant, but through labelling the method of entry as illegal also stigmatizes the individual as a criminal (Helleiner, 2013, p. 1509). Author Jane Helleiner offers that the securitization of the state against migration has resulted in the insecuritisation of the migrant (Helleiner, 2013, p. 1509). Insecuritisation is defined by Helleiner “as a form of structural violence produced by the

contradictions of selectively policed borders in an unequal globalizing world” (Helleiner, 2013, p. 1521).

Following the end of the Cold War, national borders have become increasingly irrelevant as trade becomes more globalized (Edwards, 2009, p. 770). However, while the movement of goods between nations is becoming more fluid, there is a greater effort taken by countries in the global north to stop the migration of individuals, particularly those seeking asylum, from the global south (Edwards, 2009, p. 770). This is ironic since, as author Alice Edwards notes, “the Cold War was responsible in part for the very refugeehood of these individuals” (Edwards, 2009, p. 776). Refugees are increasingly viewed as criminals, as a threat to national security, and often labelled as terrorist (Edwards, 2009, p. 775). Increasingly, the discourse that surrounds refugees falsely labels these individuals as queue jumpers suggests that they are making bogus claims (Edwards, 2009, p. 777). As a result of the securitization of immigration, the state labels the individual as the risk rather than more appropriately identifying these individuals as victims of insecurity (Edwards, 2009, p. 784).

Central to the protection of refugees is the guarantee of non-refoulement, which bars nations from returning persons to their home country where they are at risk of threat to life and liberty (Edwards, 2009, p. 791). This principle, however, can be overturned if the individual is believed to pose a threat to the security of the nation (Edwards, 2009, p. 792). Empowerment, according to Edwards, is integral in offering protection to these individuals who should be viewed as positive members of the community rather than passive receivers of assistance (Edwards, 2009, p. 805). The literature indicates that the recent changes in policy have reduced the number of individuals permitted entry for humanitarian grounds by placing greater emphasis on economic migration, illustrative of the shift from welfare liberalism to neoliberalism (Pratt,

2005, p. 1). The protection of the refugee has taken a back seat to first determining the validity of the claim of the asylum seeker and the potential security threats they pose (Pratt, 2005, p. 2). Globalization, author Michelle Lowry argues, is responsible for many of the conditions for which those seeking asylum are fleeing from (Lowry, 2002, p. 29).

The refugee system during the Cold War was utilized, according to Lowry, as a means to promote the supremacy of capitalist western ideology over the policies and practices of the Soviet Union (Lowry, 2002, p. 31). Contemporary discourse on refugees, however, is increasingly focused on the asylum seeker as a security threat and often labeled as a “crisis” of migration (Lowry, 2002, p. 31). This criminalization of refugees, according to Lowry, stems as a result of the global North/South divide, a hangover of colonialism, and is rooted in racism utilized as a means to protect the status quo of the dominant Western culture (Lowry, 2002, p. 31). Canada’s official policy of multiculturalism is criticized for merely accepting neutral and unthreatening difference including food and music, yet those newcomers who seek political demands are viewed as a threat to the nation and Canadian culture (Lowry, 2002, p. 31). The cries for increased immigration control and border security, according to Lowry, are a red herring, as domestic terrorism has been found to be just as much a threat as international terrorism (Lowry, 2002, p. 32). The literature shows that refugees are not simply permitted entry into Canada on the basis of claim alone, but also on their likelihood of adoption into Canadian culture and society (Lowry, 2002, p. 32).

Canadian policy places great emphasis on economic migration

Robert M. Russo in his work *Security, Securitization and Human Capital: The New Wave of Canadian Immigration Laws* notes that the attacks against the United States on September 11th, 2001 acted as a catalyst for law makers globally, including Canada, to enact legislation to

protect against perceived threats associated with immigration (Russo, 2008, p. 299). Although changes to the policies and practices implemented under Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper were numerous and propagated by the attacks of 9/11, these policies are in line with those implemented in the 1980's by then Prime Minister Brian Mulroney (Russo, 2008, p. 299). Historically, and up until the end of the Second World War, Canada's immigration laws have been concerned primarily with population growth and economic prosperity (Russo, 2008, p. 300). Deputy Prime Minister Erik Nielson, leading a Task Force on Program Review, published a report in 1985, which found the need to increase the number of immigrants settled into Canada to avoid the country's population falling below thirty million by the new millennium (Russo, 2008, p. 300). Changes in immigration policy implemented under Mulroney resulted in a drastic increase in the number of individuals who settled in Canada. The number of new immigrants increased by 170,019 over 8 years; from 84,302 in 1985 to 254,321 by 1993 (Russo, 2008, p. 301). During this period, the country placed a greater focus on economic class immigrants rather than those seeking to enter for humanitarian or family reunification reasons (Russo, 2008, p. 301). These changes, according to Russo, were a calculated measure to gain stronger ties to this community of new citizens and benefit from a larger support base during times of elections (Russo, 2008, p. 301). This tactic, however, risked alienating long standing Conservative supporters as they viewed immigration as an economic threat during times of recessions, despite evidence which illustrates the existence of only a negligible effect (Russo, 2008, p. 301).

Shift towards National Security

Traditionally, the concerns of states regarding security have focused on the proliferation of arms as the primary means for protecting the sovereignty and safety of the nation (Lowry, 2002, p. 29). There was a shift away from state centered security and towards the notion of

human security under the Liberal government of Canada in the 1990s (Lowry, 2002, p. 29).

Lowry defines human security as “understanding security in terms of the real-life, everyday experience of humanity embedded within the global social and economic structures” (Lowry, 2002, p. 29). The literature indicates that more recent conceptualizations of security post 9/11 are centered around the notion of national security (Messina, 2014, p. 551).

The process of securitization

Authors Mark B. Salter and Geneviève Piché put forth that securitization is the breakdown of democracy, as debate is avoided when an issue is accepted as a security threat and the government is permitted “emergency measures and extraordinary powers” (Salter & Piché, 2011, p. 933). Securitization is inherently a social process as the participation and acceptance of issues as a threat to security by the general population is imperative for an issue to become securitized (Salter & Piché, 2011, p. 935). The practice of threat naming, according to the literature, is the central discourse tool utilized in the securitization process (Salter & Piché, 2011, p. 938). The naming of a threat, regardless of validity, if accepted by the public as true will see an issue successfully securitized. Salter and Piché, through employing a political discourse analysis, have found just how effective threat naming can be when securitizing an issue. For Salter and Piché, the attacks of 9/11 are offered as a prime example, as there have been and infinitesimally small number of international terror attacks at home against the United States, yet there is a constant discourse which suggests otherwise (Salter & Piché, 2011, p. 938). The literature shows that terrorism, despite any attempt to define such acts, has been found to be the primary discursive tool employed when calling for legislation and technologies to strengthen the perceived weak Canada-US border (Salter & Piché, 2011, p. 940).

Anthony M. Messina's work, *Securitizing Immigration in the Age of Terror*, describes the securitization of immigration as a top-down process in which the state and indeed society as a whole, according to the political elite, are at risk by external threats from migration (Messina, 2014, p. 531). The transfer of issues from normal to emergency realms is central to an issue being securitized, but this is only possible after threats are legitimized through their acceptance by the public (Messina, 2014, p. 531). Post-9/11, legislation has been implemented to alleviate perceived economic, cultural, and physical threats posed by immigration (Messina, 2014, p. 531).

Messina offers three forces that have perpetuated the securitization of immigration. Firstly, there is a fear amongst the political elite, that there is a threat to the loss of symbolic power over sovereignty of their nation's boundaries (Messina, 2014, p. 533). Secondly, those working within the field of security feel they have a vested interest in issues surrounding immigration through beneficial and lucrative government contracts (Messina, 2014, p. 533). The third factor is the feeling of alienation among newly immigrated and settled individuals who feel unable to cope and adapt to their new homeland (Messina, 2014, p. 533). The perceived risk posed by the immigrant is not solely linked to issues surrounding threats to national security, as in times of recession these individuals are often scapegoated as a threat to the economy as well (Messina, 2014, p. 535). Further, migrants are argued to be a threat to national cultural identity through wanting to preserve their own heritage (Messina, 2014, p. 535).

Securitization and the Media

The literature indicates the media, in the securitization process, is an integral component, as it transmits the messages from the political elite to disseminate amongst the general population (Messina, 2014, p. 543). Additionally, the media has a tendency to support and report

from the side of key political agents including the police and government (Messina, 2014, p. 543).

Author Liette Gilbert examines the normalization of a securitized discourse and the effect of media on this process and policy implications in her work, *The Discursive Production of a Mexican Refugee Crisis in Canadian Media and Policy*. Gilbert employed a critical media discourse analysis on the reporting of Mexican refugee claimants at the Detroit/Windsor border. She found that reporting on this issue overwhelmingly characterized these individuals as having crossed illegally and making “bogus” claims (Gilbert, 2013, p. 828). In response to this perceived “crisis” as reported in the media, the Canadian government, under Prime Minister Stephen Harper, on July 13, 2009, announced a new visa requirement for all Mexican citizens seeking to travel into Canada (Gilbert, 2013, p. 827). This change in policy was, according to Jason Kenney, then Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, a response to “the sheer volume of these [Mexican] claims” (Gilbert, 2013, pp. 827-8). This change is illustrative of the normalization of the refugee as a threat created through discourse reporting on the issue as a “crisis” which directly impacted governmental policy through implementing a visa requirement restricting the movement of these targeted individuals.

Similar to the media’s reporting of the “bogus” Mexican claims for asylum in Canada, the Canadian media has played an active role in the creation of a discourse which links issues surrounding migration and risks to national security. The case of the Canadian government’s interception and apprehension of 599 Chinese nationals off the coast of British Columbia in 1999 is cited in the literature as a prime example of the effect the media has in shaping the opinions of Canadians. The coverage of this event often described these individuals as “illegal” and called into question the effectiveness of this country’s immigration system (Ibrahim, 2005, p. 173).

Discourse, for French philosopher Michel Foucault, is central to the establishment and maintenance of power (Ibrahim, 2005, pp. 163-4). Maggie Ibrahim, in her work, *The Securitization of Migration: A Racial Discourse*, offers that the securitization of immigration is an example of a discourse through which power is exercised (Ibrahim, 2005, p. 164). Foucault, on power and discourse offers, “we are also subjected to truth in the sense in which it is truth that makes the laws, that produces the true discourse which, at least partially, decides, transmits, and itself extends upon the effects of power” (Ibrahim, 2005, p. 164). Ibrahim argues that cultural difference, believed to result in the breakdown of society is the core concept of the securitization of immigration (Ibrahim, 2005, p. 164). Migrants in Canada face racial prejudice as a result of the association of racial difference with threat and risk (Ibrahim, 2005, p. 166). Labelling migrants as a threat to the security of a nation only acts to legitimize racist beliefs and attitudes (Ibrahim, 2005, p. 169). The risks associated with migration, for Ibrahim, are those individuals who face great challenges and difficulty in escaping countries due to war, famine, and poverty (Ibrahim, 2005, p. 169). The divide between the “us” and “them” is exaggerated through the creation of a discourse which views immigration as a threat to security (Ibrahim, 2005, p. 171).

Desecuritization as a response to securitization

With a myriad of literature dedicated to securitization, Paul Roe addresses the issue of desecuritization, an area in need of more research, in his work, *Securitization and Minority Rights: Conditions of Desecuritization*. Roe explains the process of securitization as the implementation of emergency measures against external threats (Roe, 2004, p. 281). For Roe, desecuritization is “the returning of issues from ‘emergency politics’ to ‘normal politics’” (Roe, 2004, p. 280). According to Roe, the realm of “emergency politics” is the antithesis of “normal politics” and democracy, as the development of public policy is shrouded in secrecy and there is

a distinct lack of accountability on the part of political agents (Roe, 2004, pp. 282-3). Once identified, addressing this threat is given priority over all else (Roe, 2004, p. 281).

Desecuritization, for Roe is desirable, as it has the potential to offer a more efficient political system, it is an alternative to securitization which, in an unpredictable world is ineffective, and has the ability to reorder domestic society creating a more just domestic life (Roe, 2004, p. 284).

The desecuritization process is achieved through three strategies. The first, avoiding securitization entirely, is simply to refrain from addressing the issue as a threat to security (Roe, 2004, p. 284). The second strategy, after an issue has been securitized, is to avoid escalating the threat when addressing the issue (Roe, 2004, p. 284). The third, and final method of desecuritization is the placement of an issue related to security back into the normal political sphere (Roe, 2004, p. 284). Roe suggests that when desecuritizing issues related to migration it is imperative to understand the individual as not simply singularly defined, but one with multiple characteristics, as he suggests, “the migrant is not just the migrant, but someone with multiple identities – woman, teacher, mechanic, father, etc. The migrant is revealed as being someone who is just like *us*, just like one of the natives” (Roe, 2004, p. 286). However, while securitization can be examined as a real phenomenon, desecuritization as a response to this process is only a theory, as it has not yet been fully achieved. Roe suggests that the securitization of migration is not only concerned with threats against national security, but also against societal security (Roe, 2004, p. 289). The state’s primary focus is the protection of sovereignty, for without sovereignty, the state fails to exist. Similarly, along this line, threats against the security, or identity, of society will result in the collapse of the society (Roe, 2004, p. 289).

Assimilation preferred over multiculturalism as a migration model

In response to this perceived threat due to migration came the emergence of the Reform Party which, in 1988, ran on the platform of increased immigration control and argued, there “is perhaps no area of public policy where the views of Canadians have been more systematically ignored” (Russo, 2008, p. 301). Central to the drafting of this election platform was Stephen Harper who held the role of Chief Policy Officer for the Reform Party (Russo, 2008, p. 301). During the 1993 federal election in Canada, Reform Party members were staunchly opposed to immigration on humanitarian grounds and fought against reforms to the definition of refugees which would have resulted in greater numbers of those in need being allowed entry into Canada (Russo, 2008, p. 302). Further, it was argued that those immigrants who entered Canada without knowledge of either of the country’s national languages would present “a drain on society for the rest of their lives” (Russo, 2008, p. 302). The Reform party openly opposed Canada’s official policy of multiculturalism, instead, calling for the assimilation of newcomers into the “national culture” (Russo, 2008, p. 302). There however, was no attempt made by the Reform Party to offer a definition of what Canada’s “national culture” is. Evidence suggests, however, that immigration policy which focuses on language skill and economic potential only serves to further the status quo and support the groups which currently hold power (Russo, 2008, p. 302). Canada’s emphasis on the importance of maintaining the superiority of its two primary languages is evident in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms which under section 16 explicitly outlines French and English as the country’s two official languages (Conrick & Donovan, 2010, p. 339).

Welfare-liberalism versus neoliberalism

Welfare liberalism places great emphasis on the collective wellbeing of all in society concurrently placing expectations on the duties of its citizens (Pratt, 2005, p. 17). Neoliberalism,

conversely, views a shared responsibility to the community as being dependent on the state and results in passive citizenship (Pratt, 2005, p. 17). The state, under neoliberalism, has a minimal governmental role, limited primarily to concerns of law and order while simultaneously encouraging the entrepreneurial endeavors of its citizens (Pratt, 2005, p. 18). Anna Pratt, in her work, *Securing Borders: Detention and Deportation in Canada*, offers the “risk society” as a model for understanding contemporary society which places concern not on present, but future threats (Pratt, 2005, p. 18).

9/11 served as a catalyst for policy shift towards further securitization

The reelection of Liberal Prime Minister Jean Chrétien in 1997 resulted in a greater emphasis on public safety and national security with the tabling of Bill C-31: The *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* (Russo, 2008, p. 303). Although promoted by the Liberal party as a proponent of the rights of newcomers in Canada, this legislation is primarily a tool to secure the country from those deemed a risk to society (Russo, 2008, p. 303). The *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* (IRPA) received Royal Assent on November 1, 2001, a mere 51 days after the attacks on 9/11 against the United States. Furthermore, the minority Liberal Party in 2004, then led by Prime Minister Paul Martin, implemented the *Canada-U.S. Safe Third Country Agreement* which obliged asylum seekers to make a refugee claim in which ever of the two countries first entered (Russo, 2008, p. 303). This has resulted in an estimated one-third of all refugee claimants in Canada being diverted to the United States, a country that has been vehemently criticized for failing to provide adequate protection of these individuals (Russo, 2008, p. 303).

While the IRPA was proposed and written prior to the events of 9/11, the passage of this legislation in the wake of the attacks sought to affirm the connection between issues related to migration and security risks against the state and indeed its citizens (Pratt, 2005, p. 3). Despite its

name, discourses found within the IRPA seem to place little concern of the protection *for* immigrants and refugees but rather protection *from* immigrants and refugees. The safety of newcomers in Canada very clearly and evidently takes a back seat to the protection of the domestic society (Pratt, 2005, p. 5). Borders, in a highly globalized, neoliberal world inherently defines not only the insiders, but outsiders as well (Pratt, 2005, p. 11). This illustrates the contradictory nature of borders under globalization and neoliberalism which simultaneously weakens the border with regard to trade and mobility of individuals, yet has also become highly fortified as a result of the securitization of immigration.

Stephen Harper, in 2002 as head of the Canadian Alliance, voiced his skepticism of the refugee determination process and indeed the refugees themselves in an interview where he stated the process “threatens national security [through the creation of a] back door immigration stream” (Russo, 2008, p. 304). In 2005, now leading the Conservative Party, Stephen Harper effectively strengthened its base in Quebec, a province found to be in support of tighter immigration measures, by calling for greater limitations on the number of immigrants permitted into Canada on humanitarian grounds (Russo, 2008, p. 304).

Author, Keith Banting, in his work, *Is There a Progressive's Dilemma in Canada? Immigration, Multiculturalism, and the Welfare State*, found that Canadians, compared to citizens from other *Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development* (OECD) countries (including: Austria, Germany, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States) are more likely to view immigrants as favorable to the economy and less likely to view immigrants as causing crime (Banting, 2010, p. 803). However, the literature also shows that Canadians have been found to greatly support the assimilation of immigrants into Canadian society rather than see those individuals preserve their own culture.

Canada, following the adoption of a points based immigration system, has been found to strongly favor those individuals who are believed to have the capability to quickly gain employment and have little reliance on government support (Banting, 2010, p. 806). The literature shows there is clear evidence that illustrates a willingness of the federal government of Canada to limit the social assistance utilized by newcomers into Canada (Banting, 2010, p. 807).

Canadians' views on immigration issues shifted following September 11, 2001.

The Council for Canadian Unity on immigration in Canada surveyed public opinion following the attacks against the United States on 9/11 and found that 45 percent of those polled were in favor of a reduction in immigration, up significantly from 29 percent in the period before the attacks (Adelman, 2002, p. 15). It is clear that this shift in public opinion occurred in the absence of any concrete link between the 9/11 attacks and immigration policies. Some government actors appear to have attempted to combat the shift in public opinion by refuting the suggestion of a link between Canada's security and its approach to immigration. For example, a report published by the Standing committee on Citizenship and Immigration entitled *Hands Across the Border*, found no causal link between immigration and threats to security (Adelman, 2002, p. 16). Additionally, this report stated that while the report examined the link between immigrants and refugees, this examination should not be an assumption that either pose any risk to Canada (Adelman, 2002, p. 16).

Despite the lack of causal link between increased migration and threats to the security of Canada the post-9/11 era ushered in a number of changes in the criminal justice realm, which further accelerated the trend towards securitization. Following the attacks on 9/11 against the United States a definition of terrorism was added to the Criminal Code of Canada through Bill-36, which also allowed for the seizure of assets associated with terrorist activities (Adelman,

2002, p. 17). Further, law enforcement agencies were granted increased power of detention and arrest, in a move which author Howard Adelman argues, “challenge the core tenets of civil liberties and the restrictions to police powers at the center of our conception of democracy” (Adelman, 2002, p. 19). Stricter penalties were also implemented against those who seek irregular entry into Canada with the potential of fines up to \$1 million and/or life in prison (Adelman, 2002, p. 23).

The US and Canada cooperated in enhancing security post-9/11

One of the most significant and effective measures implemented by the Canadian government in keeping with the United States’ move towards the securitization of immigration was the requirement of travel visas for a number of countries. On December 4, 2001, only months after the attacks of 9/11, Canada and the United States implemented travel visas for the following countries: Dominica, Grenada, Kiribati, Nauru, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, Zimbabwe, and Hungary (Adelman, 2002, p. 26). While the inclusion of the first six countries, a collection of small south pacific islands, may seem peculiar upon first examination, is more fully understood as author Adelman explains these countries are where the Australian government deposits individuals apprehended at sea trying to migrate to Australia (Adelman, 2002, p. 26). The inclusion of Hungary is in response to the large number of Roma population, which have been found to make a relatively high number of refugee claims in Canada annually (Adelman, 2002, p. 26). Zimbabwe, perhaps most troubling, is a country which has historically produced a large number of successful refugee claimants, but the requirement of a visa to travel results in many individuals being deterred from seeking entry into Canada (Adelman, 2002, p. 26). This is illustrative of the changes in policy and penalties against those who seek irregular entry into Canada.

Although there is no direct link between the attacks of September 11, 2001 and the US/Canada border, this event resulted in a number of changes to address the perceived weakness and threats posed by the United States' northern boundary (Salter & Piché, 2011, p. 932). The boundary between the United States and Canada, once touted as the longest undefended border in the world, has, in an increasingly securitized world been criticized by many as a weak link vulnerable to external threats. The apprehension of an Ahmed Ressad, an Algerian born resident of Montreal, Canada, in December 1999 at the British Columbia/Washington border with a carload of explosives with the intent of driving to California and detonating the bomb at the Los Angeles airport was cited by many in the US as an example of the threat posed by the perceived weak border (Salter & Piché, 2011, p. 930). Additionally, Mr. Ressad had entered Canada on a fake passport living in Quebec as a refugee; further spurring calls for increased security control over the migration process in Canada (Salter & Piché, 2011, p. 930).

Further changes in policy that were passed in the wake of the attacks on the United States on 9/11, include the Smart Border Accord, a program which facilitated easier economic import and exports between the two countries while simultaneously increasing the use of technology and resulting in a higher number of border officers employed by each country along their respective perimeter (Salter & Piché, 2011, p. 931). Additionally, in 2004, the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI) was adopted which put into place the requirement of travel documents for all travelers, including American citizens, who seek entry into the United States (Salter & Piché, 2011, p. 932). Despite a pervasive discourse that exists exclaiming the threat posed by a weak US/Canada border, the literature shows that only 1.3 percent of all those apprehended entering the United States as an "inadmissible alien" are found at the Northern United States' boundary, while the vast majority occur to the south (Helleiner, 2013, p. 1507).

Recently, the United States has employed the use of UAV (unmanned aerial vehicles) Predator Drones to patrol the vast expanses of the remote border between itself and Canada (Salter & Piché, 2011, p. 933). Despite any link between the attacks on 9/11 and the border between Canada and the United States, there were still some media and public officials that criticized the boundary as a contributing factor to the event (Apler & Loucky, 2007, p. 6). In fact, authors Donald K. Apler and James Loucky have found evidence that illustrates that stricter border controls have the consequence of increasing criminal activity which flourishes on differences between nations (Apler & Loucky, 2007, p. 20). Further, Apler and Loucky argue that border controls between nations where no conflict exists has the effect of creating a feeling of conflict between the countries (Apler & Loucky, 2007, p. 22). In this way, the securitization of immigration has been found to result in a rise in nationalism and a widening of racial and class disparity (Apler & Loucky, 2007, p. 24).

The literature identifies serious consequences of securitization

Messina argues that the consequences from the securitization of immigration are numerous, including an erosion of civil liberties, the attrition of the rights of immigrants, loss in national economic strength, and ironically “severely compromised national security and even imperiled democracy itself” (Messina, 2014, p. 546). The securitization of immigration has been found to result in those economically successful migrants fleeing their new home countries in fear of increased persecution (Messina, 2014, p. 546). The literature shows that the stigma associated with criminalizing the migrant is believed to be responsible for creating tension and hostility between the citizens of the host nation and the newly settled individuals (Messina, 2014, p. 546). Further, through criminalizing migration, there has been a blurred definition of migrant which now encompasses all, from labour migrant to refugee, and blankets these individuals as a

threat to national, societal, and economic security of the nation (Messina, 2014, p. 546). The risks and threats supposed to exist and be addressed through the securitization of immigration, have actually been found to have been aggravated and made worse by changes to policy and practice (Messina, 2014, p. 547).

Moral Panic

Through the propagation of a threat, the media creates a sense of panic in the public which in turn can result in changes in public policy by the government to address perceived internal or external threats. Stanley Cohen, on the phenomenon of moral panic offers:

Societies appear to be subject, every now and then, to periods of moral panic. A condition, episode, person or group of persons emerges to become defined as a threat to societal values and interests; its nature is presented in a stylized and stereotypical fashion by the mass media; the moral barricades are manned by editors, bishops, politicians and other right-thinking people; socially accredited experts pronounce their diagnoses and solutions; ways of coping are evolved or (more often) resorted to; the condition then disappears, submerges or deteriorates and becomes more visible. Sometimes the object of the panic is quite novel and at other times it is something which has been in existence long enough, but suddenly appears in the limelight. Sometimes the panic passes over and is forgotten, except in folklore and collective memory; at other times it has more serious and long-lasting repercussions and might produce such changes as those in legal and social policy or even in the way the society conceives itself (Cohen, 2002, p. 9)

Changes to policy, as a result of moral panic, took place in the period following the events on September 11 against the United States. Further, this moral panic can be witnessed in the reporting on the Syrian refugee “crisis” that is said to be plaguing Europe. In the wake of the Paris attacks in November 2015, it was suggested, in a report by the BBC that one of the attackers “... may have been posing as a Syrian refugee” (BBC, 2016). Despite any concrete evidence, there was still a link created between the commission of a terror attack in Europe and the migration of asylum seekers from Syria. Further, where in the case of Syrian refugees, particularly those of Muslim faith, who are often depicted as a threat to Western values.

The literature demonstrates the significant role race plays in the securitization phenomenon

The literature indicates that the policies and practices adopted as a result of the increased securitization of immigration are focused and directed primarily against those individuals who are male, young, and of Muslim descent (Dauvergne, 2007, p. 534). Muslim women are also targeted as the practice of wearing a veil has come under increasing criticism following the attacks on 9/11 against the United States (Behiery, 2013, p. 775). Valerie Behiery, in her work, *Bans on Muslim Facial Veiling in Europe and Canada: A Cultural History of Vision Perspective*, has found that images depicting Muslim women wearing a veil are often used by the media when reporting on debates centred on the issue of the problems associated with Islam (Behiery, 2013, p. 777). Attempts to restrict the practice of veiling are indicative of a larger agenda, post 9/11, which seeks to limit civil rights in an effort to increase security and surveillance methods (Behiery, 2013, p. 778). Policies which seek to ban veiling practices create a dichotomy of “us” versus “them” while simultaneously promoting the supposed superiority of western culture (Behiery, 2013, p. 778). The Harper Tories even went so far as to propose a phone-in tip line where “victims” or witnesses could call and report, what was then referred to as “barbaric cultural practices”, including the wearing of traditional and religious dress, namely the niqab. This, according to Behiery, is a clear instance of Orientalism, which promotes the superiority of western culture over all other (Behiery, 2013, p. 775).

The greatest risks associated with immigration are believed to be overwhelming our welfare state, health risks, and a rise in crime (Ibrahim, 2005, p. 174). Ibrahim summarizes Foucault’s opinion on governmental policies as “the outcomes of knowledge production through the functioning of a discourse” (Ibrahim, 2005, p. 178). The inclusion of provisions against terrorism, without any attempt to define the act or actors, leaves the interpretation at the hands of those prosecuting (Ibrahim, 2005, p. 181). Individuals with a record of criminality are deemed

inadmissible into Canada, without right to appeal, an affront to the legal rights of these individuals (Ibrahim, 2005, p. 182). The policies outlined within the IRPA, according to the literature, place a clear emphasis on deterring individuals from seeking entry into Canada, rather than provide any humanitarian assistance to those in need (Ibrahim, 2005, p. 183).

Summary of Findings- Refugee Issues

This work employs a critical media discourse analysis of articles published within The Globe and Mail and the National Post. While reporting on the topic of Syrian Refugees in Canada is not limited to these sources, analysis was limited to these national print publications. Overall, 47 articles published by The Globe and Mail were examined; six pre-election, six during election, and 35 post-election. From the National Post, 46 articles were selected for analysis, with 3 coming from the pre-election period, 21 from during the election campaign, and 24 post-election.

Chart A illustrates the changes in reporting on Syrian refugees in The Globe and Mail. In the period leading up to the election campaign, the articles were evenly split between positive and negative. During the campaign, however, the coverage of this issue was wholly positive towards the asylum seekers. Post election, this publication remained overwhelmingly positive in

its reporting on issues surrounding Syrian refugees.

Chart B shows that the coverage on the issue of Syrian refugees in the National Post has progressed from wholly negative in the pre-election period to a majority of articles written during the election campaign and post-election being supportive of the asylum seekers. There, however, are a significant number of articles which portray the Syrian refugees in a negative manner, with reference to threats of security associated with their settlement in Canada.

Summary of Findings- Federal Governance

Chart C illustrates The Globe and Mail's significant shift in support of the federal government and its policies from the Harper Tories during the pre-election and election campaign to the overwhelming support for Trudeau's Liberal party during the post-election period.

Chart D shows that the National Post was wholly supportive of the Harper Conservatives during the pre-election campaign. There was a shift during the election campaign period which saw this publication's articles offering a large number of criticisms of this government. This

trend continued during the post-election period following the election of the majority Liberal federal government led by Justin Trudeau.

The Globe and Mail Pre-Election Analysis

Syrian refugees and refugee issues received limited reporting in The Globe and Mail prior to the 2015 Canadian federal election. A search of this newspaper's database for articles on the topic of refugees within the Canadian context between January 1, 2015 and August 3, 2015 returned a mere 56 results. The relatively light coverage of this issue is surprising and troubling, as Syrian citizens have faced being displaced for years since the start of the Syrian Civil War in 2012. A sampling of six of these articles found that portrayal of Syrian refugees and issues related to refugees in Canada was evenly split with three articles writing positively and three representing a negative image of the asylum seekers. One positive article *Refugee in Canada*, published January 12, 2015 in The Globe and Mail referred to the situation not as a refugee crisis, but described the situation as "one of the worst humanitarian disasters of all time" (The Globe and Mail, 2015b). Framing the situation in Syria as a humanitarian issue and not as a refugee crisis provides the reader with the image of these individuals as requiring aid and support. As Pratt argues in the literature, the shift from welfare liberalism to neoliberalism resulted in humanitarian immigration taking a back seat to the preferred economic migration. Putting greater emphasis on this issue as requiring a humanitarian response is working towards the desecuritization of refugees through the shift back towards welfare liberalism which prioritizes the well-being of all in society. In contrast to this, the article, *The Harper Effect*, published February 7, 2015, in reference to the interception of the cargo ship MV Sun Sea carrying aboard it Sri Lankan Tamils, reporter John Ibbitson writes that this incident reminded the citizens of Canada "that the world considered them a soft touch when it came to asylum seekers" (Ibbitson, *The Harper Effect*, 2015a). This portrayal of Canada as vulnerable to being taken advantage of by those seeking refugee status in this country seeks to affirm the contrast

between perceived deserving and undeserving refugees. It presents the idea that there are asylum seekers who, taking advantage of the generosity of Canadians, can gain refugee status where they may be denied by other, more critical, countries. This is a false notion as refugee status is granted to individuals meeting the strict guidelines outlined by UNHCR in the United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees of 1951 which classifies a refugee as those who have a:

well-founded fear of persecution 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. (Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, 1951)

Status as a refugee is based on classification according to this convention, and not by the perceived generosity or reputation a country has as having a “soft touch”. An article by Doug Saunders, published May 23, 2015 laments the difficulty refugees have settling in their new countries and notes his surprise at how refugees in Germany were met with “surprising calm, even optimism” (Saunders, 2015).

Analysis of the articles sampled during this time period within The Globe and Mail also found strong support for the Harper government and its actions with regards to Syrian refugees. Five out of the six articles analyzed were supportive of the actions of the Conservative government, whereas only one was critical of the Prime Minister. Mr. Ibbitson’s article, *The Harper Effect*, lauds the Conservative leader for fixing “a broken refugee system” and claims this to be “one of the Conservative government’s more important and lasting achievements”. The newspaper praises Minister of Citizenship and Immigration Chris Alexander’s announcement that Canada has agreed to settle an additional 10,000 Syrian refugees. (The Globe and Mail, 2015b). While this number is relatively small when compared to the global number of Syrians

forcibly displaced by war in their home country, this article commends the actions of Canada as “one of the best efforts among countries outside the immediate region” (The Globe and Mail, 2015b). Martin Patrick’s article, *Scenarios we may face in Syria*, published March 31, 2015, however, is critical of the declaration that the Canadian government plans to extend its military role in Syria in combating the Islamic State. The article posits that the worst-case scenario resulting from Harper’s decision to continue the military attack is a drastic increase in displacement “adding to the refugee burden in neighboring states” (Patrick, 2015). The most likely outcome, according to Patrick is “war without end”, and that “Syria will go on bleeding refugees to Lebanon and Jordan” (Patrick, 2015). It is clear that the author is critical of the Conservative government’s plan of a militarized response to the issues facing Syria, as he believes the results will likely only perpetuate and fuel the conditions that have caused millions to flee their homeland.

The Globe and Mail Election Analysis

During the 2015 federal election in Canada from August 3, 2015 to October 22, 2015 the issue of Syrian refugees received substantially more coverage in The Globe and Mail. This can be largely attributed to the drowning death of the young Alan Kurdi on September 2, 2015 as he and his family fled Syria by boat to Turkey. The tragic image of the child’s body being recovered on the shores of Turkey was broadcast globally, but with reports claiming the family was attempting to reunite with family in Vancouver, Canada, the tragic death drove the issue of Syrian refugees to the forefront of topics debated during the election. In contrast to the portrayal of refugees and refugee issues prior to the 2015 election in Canada, which was evenly divided between positive and negative, analysis of a random sample of articles published by The Globe and Mail during the election period illustrated that reporting on this topic was overwhelmingly

positive. Of the seven articles examined, none framed the Syrian refugees as a threat or related the situation to a security risk. Citizens of Canada, with the image of young Alan Kurdi on the beach were made acutely aware that individuals fleeing their homeland in Syria for safety in other countries required humanitarian aid and assistance, and should not be feared as a threat to national security. An article published September 3, 2015, the day after the world bore witness to the drowning death of Alan Kurdi, addressed this issue explicitly, stating:

The human beings trying to enter Europe are clearly in crisis – but why must Europe act as if it is in crisis? Yes, in the first half of 2015, more than 300,000 migrants arrived in Europe. But that’s only about 0.1 per cent of the EU’s population”. (The Globe and Mail, 2015a)

This article, illustrating that the true threat was the situation from which these families were fleeing in Syria, and not the individuals themselves, is a step towards the desecuritization of refugees and refugee issues. The first method, as outline by author Paul Roe, recognizes the importance of understanding the individual as multi-dimensional and is “like us, just like one of the natives”. While there were no overt references to the Syrian refugees and security, language was still present which casts these individuals in a negative light. Additionally, Roe suggests desecuritizing an issue by responding in a more humanitarian manner. An article by John Ibbitson, entitled, *Three ways in which the plight of refugees could affect the federal election’s outcome*, offers that, “the refugee crisis is escalating... tens of thousands of desperate Syrians, Iraqis and Afghans continue to flood into Europe...” (Ibbitson, *Three ways in which the plight of refugees could affect the federal election's outcome*, 2015b). Referring to the situation in Syria as a refugee “crisis” creates the impression that the individuals fleeing bring with them crisis and chaos. The Globe and Mail reported of former Canadian Forces Chief of the Defence Staff, Rick Hillier, who commented on the Syrian refugee situation, stating, “I wonder why we, as the greatest country that we are, could not stand tall during these dark days for the hundreds of

thousands of displaced souls who are fleeing, quite literally, for their lives” (Fine, Red tape prevents Ottawa from keeping up with the public's desire to help, 2015a). While The Globe and Mail, during this period, reported favourably on the Syrian refugees and refugee issues, this news organization was overwhelmingly critical of the country’s Conservative federal government under Stephen Harper. Only a single article analyzed during the 2015 federal election campaign in Canada was not critical of Mr. Harper and his government; however, it was not truly supportive, stating, “Canada takes in close to 1 percent of its population each and every year, in the form of immigrants and refugees. Canada is not in crisis as a result. Quite the opposite” (The Globe and Mail, 2015a). This is not exactly glowing praise for the Conservatives, but it does illustrate some openness on the part of the federal government to immigration and refugees.

Little is held back when criticising the actions, or inactions, of the Harper government in The Globe and Mail during this period, which is reported as, “resisting calls to expand Canada’s response to the refugee crisis” (Chase, Fast-tracking measures all from the past, 2015). Mr. Harper’s calls for increased screening of refugees coming from “a terrorist war zone” was criticized by members of his own party as well as by Liberal leader Justin Trudeau who countered, “Joe Clark certainly didn’t let security concerns prevent Canada from welcoming tens upon thousands of boat people fleeing what had been a war-ravaged area of the world” (Chase, Fast-tracking measures all from the past, 2015). Further, this article criticised Sonia Lesage, spokesperson for the Department of Citizenship and Immigration, who, when pressed for what new measures would be taken to address the situation of Syrian refugees, only made continued reference to programs already in place (Chase, Fast-tracking measures all from the past, 2015). The Globe and Mail was not short in its denunciation of bureaucratic “red tape” blamed for the backlog of refugee applications in writing, “a fast-spreading movement of local and provincial

governments, community groups and individuals trying to raise money to sponsor Syrian refugees to come to Canada is up against what appears to be largely a business-as-usual federal system” (Fine, Red tape prevents Ottawa from keeping up with the public's desire to help, 2015a). It would appear, according to The Globe and Mail, that there is strong support in all other levels of government and from the citizens of this country and that there is a consensus which supports providing aid and assistance and settlement for asylum seekers fleeing Syria. Despite this overwhelming support, the Conservative federal government, led by Stephen Harper continued its mandate of security over humanitarianism. The Globe and Mail continued its criticism of the bureaucratic failures of the federal government, reporting that as of September 5, 2015, only 2347 Syrian refugees had been settled of the pledged 11,300 yearly total, offering, “...the current process has so many bureaucratic stumbling blocks that refugee advocates doubt the target will be reached” (Fine, When Canada was a leader, 2015b). Perhaps this publication’s greatest criticism of the Harper government came in an article by Amira Elghawaby and Bernie Farber, *Forget labels when we witness such dire human need*, condemning the policy of giving priority settlement to religious minority asylum seekers fleeing Syria while ignoring the majority of those who are of Muslim faith (Elghawaby & Farber, 2015). The authors criticize the federal government, stating this “anti-Muslim rhetoric falls dangerously close to what Canadians heard in prewar times” (Elghawaby & Farber, 2015). Changes to immigration policy in 2012, effectively creating a two-tier system which offers priority to certain groups deemed preferential by the federal government are put forth in this article as the impetus for this “anti-Muslim” practice (Elghawaby & Farber, 2015). Further, the authors include criticism of the Harper Conservatives by the United Nations, who “reportedly balked at Canada’s request to select refugees based on religious background” (Elghawaby & Farber, 2015).

Based on the analysis of the randomly selected articles posted in The Globe and Mail between August 3 and October 22, during the 2015 Canadian federal election, it is clear that this publication began to shift its reporting on Syrian refugees to portray these individuals in a more positive light than in the period leading up to the campaign. As suggested by Roe, through creating a discourse which highlights a situation as a humanitarian issue as opposed to a security threat, this shift represents a significant and optimistic step towards the possibility of future desecuritization of refugee issues. Additionally, through promoting responses that seek to alleviate the situation through means other than as a response to a perceived risk, such as increased settlement of Syrian asylum seekers, The Globe's reporting acts to further desecuritize this issue. Unlike the pre-election articles analyzed in the Globe and Mail, those published during the 2015 campaign for federal election in Canada were highly critical of the current Conservative government led by Prime Minister Stephen Harper. This can largely be attributed to the tragic drowning death of Syrian Alan Kurdi in Turkey, which galvanized public support for those seeking asylum and laid to rest, for a significant portion of the population, fears of national security issues, instead favouring solutions which offered support and aid to those in need.

The Globe and Mail Post-Election Analysis

Following the election of a majority Liberal federal government led by Justin Trudeau the issue of Syrian refugees gained even more prominence in media coverage within The Globe and Mail. Prime Minister Trudeau ran an election campaign that placed great emphasis on a drastic increase of Syrian refugees to be settled in Canada following his election, with a target of 25,000 individuals by the year's end. Analysis of a random sample of articles pertaining to Syrian refugees and Canada following the election on October 22, 2015 to the writing of this paper on July 3, 2016, found that The Globe and Mail continued to report on this issue favourably. 29 of

the 35 articles examined, or approximately 83 percent, were found to present a positive image of Syrian refugees and the issues they face.

However, there was not a consensus on the positive reporting on Syrian refugees and refugee issues. Six of the 35 articles analyzed during the post-election period found that concerns over security issues surrounding the settlement of Syrian refugees in Canada were raised. This is largely attributed to the November 13, 2015 terrorist attacks in Paris where 130 individuals were killed by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). Although there was no direct link between the terrorists who orchestrated the attack and Syrian refugees, The Globe and Mail's reporting raised the issue of potential security risks from settling so many refugees in Canada in so little time. Lysiane Gagnon's November 25, 2016 article, *Paris terror attacks strain Quebec's pacifist tradition*, notes that "Canada's effort in relocating Syrian refugees is quite honorable, compared with many other developed countries", yet public opinion in Quebec is less welcoming (Gagnon, 2015). Gagnon reports that a public opinion poll of Quebec residents found that 60 percent of respondents were "against the idea of receiving so many refugees" (Gagnon, 2015). The reasoning behind these opinions were threefold: worry over the ability for health and school services to be able to adapt to the greater strain of a population increase of refugees, distrust in immigration of Muslim individuals, and a fear of terrorism as a result of settling Syrian refugees (Gagnon, 2015). The Paris attacks, only days before this article was published, are certainly responsible for the fear over perceived risk associated with the settling of 25,000 Syrian refugees over such a relatively short period of time and the resurgence of security-based discourse. Additionally, this poll found that 64 percent of respondents believed that the Canadian government should increase or at least maintain airstrikes against Islamic State targets. The Globe and Mail reported that Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's Liberal government "altered its

plans to resettle 25,000 Syrian refugees to accommodate the changed perceptions about risk after the terrorist attacks in Paris” (Chase, Clark, Leblanc, & MacKinnon, 2015). Trudeau, on his meeting with British Prime Minister David Cameron, stated the two would discuss “very real security concerns that we’re all faced with around the world and at home” (Chase, Clark, Leblanc, & MacKinnon, 2015). The discourse offered by the federal government and published in *The Globe and Mail* is troubling, as it represents how quickly there can be a return to the securitization of refugees and refugee issues following an unrelated terror attack.

The Globe and Mail addressed fears south of the border in the United States as some politicians there were voicing concern over perceived lack of security measures and threats refugees posed to their sovereignty. The article, *Refugees no danger, U.S. told*, reported by Michelle Zilio on February 3, 2016, states that US border agents working for the National Border Patrol Council (NBPC) were concerned that refugees, once granted status in Canada, will cross into the United States (Zilio, *Refugees no danger, U.S. told*, 2016c). Canadian Liberal cabinet members, however, were quick to dispel these fears, offering that the background checks were fully completed “to the highest Canadian standards” (Zilio, *Refugees no danger, U.S. told*, 2016c). In response to the fears expressed by the US government, director of the Canadian Council for Refugees, Janet Dench, dismissed their worries as “ludicrous” and “scaremongering” (Zilio, *Refugees no danger, U.S. told*, 2016c). As the deadline loomed towards the end of 2015 to settle 25,000 Syrian refugees in Canada, the Liberal federal government pushed back their end date by two months to meet their goal by February 2016. Michelle Zilio, reporting on the federal Liberals meeting this goal, stated that “no Syrian refugees were turned away for security reasons after arriving in Canada” (Zilio, *Liberals' Revised Goal Met As 25,000th Syrian Refugee Arrives In Canada*, 2016b). Furthermore, language in the article overwhelmingly illustrates the

publication's support for the plan to settle these individuals when describing statistics on the resettlement efforts: "90 communities have welcomed or are expecting Syrian refugees" (Zilio, Liberals' Revised Goal Met As 25,000th Syrian Refugee Arrives In Canada, 2016b). The continued favourable reporting, dispelling security fears surrounding the settlement of Syrian refugees, indicates that The Globe and Mail remains a media outlet contributing to the possible future desecuritization of refugees and refugee issues.

The perception of The Globe and Mail attitude towards the federal government changed dramatically following the defeat of Stephen Harper's Conservatives by Justin Trudeau's Liberal party. 28 out of 35, or 80 percent, of articles analyzed found The Globe and Mail to be supportive of the new government's policies and practices towards the settlement of Syrian refugees. In a move that illustrates the new federal government's attitude towards refugees following his election, Prime Minister Trudeau made the important rebranding of the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration to its new name, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. The Globe and Mail, on March 9, 2016, offered a statement by John McCallum, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada on the recent immigration plan revealed by the federal government that there will be "a significant shift in immigration policy towards reuniting more families, building our economy and upholding Canada's humanitarian tradition to resettle refugees and to offer protection to those in need" (Zilio, Canada is making room for more immigrants in 2016, 2016a). Michael Bell, for The Globe and Mail, wrote, on May 18, 2016, in his article, *Canada's new strategy pays off*, "the determination of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Foreign Minister Stéphane Dion to restore Canada as a world player with a real voice at the international table deserves commendation" (Bell, 2016).

This publication, however, was critical of the cost associated with the settlement of 25,000 Syrian refugees, namely the price of air travel. Campbell Clark reported, on February 26, 2016 that the federal government had spent a total of \$32-million on flights between Jordan and two sites in Canada; Montreal and Toronto (Clark, 2016). This figure works out to be approximately \$1,436 per person, an amount higher than that of comparable public flights between these two countries according to Clark (Clark, 2016). However, a representative from a charter aviation company, when questioned on the rate the government was being charged stated: “I don’t think this price is out of whack” (Clark, 2016). Changes to policy under Trudeau mean that the Syrian refugees being settled will not be required to repay the government for the cost associated with their transfer into Canada, a requirement imposed on previous refugees (Clark, 2016). The focus on the relative high amount of money seems a departure from the trend of The Globe and Mail to be supportive of the new Liberal federal government’s policy and practice of settling Syrian refugees in Canada. Rouba Al-fattal, reporting for The Globe and Mail is highly critical in her article, *Europe may be failing Syrians, but Canada shouldn’t boast yet*, arguing Canada should not be overly proud of meeting its somewhat arbitrary deadline of settling 25,000 Syrian refugees by the end of February when there are still four million Syrians seeking asylum and over 7.5 million displaced within Syria (Al-fattal, 2016). Al-fattal continues her criticism of the lack of support the Syrian refugees are receiving, writing;

“More than 1,000 of the newcomers are living in temporary housing. And we still have a shortage of family doctors, a lack of proper dental care for low-income adults and a lack of subsidized daycare spaces for parents who want to learn English. University-age refugees, or those who already have foreign degrees, can’t afford our postsecondary system, sending many to low-income jobs instead. What future do refugees have without proper language training, Canadian education or Canadian work experience?” (Al-fattal, 2016)

The issues raised in this article are legitimate, but can hardly be limited solely to the current federal government in Canada. This, however, does not take away from the importance to address these issues if we as a country are to successfully settle the tens of thousands of Syrian refugees. This critical discourse, however, contributes to the desecuritization of the Syrian refugees, as it is calling for greater action to be taken in the settlement of these asylum seekers. Conversely, the criticisms against Prime Minister Trudeau's government are overwhelmingly outweighed by the support it has received from The Globe and Mail prior to the 2015 federal election in October.

National Post Pre-Election Analysis

The coverage of Syrian refugee issues in the National Post in the period before the 2105 Canadian federal election was even more limited than that of The Globe and Mail. A search of this publication's archives from January 1, 2015 to the start of the election campaign on August 3, 2015 revealed that there were a mere nineteen articles published which addressed Syrian refugees with reference to Canada.

Analysis of three randomly selected articles during this period found that coverage of this issue was exclusively negative. The article, *Slamming the door on refugees? Hardly*, published May 28, 2015, reads "Canada remains remarkably welcoming to refugee claimants" (National Post, 2015b). The qualifier "remarkably" presents the message that it is a surprise that this country is open to granting asylum to those in need of protection whereas it would be more understandable to meet these individuals with hostility and fortify its borders against refugee claimants (National Post, 2015b). Further, this article puts forth the argument that "dubious" asylum seekers are deterred by the relative quick process time of Canada's refugee determination system. As previously indicated, individuals are granted refugee status on a very specific set of

criteria, and confusing those individuals who fail to successfully prove their persecution and fear with individuals trying to cheat the welfare system of Canada is indicative of a discourse which results in the securitization of immigration and refugees. As Pratt has offered, protection of the refugee is second to determining validity of claim and protection of the welfare system (Pratt, 2005, p. 2). On June 20, 2015, the National Post published an article, *The rising tide of refugees*, which notes that “the fact there are so many crises happening at once means developed countries are seeing a sharp rise in the number of asylum claimants and illegal entries” (Edminston, 2015). The discourse of the asylum seekers as utilizing “illegal entries”, as Helleiner argues, conflates the individual and the act resulting in perception and stigmatization of the claimant as a criminal.

Similar to the negative portrayal of Syrian refugees in the National Post, there was a consensus among the articles analyzed of overwhelming support for the Harper Conservative federal government. While the May 28 article did concede that the change in policy to cut health care access to asylum seekers was “pointless and mean-spirited”, the article concluded that “the Tories have done a pretty reasonable job” (National Post, 2015b). The policy change garnering the most praise, in this article, is the speed with which cases are processed under this federal government; down from “years” to four months (National Post, 2015b). Further, it is reported that successful claims are up from 47 percent to 62 percent under the new expedited system (National Post, 2015b). The article offers no criticism while glossing over the abhorrent Tories’ visa policy implementation that impeded the travel of asylum seekers from countries with high application rates: “the only reason Mexicans, Czechs and Hungarians (among others) have at times in recent years required tourist visas is because huge number of their compatriots were claiming asylum in Canada” (National Post, 2015b). Rather than offer humanitarian aid and assistance, the Harper Conservatives effectively closed the gates of Canada to those in need. As

author Adelman illustrates, the Harper Tories have knowingly utilized visa requirements as a means for restricting the number asylum claimants reaching Canada. Further support of the federal government was reported in an interview with Diane Goodman, European deputy director of the UNHCR offered that, “Canada can continue to reaffirm its global importance in refugee management and protection” (National Post, 2015d). Goodman, however, stopped just short of criticizing the Tories plan to resettle 10,000 Syrians over a three-year period, offering, “the country [Canada] has the capacity, the resources, the communities, the network at the grassroots level, and the people to come together to provide sponsorships. Canada has a very good potential to be able to expand the program” (National Post, 2015d). The sentiment “Canada can do more” is a positive one and one that works towards the desecuritization of refugees through the discourse of the issues as in need of a humanitarian response and with no mention of unfounded security threats.

The National Post’s coverage, or lack thereof, of Syrian refugees during the 2015 pre-election period in Canada is shocking to say the least. Despite millions being displaced due to civil war, this publication essentially dismissed this as an issue about which Canada and its citizens need not worry. Further, the articles analyzed illustrate the overt support of the federal government under Stephen Harper, specifically the satisfaction with the Tories’ visa policy, which dissuaded asylum seekers from seeking refuge across the Atlantic.

National Post Election Analysis

As the campaign for federal election began in August 2015, there was a marked shift in both the frequency and manner of reporting on Syrian refugees within the National Post.

Analysis of articles published during the period leading up to the campaign saw a consensus of journalistic opinions portraying these individuals in a negative light; during the campaign,

however, this publisher reported more positively on this issue. During the campaign period, from August 3, 2015 to October 22, 2015, fourteen of the 21, or 66.6 percent, of the randomly selected articles were positive towards the Syrian refugees, while seven of the 21, or 33.3 percent, reported on this issue negatively. In the days following the drowning death of the three-year-old Syrian, Alan Kurdi, in Turkey, the articles analysed published by the National Post were wholly positive. On September 4, 2015, just two days after this event, on the topic of the number of Syrian refugees settled into Canada, the National Post reported “we can and should do more” (National Post, 2015c). This is a markedly different stance on the issue from the pre-election period, which found the Harper government to be doing “a pretty reasonable job”. The National Post reported that an increasing number of Canadians were stepping up to offer assistance and sponsorship of Syrian refugees, while the Quebec government was stating it would increase the number of asylum seekers settled into its province by three times (Boseveld, 2015). Ian Macleod’s article, *Don’t overstate refugee terror risk, experts say*, reports that, “the current humanitarian need outweighs possible risks” (Macleod, 2015). Reporting on this issue as “humanitarian” is a significant step towards the possibility of future desecuritization of refugees and refugee issues, as Roe suggests this is achieved through returning the issues from “emergency” politics and back into the “normal” political sphere.

This sentiment, however, was not long lived in the National Post, as this tragic event faded from the collective consciousness, this publisher became more balanced between positive and negative reporting on the Syrian refugees. It was reported that, if re-elected, Harper “would bring in more refugees and expedite the process, while ensuring adequate screening measures remained in place to make sure Canadians are protected from potential terrorists” (Iverson, 2015). Conflating refugees with potential terrorists, despite any evidence to support that risk, is

devastating to the settlement process of these individuals and harbours an inherent fear of the other among the citizens and residents of Canada. Such statements and discourse in the media have so much power and influence and play a vital role in the securitization of refugees, as Salter and Piché argue, threat naming is the primary method through which media discourse contributes to the securitization of an issue (Salter & Piché, 2011, p. 938).

Lee Berthiaume writes in his article, *More Syrian asylum seekers allowed to stay; Already in Canada; Coming as tourists, foreign workers*, published September 22, 2015, “it is, in fact, nearly impossible for Syrians to reach Canada by legitimate means” (Berthiaume, *More Syrian asylum seekers allowed to stay; Already in Canada; Coming as tourists, foreign workers*, 2015a). The article also states “the number of Syrians permitted to stay in Canada as refugees after coming here as tourists, students or temporary foreign workers has skyrocketed in recent years” (Berthiaume, *More Syrian asylum seekers allowed to stay; Already in Canada; Coming as tourists, foreign workers*, 2015a). Berthiaume is suggesting that Syrians are coming to this country under false pretenses to somehow cheat the welfare system of this country and be granted refuge. What this premise fails to recognise is the systematic and meticulous process for being granted refugee status. Claims are not merely granted upon application; the individual is required to provide extensive evidence to support their fear or the threats they face in their home country.

Similar to the reporting on Syrian refugees, there was a marked change in the support of the Harper government during election period of the 2015 Canadian federal election. Of the 21 articles analyzed, nine, or 42.9 percent, were supportive of the Tories, while the remaining twelve, or 57.1 percent, were critical of the current federal government. Again, similar to the portrayal of Syrian refugees, the death of Alan Kurdi was apparently highly influential on the

reporting from the National Post, as in the days following this event the publisher was highly critical of the Harper Tories. The National Post was critical of the small number of Syrian refugees settled in Canada, writing that the Tories have “been slow to act” (National Post, 2015c). In reference to the image of the lifeless Alan Kurdi on the beach in Turkey, Mr. Harper offered:

[T]here is no refugee-based solution to that problem... we can admit thousands, tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands of refugees and we are still going to see those kinds of images. So we’ve got to be doing a lot more than that. (Tandt, 2015)

In response to this statement, National Post reporter Michael Den Tandt offered, “In sticking rather grimly to the mantra that 10,000 additional refugees over three years is enough, regardless of the shift in sentiment this past week, Harper has declined an opportunity to lead” (Tandt, 2015). Whether “the opportunity to lead” in this sense was in relation to Harper’s role as Prime Minister or his position in the campaign, it is a strong denunciation of the individual and his policies to attack his lack of leadership. The National Post was also critical of the cuts to refugees’ access to health care, calling for the federal government to “discontinue its appeal of the Federal Court’s ruling and fully reverse the cuts to the refugee health care program in Canada” (Chen, 2015).

Support for the Harper Tories returned, as the images of Alan Kurdi faded from the media. The National Post was not wholly supportive of the Conservative government; however, their reporting was fairly balanced between support and criticism. The National Post reporting on a public opinion poll offered, “more Canadians trust Prime Minister Stephen Harper to sensibly handle the ‘Syrian refugee situation’...” (Galvin, 2015). Father Raymond J. De Souza, in response to Calgary Mayor, Naheed Nenshi’s criticism of Harper’s “dog-whistle politics”, leaps to the defence of the Prime Minister, offering;

[I]f Nenshi were to ask the Ismaili community what they think about bringing in large numbers of people from the refugee camps in Syria, dominated as they are by Sunni Arabs not untouched by jihadist pressures, it is not implausible that they would raise concerns about radicalization. (Souza F. R., 2015)

Supportive of the low number of Syrians the Harper Tories pledged to settle, National Post reporter Jonathan Kay offered, “Canada remains a tolerant country precisely because we have done such an excellent job of integrating newcomers. If we accept more than our society can assimilate, a backlash inevitably will ensue” (Kay, 2015). This is a dangerous fallacy: belief that the refugees are bringing with them the conflict they are fleeing. These individuals are victims, not agents, of persecution and war. To confuse the two puts the lives of tens of thousands, if not millions, at jeopardy based on the false assumption that their supposed intolerance will infect the moral fabric of Canada and descend the country into chaos.

There was a distinct shift in the articles analyzed during the campaign period of the 2015 Canadian federal election. This change, unfortunately, can largely be attributed to the drowning death of Alan Kurdi in early September 2015. While this effect was short lived, it did result in a more balanced reporting on the issue of Syrian refugees from wholly negative towards these individuals and supportive of the Harper Tories to a significant portion of articles portraying these individuals positively while criticising a number of policies put in place by the Conservative federal government.

National Post Post-Election Analysis

Following the election of Justin Trudeau as Prime Minister of Canada, the reporting on Syrian refugees was more-or-less balanced in the National Post with thirteen out of a total 22 article analyzed, or 59.1 percent, reporting on the issue in a positive manner. In the days following the election, the National Post, in an interview with private sponsorship agency Lifeline Syria, concluded that “security concerns have also been raised, given the presence of a

nihilistic terror cult on the Syrian battlefield, but those concerns are overblown...” (Brean, 2015). Although the issue of Syrian refugees is raised in connection to terrorism or a terrorist organization, the publisher is quick to dispel any fears the general public may have by explicitly stating there is no need for alarm. Further, the article offers that continued support post-settlement is what is most important for ensuring success, as “the worst thing host countries could do... would be to invite hundreds of thousands of refugees in a fit of sympathy and then lose interest or become hostile, starving them of support and vilifying them politically...” (Brean, 2015). This sentiment represents a significant departure from the discourse published during the election campaign by this organization, which posited that Canada’s tolerant society was at risk by accepting more than can be assimilated. A significant shift in discourse can be seen in the National Post’s reference to the situation of asylum seekers fleeing Syria not as a “refugee crisis”, but as a “humanitarian crisis” (Leuprecht & Speer, 2015). While this difference may appear insignificant, the distinction is important in the desecuritization of refugees. The discourse and reference to this event as a “refugee crisis” imparts on the public fear that those seeking asylum, once settled, will bring with them the instability they fled from in their home country. Reference to the issue, however, as a crisis of humanity places the emphasis on the response required to provide aid and assistance to those in need and reinforces, importantly, that these individuals are victims, not agents, of violence and persecution.

It is unsurprising that the November 2015 attacks in Paris had a negative impact on the reporting on Syrian refugees by the National Post. Analysis shows that nine out of the 22 articles examined during this period portrayed these individuals in a negative light. Despite any link between Syrian refugees and the attack within the French capital, the National Post praised Prime Minister Trudeau for his plan to slow the settlement rate of the Syrians to ensure the

process is “done right” (Fekete, 2015). Additionally, the article offers a quotation from the Liberal leader;

We realized that the most important thing is to be able to reassure Canadians that absolutely everything is being done to keep Canadians safe, and therefore ensure that these refugees are welcomed as new Canadians and not a cause for anxiety or division within the population. Getting this done right has always been what we are focused on. (Fekete, 2015)

This sentiment, expressed by Trudeau seeks only to securitize the Syrian refugees by drawing links between this marginalized group and anxiety and fear among the population of possible threats to national security. This is evidence that while there is a greater discourse which is working towards possible future desecuritization of refugees, this issue is still currently highly connected with issues of security. The National Post’s reporting on fears surrounding the settlement of the Syrian refugees is not simply limited to issues surrounding physical threats, but also the costs associated with the process and drains on social systems, namely healthcare. Tom Blackwell’s article intimidatingly entitled, *Refugees bring health nightmares; Stress, depression*, published November 30, 2015, writes, “the ordeal that led them here has taken a hefty toll on their health, a fact that Canadian medical providers will soon have to confront” (Blackwell, 2015). This scare tactic discourse instills in the reader the fear that these individuals, fleeing their homeland in Syria, seek to exploit our welfare system through inundating Canada’s beloved national health care system. On the topic of settling Christian refugees over those of Muslim faith, the National Post published an article which reads;

[I]t is simply obtuse to hold that a young Sunni Muslim man from Syria who was formerly waging jihad against Syrian President Bashar al-Assad is the same security risk as a Chaldean Christian family driven out of Mosul, Iraq. The latter do not produce terrorists; the former, in rare but real cases, do. It would seem entirely reasonable for Canadian security officials, charged by the government with vetting 5,000 refugees a week before Dec. 31, to take that into account. Everyone knows that it’s not possible to vet so many so quickly without applying some general profiling rules. If those rules favour Christians for security reasons, it is perfectly legitimate (Souza R. J., 2015)

It is worth noting that this article is attributed to Raymond J De Souza, and not, as he has in other articles which credit “*Father*” Raymond J De Souza. This editorial is plain and simply Islamophobic. Prioritizing one segment of society over another for sake of ease under the guise of security places this marginalized group at serious risk. This discourse is powerful and destructive and to publish it in a national publication is extremely troubling.

In analyzing the National Post’s reporting on Liberal Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, there exists a clear dichotomy between support during the time directly following the election which wanes toward criticism towards the end of November 2015. Further examination shows that this publisher wrote favourably of Canada’s new leader in nine of 22 articles, or 40.9 percent. The national Post praised Mr. Trudeau’s “sensible compromise” to delay the settlement of 23,000 Syrian refugees from the end of December 2015 to February 2016 (Kheiriddin, 2015). The article further compliments Canada’s Prime Minister while simultaneously criticising Ontario’s Liberal leader, writing, “Trudeau didn’t label his critics racist, Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne did” (Kheiriddin, 2015). Author Tasha Kheiriddin concedes the policy to give settlement priority to families, women, and those within the LGBT community is a “reasonable” plan which “protect those most in need of refuge” (Kheiriddin, 2015). The article concludes simply that “Trudeau deserves credit” (Kheiriddin, 2015).

By December 2015, support for Justin Trudeau had waned from the National Post. Lee Berthiaume criticized Canada’s Liberal leader for his government’s policy of requiring refugees to repay the costs associated with their settlement, a move the author calls “unconscionable” (Berthiaume, Pay refugee travel costs, Ottawa urged; new report; Debt load an obstacle to rebuilding lives, 2015b). While this criticism is just, to place the blame solely on the newly elected Prime Minister is hardly fair, as the Liberals had only been in power for weeks, and

changes to policy do take time to theorize and implement. Further, the Liberal government announced in January 2016 that they would waive the travel fees associated with settling the Syrian refugees. The significance of the timing of the National Post's criticism against Trudeau is largely due to the leader's change in policy, which delayed the self-imposed deadline of settling 25,000 Syrian refugees from the end of December 2015 to February 2016. Further, author Matthew Fisher took exception to the praise the Prime Minister and his federal government had received, especially when compared to the number of asylum seekers settled in Europe. The author writes, "but the orgy of congratulatory backslapping that has gripped the country for several months is way over the top. A little perspective is urgently required" (Fisher, 2015). Author Chris Selley somehow manages to take opposing stances on these criticisms while simultaneously disapproving of Trudeau's policies and practices. Selley, following the announcement of the Liberal plan to forgive travel costs of the Syrian refugees, argues "there is nothing morally wrong with asking asylum seekers to pay what they can". The author then denounced the plan to settle 25,000 by the end of February 2016 as "the Liberals' insane deadline" (Selley, 2016). It would appear, given the criticisms outlined in these articles that the Liberals are "damned if they do or damned if they don't" with regards to the National Post reporting on their policies and practices surrounding the Syrian refugees.

It is evident that world events such as the drowning death of Alan Kurdi and the attacks experienced in Paris, France had a significant impact on the reporting of issues related to Syrian refugees in Canada. Further, the 2015 Federal election, and the Liberal defeat of the Conservative government saw a more positive reporting on this topic within two of Canada's largest national newspapers. The ideological positions of The Globe and Mail and National Post did appear to predispose some opinion when reporting on the Syrian refugees with The Globe

and Mail highly critical of the Harper Tories and supportive of the Trudeau Liberal government; whereas the National Post was supportive of the pre-election Harper government, but support waned during the election and the publication was fairly critical of the incoming Liberals.

Discussion

This work sought to examine, through applying a critical media discourse analysis, the degree to which two national newspaper publications; The Globe and Mail and the National Post, furthered the securitization of refugees or contributed to a climate hospitable to the future desecuritization of this issue. The content was examined with regard to their reporting on issues related to the settlement of Syrian refugees in Canada as well as the reporting on policies or practices of the current federal government at the time of the last election. The 2015 Canadian federal election provided a prime opportunity to explore the various reporting through three distinct periods: pre-election, election campaign, and post-election. This was a momentous election in Canada's history, as it was the longest ever recorded for the country and resulted in a significant change in leadership from a longstanding Conservative government led by Stephen Harper to a majority Liberal government helmed by Justin Trudeau. The great number of Syrian refugees, displaced by civil war in their home country became a major campaign issue largely as a result of the broadcast of the tragic drowning death of young Syrian Alan Kurdi. The findings, in analyzing the reporting in The Globe and Mail, illustrate that in the period prior to the campaign this publication was fairly split between positive and negative reporting on the Syrian refugees. During the campaign, however, and after the death of Alan Kurdi, the articles were wholly positive when reporting on these issues. The post-election reporting on this issue, in The Globe and Mail, was mostly supportive, with some security concerns being raised as a result of the Paris attacks in November 2015. Reporting on the federal government and its policies and practices, The Globe and Mail, a historically Centrist publication, was supportive of the Harper Tories in the pre-election period, highly critical of this government during the election, and very supportive of the new majority Liberal government led by Mr. Trudeau. The findings of the

content analysis of this publication suggest that The Globe and Mail is contributing to the possible future desecuritization of migration, specifically refugees, through reporting on the humanitarian side of the issue rather than focusing on issues related to security. While there remain some articles, specifically in the wake of global terror attacks, which reference the need to have in place security screening measures, these articles remain rare and fairly isolated.

The pre-election reporting on Syrian refugees within the National Post was nearly non-existent and those articles analyzed were found to be wholly supportive of the Harper Tories and portrayed the issues related to the settlement of these asylum seekers negatively with strong references to security concerns. The election-campaign reporting was apparently influenced by the drowning of Alan Kurdi, with the articles around this time being critical of the federal government and describing the Syrian refugees with reference to humanitarian need, and not security; however, this was short-lived, as within a week, reporting was mixed. While there was more diversity within the reporting on both the refugees and the federal government, there still existed a significant portion of articles actively contributing to the securitization of refugees through falsely equating the settlement of these asylum seekers with threats to national security. The post-election reporting on Syrian refugee settlement in Canada again was fairly evenly split between positive and negative. The writing on the federal government and its policies was also quite even, yet opinion seems to have been divided and influenced significantly as the self-imposed deadline to settle 25,000 Syrian refugees by the end of 2015 (later delayed to the end of February 2016) neared. The articles analyzed indicate that the National Post was highly supportive of the country's new Liberal government and its policies until the end of November 2015 with nine out of eleven, or 81.9 percent, of those published up to this date praising the leadership. However, the National Post, a historically right-wing publication, reporting from

December on was wholly critical of the Trudeau government. The findings of the critical discourse analysis of the articles published in the National Post on the topic of federal governance and Syrian refugees, while divided, contain significant references to security in relation to the settlement of these asylum seekers. The humanitarian response to the tragic drowning death of the young Syrian boy in Turkey influenced the discourse surrounding the settlement of the refugees for a short period in this publication, but ultimately was forgotten in favour of messages of unfounded fear and security threats.

The critical analysis of the articles in The Globe and Mail indicate that this publication is creating a discourse which may allow for the future desecuritization of refugees through the reporting on the humanitarian responses required to address this issues and, more often than not, failing to link the settlement of these individuals with threats to Canada's national security. The National Post, however, makes less contribution to the possible future desecuritization of refugees, with a significant number of articles raising fears of inadequate security screening and possible terrorist influences within the refugee camps abroad. Both publications were influenced by the tragic death of young Alan Kurdi, but the effect was short lived in the articles published by the National Post. The Paris attacks in November 2015 were hugely influential in the reporting from this publication, and indicate that any future attacks will result in calls for greater security screening of refugees in this newspaper, despite any evidence to support this link. These attacks, and their subsequent reporting are contributing heavily to the further securitization of refugees, undoing any progress made by The Globe and Mail.

Conclusion

The policies and discourse that existed under the Harper Tories fomented the conditions which increased the securitization of immigration within Canada. During the election, the masses of refugees fleeing Syria became a significant campaign issue. Through critical analysis of the discourse presented in the National Post and The Globe and Mail, it was found that during the 2015 Canadian federal election there was a tonal shift in the reporting on this issue; leading to Syrian refugees being framed in a more positive light. This is largely attributed to the tragic drowning death of young Syrian, Alan Kurdi. While the surge in positive reporting on refugee issues found during the election has somewhat diminished, there is evidence that illustrates that the portrayal of this issue within the Canadian media remains more positive than it was in the pre-election period. The current political climate in Canada has the potential to effectively create a discourse, through support from the media, which may contribute to the desecuritization of issues related to immigration, particularly with regard to Syrian refugees.

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