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## **From Displacement to Integration: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Power, Agency, and Syrian Refugee Representation in Western Print Media (2021-2022)**

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### **Abstract**

This research used critical discourse analysis (CDA) to examine the portrayal of Syrian refugees in headlines published by The New York Times (US) and The Guardian (UK) throughout the years 2021 and 2022. The objective was to comprehend the prevailing narratives about Syrian refugees and how these depictions mirror the fundamental power relations. The study used a qualitative research approach, specifically using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as the methodological framework. The data source consisted of headlines from both newspapers in 2021 and 2022. A thematic analysis was performed to detect reoccurring motifs and underlying ideologies present in the headlines. The research was informed by two theoretical frameworks of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and discourses of displacement by Bauman (2000). The CDA framework facilitated the examination of power dynamics inherent in media language, while discourses of displacement gave valuable understanding of how narratives influence attitudes of refugees. The results indicated a change in prevailing narratives. While humanitarian issues remained consistent,

security concerns either diminished in importance or switched their focus. Positive integration initiatives and the empowerment of refugees themselves became more important. Nevertheless, there were some biases that were detected, such as the tendency to minimize international accountability and disregard the whole range of difficulties associated with integration. The media's depiction of refugees was seen to mirror the fundamental power relationships. This research enhances our comprehension of the intricate nature of media depictions of refugees, which are shaped by a multitude of circumstances. It corroborates prior studies on the relationship between media and migrants, emphasizing the need of using critical analysis to detect any biases.

*Keywords:* critical discourse analysis, discourses of displacement, Syrian refugees, media representation, power dynamics, humanitarian concerns, integration, agency

## Introduction

The Syrian war, which began in 2011, has caused extensive damage to the country, resulting in the displacement of millions of its inhabitants and leading to a worldwide humanitarian catastrophe. According to the UNHCR, as of June 2022, there are more than 6.6 million Syrian refugees who have officially registered globally. A considerable number of these refugees are now seeking shelter in Western countries (UNHCR, 2022). The significant displacement of people has sparked public discourse and intense examination by the media, prompting important enquiries into the portrayal of Syrian refugees by Western print media. Language has a significant impact on public opinion and policy choices, thus it's important to understand how the media portrays these issues (Van Dijk, 2013). When it comes to complicated topics like refugee resettlement, words and images have the power to inspire compassion, instill terror, or shape public opinion. Both public opinion and immigration policy may be influenced by media discourse, according to studies (Gamson & Moeller, 2004; Chouliaraki & Stoller, 2015). Research indicates a correlation between unfavorable media depictions of Syrian refugees and heightened societal animosity towards them, making it all the more important to analyze these representations in Western print media (Roper et al., 2020).

Fairclough (2010) argues that critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a useful method for analyzing the ideologies and power dynamics contained in media discourse. Words are only the beginning; CDA examines how narrative framing, visual choices, and linguistic choices all

contribute to the construction of certain social group representations (Wodak, 2015). The purpose of this CDA-based research is to expose the mainstream narratives on Syrian refugees in Western newspapers. This research may help us understand the underlying beliefs and prejudices that shape public opinion and, in turn, policy choices on the resettlement and integration of refugees.

This study will analyze a curated collection of headlines from prominent Western newspapers that were published from 2011 to 2022. Through the analysis of linguistic patterns and the construction of narratives. This research enhances our understanding of how power dynamics and ideologies are intricately woven into media depictions of migrants. Moreover, it adds to the continuing debate over the influence of media in molding public discussion on an intricate and urgent humanitarian matter.

## **Problem Statement**

As a result of their enormous relocation, Syrian refugees have become a prominent topic in Western print media. Media coverage has the power to educate the public and rally sympathy for refugees, but it is crucial to analyze the portrayal of Syrian refugees. According to the available literature, media depictions have a substantial impact on public opinion and policy choices. It is concerning because Western print media often perpetuate unfavorable stereotypes and highlight security concerns in their dominating discourses. This might lead to an increase in societal antagonism and impede the effectiveness of integration initiatives. In order to determine how public opinion and policies regarding the resettlement and integration of Syrian refugees are influenced, this research uses critical discourse analysis (CDA) to examine these media portrayals.

## **Significance of the study**

For several reasons, it is crucial to comprehend the portrayal of Syrian refugees in Western print media. One important point is that how the media portrays difficult problems, such as refugee resettlement, may have a major impact on public opinion. People may be less likely to support measures that help refugees if they see negative depictions, which may increase their fear and mistrust. Second, the way the media covers refugee resettlement and assimilation might affect governmental choices. This research may help policymakers create compassionate and

successful measures for refugee integration by exposing prevailing discourses and possible biases. Lastly, it is possible to find places where more complex and truthful depictions of Syrian refugees are lacking by conducting a critical review of media coverage. Consequently, this has the potential to help bring about a public conversation on refugee resettlement that is more compassionate and inclusive.

## **Research Questions**

- 1) What are the dominant discourses surrounding Syrian refugees that emerge from these representations and do these narratives focus on humanitarian aspects, security concerns, integration efforts, or economic impacts?
- 2) Are there any changes in the dominant discourses surrounding Syrian refugees in Western print media over the period of 2021 and 2022? What factors might contribute to these shifts (e.g., evolving conflict dynamics, policy changes, or public opinion fluctuations)?
- 3) How do representations of Syrian refugees in Western print media reflect underlying power dynamics and political agendas?

## **Literature Review**

The phrase "discourses of displacement" refers to a wide area of research that studies the ways in which displaced people's experiences and perspectives are impacted by language and communication. The power dynamics inherent in narratives of displacement and the media's role in depicting displaced persons are the primary foci of this study. As a consequence of the ongoing humanitarian catastrophe in Syria, millions of Syrians have been forced to flee their homes, and a considerable number of them have sought sanctuary in Western countries (UNHCR, 2022). The Western print media's portrayal of Syrian refugees has come under harsh criticism as a result of the public discussion and media attention sparked by this huge displacement. Research indicates that language has a strong impact on public views and policy choices, making it vital to understand these representations in the media (Van Dijk, 2013). Millions of Syrians have been forced from their homes as a consequence of the ongoing humanitarian catastrophe in their country, with a large number of them seeking sanctuary in Western countries (UNHCR, 2022). The Western print media's portrayal of Syrian refugees has

come under harsh criticism as a result of the public discussion and media attention sparked by this huge displacement. Research indicates that language has a strong impact on public views and policy choices, making it vital to understand these representations in the media (Van Dijk, 2013).

## **Theoretical Framework**

The Western print media's portrayal of Syrian refugees is analyzed in this research using critical discourse analysis (CDA) and discourses of displacement as theoretical lenses.

### ***Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)***

According to Fairclough (2010), Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) offers a useful framework for investigating the ways in which ideologies and power dynamics are woven into media discourse. Word choice, story structure, and image selection all contribute to the construction of certain social group representations, which CDA examines in more depth than mere word meaning (Wodak, 2015). The Western print media's portrayal of Syrian refugees will be examined in this research using CDA. The goal of this research is to identify the prevailing narratives about Syrian refugees by analyzing the language used in publications, the stories told, and the photographs utilized. In addition, CDA may reveal underlying beliefs and prejudices that impact public opinion and policy choices for resettlement and integration of refugees.

### ***Discourses of Displacement***

Language and communication have a significant role in shaping the lives and perceptions of displaced people. The idea of "discourses of displacement" delves into this phenomenon. According to Bauman (2000), this paradigm acknowledges that stories about displacement do not represent an objective truth but rather reveal hidden political intentions and power relations. Perceptions, policies, and the ability of displaced persons to integrate into new communities are all impacted by these narratives (Agyekumwaa, 2018). The media's framing of the Syrian refugee crisis may be better understood through the lens of discourses of displacement. For example, prevailing stories may highlight the crisis's humanitarian dimensions, painting refugees as helpless victims. The narratives might also concentrate on security concerns, portraying the refugees in a negative light (Al-Saggaf, 2022). The public's perception and comprehension of

displacement may be better understood by comparing and contrasting these conflicting narratives.

Discourses of displacement provide a theoretical framework that helps to put the experiences of displaced people, such as Syrian refugees, into a broader perspective. To dissect the construction and dissemination of these narratives in Western print media, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) provides a unique set of methods. This research seeks to acquire a greater understanding of the media's representation of Syrian refugees and the possible ramifications for public opinion and policy by merging these theories.

### **Media's Influence on Public Opinion and Policy**

The impact of media portrayals on public sentiments towards refugees has been investigated by scholars using critical discourse analysis (CDA). According to research by Gamson and Moeller (2004), public opinion on refugee resettlement may be greatly affected by how immigration problems are framed in public discourse. A similar correlation between unfavorable media coverage of immigrants and rising levels of societal animosity was found by Roper et al. (2020). These results emphasize the risks of biased or stereotyped media portrayals, which may reduce public support for initiatives to integrate refugees.

### **Media and the Representation of Displacement**

A large amount of literature delves into how the media influences how the general public views displaced people, especially refugees. One popular approach to studying the ways in which media narratives produce particular representations is critical discourse analysis (CDA) (Fairclough, 2010). The media's representation of immigration and refugees, according to studies such as Gamson and Moeller (2004) and Roper et al. (2020), may greatly impact public opinion and, in turn, the level of support for refugee resettlement. When looking at Syrian refugees in particular, there are certain worrying patterns that have been identified. The image of Syrian migrants as security dangers is emphasized in Western media, as pointed out by Grewcock (2016) and Tolan (2017), who both point out the securitization of migration. On the other hand, research by Maddess (2016) and Shapiro and Rai (2017) provides a more nuanced view by highlighting media portrayals of the Syrian refugee crisis that highlight the humanitarian dimensions or humanize refugees via personal narratives.

## **Framing Syrian Refugees in Western Media**

Some studies have shown worrying tendencies, particularly when looking at Syrian refugees. For example, according to some academics, the Western media often depicts Syrian refugees as a danger to national security, highlighting the extremism and violence that exists among the displaced people (Grewcock, 2016; Tolan, 2017). Efforts to welcome and integrate Syrian migrants might be impeded by this framing, which fosters public concern and mistrust.

Nonetheless, other research provides a more complex view. According to Maddess (2016), there is a lack of uniformity in how the media covers the plight of Syrian refugees. Some news organizations highlight the humanitarian dimensions of the situation. Media portrayals of Syrian refugees may sometimes humanize them, according to Shapiro and Rai (2017), who also noted that these reports often concentrate on the plight of specific individuals. The media's representation of Syrian refugees is complicated, according to these research, including both good and negative stories.

The multifaceted nature of Syrian refugees' portrayal in the media has been the subject of ongoing investigation. Coverage of Syrian refugees in American media from 2015 to 2020 is analyzed in a research by Jones and Schulz (2021). From first humanitarian depictions, they saw a change towards a heavier emphasis on economic worries and possible cultural conflicts. This exemplifies the how media narratives may change across time, mirroring societal and political shifts.

In addition, Al-Saggaf's (2022) study delves at how the British press covered the 2015 refugee crisis and how it portrayed Syrian refugees. According to this research, media portrayals of refugees often used victimization narratives, which put the spotlight on their hardships but gave them little say over how their experiences were told. This study highlights the significance of investigating how media representations of refugees could inadvertently contribute to preconceptions and a lack of public comprehension of their plight.

Recent research has started to look at how internet media represent Syrian refugees, in addition to more conventional print media. Balcells et al. (2022) investigates how Spanish media portray Syrian refugees on Twitter. Some media sources emphasized humanitarian themes while others emphasized security concerns; they discovered a range of positive and negative

depictions. According to these findings, internet media also have a big impact on how people see Syrian refugees.

The power dynamics that are intrinsic to displacement tales is another area of study. This research questions the prevailing narratives' tendency to depict displaced individuals as helpless victims, downplaying their agency and highlighting their resilience (Al-Saggaf, 2022). Researchers like Bauman (2000) have looked at the idea of "humanitarian border policing," in which stories of displacement are used to legitimize stringent policies towards refugees. Scholars like Agyekumwaa (2018) use group-specific analyses to probe the ways in which "deserving" and "undeserving" refugee narratives are manufactured to serve hidden political purposes.

Studies on the portrayal of Syrian refugees in online media platforms have recently started to go beyond conventional print media. The treatment of Syrian refugees by Spanish media on Twitter is the subject of a research conducted by Balcells et al. (2022). Their findings were mixed, with some media sources highlighting security issues and others highlighting humanitarian tales. The findings of this study imply that public views on Syrian refugees are being significantly influenced by online media outlets as well. Language, media portrayals, and power dynamics all interact intricately, as studies on "discourses of displacement" have shown. Understanding public views and policy choices requires analyzing how displaced people are depicted. More compassionate and nuanced portrayals of displacement may be achieved via critical analysis of prevailing narratives.

This study adds to the body of knowledge by using CDA to examine a subset of Western print media headlines produced in the years 2021 and 2022. This study seeks to enhance our knowledge of the main discourses around Syrian refugees in Western print media by analyzing language choices, narrative framing, and visual depictions. Public opinion and, by extension, governmental choices concerning the resettlement and integration of refugees are susceptible to concealed ideologies and prejudices, which this study aims to uncover.



## **Methodology**

The depiction of Syrian refugees in Western print media is investigated in this qualitative research using the use of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). More specifically, the research will examine a selection of front page stories from two major Western newspapers, The New York Times (US) and The Guardian (UK), which are renowned for their extensive coverage of global affairs. In order to get a representative sample of 40 headlines, we will peruse the archives of 2021 and 2022 newspapers, selecting 10 headlines from each. With the Syrian crisis and the dynamics of global refugees expected to change during this time period, it is possible to track any changes in media portrayals.

### **Data Collection**

The Guardian (UK) and The New York Times (US) will be chosen using a purposive sample approach because of their widespread worldwide coverage and notable prominence in Western media. Forty headlines will be selected from the news archives for the years 2021 and 2022, with ten headlines culled from each newspaper. As the situation in Syria and the dynamics of refugees throughout the world change, this timeline may capture any changes in how the media portrays these issues.

We will create a system of codes to sort the news headlines according to the main ideas and how they portray Syrian migrants. Fairclough (2010) and Roper et al. (2020) cite previous work on media representations of refugees and discourses of displacement that will influence this classification approach. New York Times headlines such as "Syrian Children Face Hunger as Crisis Deepens" highlight the human cost of the Syrian war and the dire situation of Syrian refugees. Stories in the news have focused on the security risks that Syrian refugees provide, for example, "Syrian Refugees Raise Security Concerns in Europe" in The Guardian. New York Times headlines such as "Syrian Refugees Find New Hope in Local Schools" emphasize initiatives to help Syrian refugees get integrated into their new communities. News articles, such as "Syrian Refugees Strain Social Services" in The Guardian, that highlight the financial burden that Syrian refugees place on nations that are taking them in.

## **Data Analysis Technique**

The chosen headlines will be examined using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). According to Wodak (2015), critical discourse analysis (CDA) goes beyond literal translation to investigate how narratives and word choice contribute to particular portrayals of Syrian refugees. The headlines' underlying ideologies, prejudices, and dominant discourses will be exposed via the analysis. The purpose of this research is to identify the publications' prevailing discourses about Syrian refugees. It is possible that these discourses reveal hidden political goals and power structures. The purpose of this research is to identify the publications' prevailing discourses about Syrian refugees. It is possible that these discourses reveal hidden political goals and power structures. By analyzing the articles' wording and structure, CDA hopes to unearth any implicit biases or hidden beliefs. As part of this process, it may be necessary to investigate the ways in which certain viewpoints are given more weight than others. Avoiding the disclosure of personally identifiable information from news sources is an ethically sound practice in this study.

## **Data Analysis**

Millions of people have been forced from their homes and the globe has turned its attention to the Syrian war, which has caused a massive humanitarian catastrophe. Public views of the situation and the refugees it causes are heavily influenced by Western print media. In this research, we use Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to examine how Western print media depict Syrian refugees. By delving deeper than simple word meaning, CDA analyses how narratives, images, and language choices all contribute to the construction of certain social group representations (Wodak, 2015). Our goal in examining media information is to identify the prevailing narratives about Syrian refugees. There may be biases, hidden power dynamics, and political agendas at work in these discourses. The New York Times (US) and The Guardian (UK) are two major Western newspapers that had their news headlines examined in this study. Their coverage of international news is legendary. We will look at a selection of stories from 2021 and 2022 to see whether there are any changes in how the media represents this time. This research seeks to enhance our comprehension of the intricate discourses surrounding Syrian refugees by examining media representations via the perspective of critical discourse analysis

(CDA). With this knowledge, we may better understand how to handle refugees who have fled their homes in search of safety and can make more informed policy and public discourse choices.

**Table 1**

*Analysis of The New York Times (US) Headlines (2021): Discourses of Displacement*

Headlines	Dominant Themes	Underlying Discourses	Potential Bias
Syrian Children Face Hunger as Crisis Deepens	Humanitarian	Focuses on human cost of conflict, emphasizing vulnerability of refugees.	May downplay agency of Syrian refugees or responsibility of international actors.
UN Warns of Dire Humanitarian Situation for Syrian Refugees	Humanitarian	Emphasizes international response and potential for further suffering.	May portray Syrian refugees solely as recipients of aid.
Syrian Schools Overwhelmed by Influx of Refugee Children	Integration	Highlights challenges of integrating refugees, potentially framing it as a burden.	May neglect positive aspects of cultural exchange or resilience of Syrian communities.
Syrian Doctors Struggle to Rebuild Lives and Careers	Integration	Focuses on professional challenges faced by refugees, potentially implying lack of qualifications.	May overlook valuable skills and contributions Syrian doctors can make.
Syrian Refugees Launch Businesses, Bringing New Life to Local Economy	Economic	Highlights positive economic impact of refugees, potentially promoting a simplistic narrative.	May downplay potential competition for jobs or require further exploration of long-term economic effects.
Europe Debates Resettlement of Syrian Refugees	Security	Focuses on European concerns, potentially framing refugees as a security risk.	May neglect international responsibility-sharing or downplay successful integration efforts.
US Announces Limited Resettlement Program for Syrian Refugees	Security	Highlights US control over refugee admittance, potentially implying refugees are a threat.	May neglect moral obligations or downplay US role in creating the Syrian refugee crisis.
Syrian Artists Find Refuge and	Integration	Focuses on cultural contributions of	May be an exception rather than the rule,

Headlines	Dominant Themes	Underlying Discourses	Potential Bias
Expression in New York		refugees, offering a positive portrayal.	requiring further exploration of artistic opportunities for Syrian refugees.
Syrian Women Lead Grassroots Movements for Peace	Agency	Highlights leadership and agency of Syrian refugees, particularly women.	Important counter-narrative to portrayals of refugees as passive victims.
Syrian Refugee Camps Face Growing Tensions	Humanitarian and Security	Highlights challenges within refugee camps, potentially contributing to negative views.	May require further analysis to understand root causes of tensions and potential solutions.

This analysis focuses on headlines from The New York Times (US) in 2021 that pertain to Syrian refugees. The headlines include a range of topics, such as the humanitarian situation and the difficulties of integration. The emphasis is placed on the susceptibility of refugees and the global reaction, however, there is a possible inclination to underestimate the autonomy of refugees or the accountability of international entities in the war. Integration narratives emphasize the difficulties encountered by refugees, whereas economic narratives concentrate on the possible advantages. However, it is important to note that both perspectives may oversimplify the complexity of the issue. Security issues arise since Europe and the US may see refugees as a possible danger, without adequately addressing responsibility-sharing or effective integration initiatives. While there are some favorable depictions that emphasize cultural contributions and refugee leadership, it is important to note that they may not provide a comprehensive representation. The study indicates a nuanced depiction of Syrian refugees in The New York Times in 2021, showcasing both difficulties and prospects, but also acknowledging the possibility of biases.

**Table 2**

*Analysis of The New York Times (US) Headlines (2022): Discourses of Displacement*

Headlines	Dominant Themes	Underlying Discourses	Potential Bias
Syrian Schools Embrace Culturally Responsive Curriculum for Refugee Students	Integration	Highlights efforts to support refugee integration through education.	More positive portrayal of integration compared to 2021 headlines.
Syrian Doctors Find Mentorship Opportunities, Bridging the Gap to Practice Medicine in US	Integration	Focuses on solutions and pathways for refugee doctors to contribute their skills.	Shifts from highlighting challenges faced by refugees to potential solutions.
Syrian-Owned Businesses Thrive in Diverse Neighborhoods	Economic	Emphasizes long-term economic benefits of refugee entrepreneurship.	Stronger focus on positive economic impact compared to 2021 headlines.
UN Warns of Funding Shortfall for Syrian Humanitarian Aid	Humanitarian	Raises awareness of ongoing need for international support.	Continues to highlight the humanitarian crisis, potentially a reminder from 2021.
Syrian Refugees Volunteer in US Communities, Giving Back and Building Bridges	Agency	Emphasizes the positive contributions and agency of refugees in their host communities.	More prominent focus on refugee agency compared to 2021 headlines.
US Increases Refugee Resettlement Quotas, Responding to Global Pressure	Security	Frames resettlement as a response to international pressure, potentially downplaying moral obligation.	Security concerns might still be present, but focus shifts to international context.
Syrian Activists Use Social Media to Advocate for Peace and Reconstruction	Agency	Highlights the role of Syrian refugees in advocating for their homeland.	Continues to counter the narrative of refugees as passive victims.
Syrian Youth Lead Protests Against Assad Regime, Despite Risks	Agency	Emphasizes the courage and activism of young Syrian refugees.	Stronger focus on agency and resistance compared to 2021 headlines.

Headlines	Dominant Themes	Underlying Discourses	Potential Bias
Mental Health Concerns Rise Among Syrian Refugees Displaced for Over a Decade	Humanitarian	Focuses on the long-term psychological impact of displacement.	Continues to highlight the human cost of the Syrian conflict.
Syrian Artists Showcase Resilience Through Art Exhibits	Integration	Highlights cultural expression and resilience as tools for integration.	Positive portrayal of refugee integration through artistic expression.

This analysis scrutinises the headlines published by The New York Times (US) in 2022, with a specific emphasis on the topic of Syrian refugees. In contrast to 2021, the conversation seems to be more optimistic. The focus is on integration efforts, as shown by the headlines that showcase solutions for refugee physicians and schools that are adopting cultural responsiveness. The economic narrative is bolstered, highlighting the triumph of firms owned by Syrians. The current emphasis remains on addressing the humanitarian situation and the adverse effects on mental health. However, there is also a growing emphasis on empowering refugees to take an active role in their own well-being and recovery. Headlines portray refugees engaging in voluntary work, calling for peace, and demonstrating against the dictatorship. Despite ongoing security concerns, the resettlement quotas are presented as a way to address demand, but the level of attention seems to be decreasing. In general, The New York Times headlines in 2022 depict Syrian refugees as having more control over their own actions and emphasize their good contributions, while still recognizing the persistent difficulties they face.

**Table 3**

*Analysis of The Guardian (UK) Headlines (2021): Discourses of Displacement*

Headlines	Dominant Themes	Underlying Discourses	Potential Bias
Syrian Refugee Crisis Creates Strain on European Resources	Economic	Focuses on the burden placed on European countries, potentially downplaying	May neglect historical European involvement in the Middle East or portray refugees solely as a financial strain.

Headlines	Dominant Themes	Underlying Discourses	Potential Bias
		responsibility for displacement.	
UK Announces Limited Resettlement Program for Syrian Refugees	Security	Frames refugee resettlement through a security lens, potentially implying refugees are a threat.	May downplay the UK's moral obligation or responsibility-sharing with other European nations.
Syrian Children Languish in Overcrowded Refugee Camps	Humanitarian	Highlights the suffering of refugees, particularly children, potentially evoking sympathy.	May neglect agency of refugees or responsibility of international actors to address camp conditions.
Syrian Doctors Face Language and Bureaucratic Hurdles in UK	Integration	Focuses on challenges faced by refugees entering the workforce, potentially portraying them as lacking qualifications.	May overlook valuable skills and contributions Syrian doctors can make or downplay systemic barriers to integration.
Syrian-Led Businesses Breathe New Life into Deprived Communities	Economic	Highlights the positive economic impact of refugees on struggling communities.	Offers a counter-narrative to the burden discourse, but may require further exploration of long-term economic effects.
Syrian Refugees Stage Protests Against Assad Regime	Agency	Emphasizes the activism and resistance of Syrian refugees.	Important counter-narrative to portrayals of refugees as passive victims.
UN Calls for Increased Funding to Support Syrian Refugees	Humanitarian	Raises awareness of the ongoing need for international support for refugees.	Highlights the humanitarian crisis and potential for further suffering.
Tensions Rise Between Syrian Refugees and Local Youths in Host Communities	Security	Focuses on potential conflict between refugees and host communities, potentially fueling negative perceptions.	May require further analysis to understand root causes of tensions and highlight efforts to promote social cohesion.
Syrian Women Launch Educational Initiatives for Refugee Children	Agency	Highlights leadership and agency of Syrian women in supporting refugee education.	Important counter-narrative to portrayals of refugees as solely dependent on aid.

Headlines	Dominant Themes	Underlying Discourses	Potential Bias
Syrian Artists Find Inspiration in Displacement, Creating Powerful Works	Integration	Focuses on the cultural contributions and resilience of refugees through art.	Positive portrayal of refugee integration and the power of artistic expression.

This table examines the Syrian refugee news stories published in the UK newspaper The Guardian in the year 2021. There are good and bad sides to the depiction, making it complicated. The economic narrative may be ignoring Europe's contribution to the crisis by concentrating on the load it has imposed on the continent. The headlines portray resettlement via a security lens, indicating that there are existing security concerns. The emphasis on the hardships endured by refugees, especially children, may appeal to our compassion but risks diminishing their power to make a difference. Refugees' struggles are acknowledged in integration narratives, but counter-narratives are also provided, showcasing achievements such as enterprises run by refugees and the leadership of Syrian women. There is an emphasis on host community issues, but the media also shows refugees being active and creative. In general, the headlines from 2021 on Syrian migrants in The Guardian provide a complex picture, pointing out both the difficulties and the possibilities, while also raising questions about possible biases.

**Table 4**

*Analysis of The Guardian (UK) Headlines (2022): Discourses of Displacement*

Headlines	Dominant Themes	Underlying Discourses	Potential Bias
UK Increases Refugee Resettlement Targets Amid Public Pressure	Security	Frames resettlement as a response to public opinion, potentially downplaying moral obligation.	Security concerns might still be present, but focus shifts to domestic context.



Headlines	Dominant Themes	Underlying Discourses	Potential Bias
Syrian Refugees Launch Legal Challenges Against Restrictive Immigration Policies	Agency	Highlights the legal activism of refugees challenging unfair policies.	Emphasizes refugee agency in advocating for their rights.
Syrian Doctors Offer Medical Aid in Ukraine, Demonstrating Solidarity	Agency	Focuses on the contributions of Syrian refugees to a new humanitarian crisis.	Shifts focus from challenges faced by refugees to their global solidarity.
UN Warns of Worsening Humanitarian Crisis in Syria as Funding Dwindles	Humanitarian	Raises awareness of the ongoing humanitarian crisis and its potential escalation.	Continues to highlight the human cost of the Syrian conflict.
Syrian-Led Community Centers Provide Safe Spaces and Support for Refugees	Integration	Emphasizes the positive role of refugee-led initiatives in fostering integration.	More prominent focus on refugee-driven solutions compared to 2021 headlines.
Syrian Youths Organize Cultural Events, Bridging the Gap Between Communities	Integration	Highlights cultural exchange and community building efforts led by young refugees.	Positive portrayal of integration through youth engagement and cultural initiatives.
Tensions Ease in Refugee Camps as International Aid Efforts Increase	Security and Humanitarian	Points to potential solutions for managing refugee populations and improving camp conditions.	Shift from solely focusing on tensions to highlighting the impact of aid efforts.
Syrian Activists Use Drones to Document Human Rights Abuses	Agency	Highlights the innovative methods used by Syrian refugees to advocate for human rights.	Continues to counter the narrative of refugees as passive victims.
Mental Health Support Grows for Syrian Refugees Facing Long-Term Displacement	Humanitarian	Focuses on addressing the long-term psychological impact of displacement and the need for support services.	Continues to highlight the human cost of the conflict, but with a focus on solutions.
Syrian Filmmakers Showcase Stories of	Integration	Highlights cultural expression and storytelling	Positive portrayal of refugee integration

Headlines	Dominant Themes	Underlying Discourses	Potential Bias
Displacement and Resilience		as tools for integration and understanding.	through artistic expression and historical memory.

There is a marked improvement in the tone of coverage of Syrian refugees in 2022 headlines compared to their negative coverage in 2021. Even while resettlement is being sold as a reaction to public demand, security is still a major worry, and internal issues are getting all the attention. Highlights in the news include legal activity on the part of refugees, medical assistance from Syrian physicians in Ukraine, and creative ways that activists have found to record human rights violations. Community centers' beneficial effects, refugee-led programs, and youth-led cultural interaction are the focal points of the optimistic portrayal of integration efforts. There has been a change in focus from the human cost of the conflict to potential solutions; for example, recent headlines have highlighted the improvement of camp conditions as a result of more assistance and the expansion of mental health support programs. The Guardian's coverage of refugees in 2022 shifts focus from seeing them as a burden to recognizing their autonomy and the value they bring to the table as they face dislocation.

**Table 5**

*Comparative Analysis of Discourses on Syrian Refugees in The New York Times (US) and The Guardian (UK) Headlines (2021 & 2022)*

Theme	Year	The New York Times (US)	The Guardian (UK)
Humanitarian	2021	Emphasized human cost and suffering of refugees.	Highlighted suffering, particularly of children, potentially evoking sympathy.
	2022	Continued focus on human cost, but with a shift towards mental health concerns.	Raised awareness of ongoing need for international support and potential worsening crisis.
Security	2021	Less prominent, but present in headlines framing refugees as potential threats.	Framed refugee resettlement through a security lens, potentially implying a threat.

Theme	Year	The New York Times (US)	The Guardian (UK)
	2022	Security concerns might still be present, but focus shifted to international context (US) or domestic pressure (UK).	Focus shifted from solely refugees to tensions in camps and potential solutions.
Integration	2021	Highlighted challenges faced by refugees, potentially framing it as a burden.	Offered counter-narratives to burden discourse, emphasizing refugee-led initiatives.
	2022	More positive portrayal of integration efforts, focusing on solutions and refugee-driven initiatives.	Continued positive portrayal, highlighting cultural exchange and youth engagement.
Economic	2021	Presented mixed narratives, highlighting both potential burdens and positive contributions of refugees.	Presented mixed narratives, but offered a counter-narrative to burden discourse.
	2022	Stronger focus on positive economic impact of refugee entrepreneurship.	Focus not explicitly economic, but potential for further exploration.
Agency	2021	Less prominent, but some headlines highlighted leadership of Syrian women.	Highlighted refugee activism and resistance to the Assad regime.
	2022	More prominent focus on refugee agency in various spheres (legal activism, volunteering, storytelling).	Continued focus on refugee agency, including innovative methods for human rights advocacy.

The humanitarian impact of the Syrian crisis and the continuous need of refugees were repeatedly brought to the attention of both newspapers. In 2021, both publications covered security issues; but, in 2022, the stories either faded or took a different angle. In 2022, both The Guardian and The New York Times began to show integration initiatives in a more favorable light. While both outlets offered conflicting accounts of refugees' effects on the economy, in 2022 the New York Times tended to highlight the positive. Both publications paid increasing attention to refugee agency in 2022, covering stories on their leadership, advocacy, and achievements across many fields.

Both media outlets minimize the role that global powers played in triggering the Syrian refugee catastrophe. Both newspapers' formulation of resettlement quotas (based on few cases)

may obfuscate moral duties or responsibility-sharing. Positive accounts of integration may not capture the realities faced by all refugees.

In sum, our findings point to a possible change in the prevailing narratives on Syrian refugees in The Guardian and The New York Times from 2021 to 2022. There is an increasing amount of attention on refugee agency, potential solutions, and the good impact that refugees may have on their host communities, even if the human cost of the war is still a major worry. Both media outlets may minimize the role that global powers played in triggering the Syrian refugee catastrophe. Both newspapers' formulation of resettlement quotas (based on few cases) may obfuscate moral duties or responsibility-sharing. Positive accounts of integration may not capture the realities faced by all refugees. In nutshell, our findings point to a possible change in the prevailing narratives on Syrian refugees in The Guardian and The New York Times from 2021 to 2022. There is an increasing amount of attention on refugee agency, potential solutions, and the good impact that refugees may have on their host communities, even if the human cost of the war is still a major worry.

## Discussion

An in-depth examination of the scrutinized headlines from The New York Times (US) and The Guardian (UK) in 2021 and 2022 uncovers an intricate interaction of prevailing narratives around Syrian refugees. The concept of humanitarianism is a persistent and recurring motif, emphasizing the toll on human lives caused by the war and the need for global assistance. (Examples: The New York Times in 2021 reported on the issue of Syrian children experiencing hunger, while The Guardian in 2022 highlighted the United Nations' warning about a deteriorating humanitarian crisis.) Although security issues are now prevalent, their emphasis seems to have moved. Both publications in 2021 depicted resettlement from a security perspective, which might possibly depict migrants as possible dangers. By 2022, there was a change in emphasis towards internal situations, such as public pressure in the UK, or international reactions, such as resettlement quotas. (Examples: The New York Times in 2021 reported that the United States has announced a programme for resettlement with some limitations. Similarly, The Guardian in 2021 reported that the United Kingdom has also announced a programme for resettlement with certain limitations.) Both publications exhibited a

discernible trend towards depicting integration efforts in a more favorable light in the year 2022. The headlines focused on solutions, efforts led by refugees, and the positive impact that refugees have on their host communities.

Examples of recent headlines include "Syrian Schools Embrace Culturally Responsive Curriculum" published by the New York Times in 2022 and "Syrian-Led Community Centers Provide Safe Spaces" published by the Guardian in 2022. The narratives were ambiguous. While several headlines drew attention to the possible challenges faced by European nations in 2021, others focused on the favorable economic influence of refugee entrepreneurship, notably as reported in The New York Times in 2022.

Both media outlets minimize the role that global powers played in triggering the Syrian refugee catastrophe. Moral commitments or responsibility-sharing might be masked by how resettlement quotas are framed. Not every refugee's story will be a happy one about assimilating. As a result, the prevailing narratives about Syrian refugees are changing. There is an increasing amount of attention on refugee agency, solutions, and the good things that refugees have contributed, even if the humanitarian issue is still a worry. But we need to look more closely at the whole picture of integration and any prejudices about international responsibility.

This study examines the headlines of The New York Times (US) and The Guardian (UK) to identify a change in the prevailing narratives about Syrian refugees in Western print media from 2021 to 2022. Although many themes remained unchanged, a careful analysis demonstrates a shift towards more optimistic depictions and an increasing focus on the ability of refugees to take action. The significant toll on human lives resulting from the Syrian crisis remains a prominent topic of discussion. Both publications regularly emphasized the plight of refugees, especially children, and the continued need for global assistance. The attention is shown by headlines such as "Syrian Children Face Hunger" (NYT, 2021) and "UN Warns of Worsening Humanitarian Crisis" (Guardian, 2022).

Security worries were evident in both 2021 and 2022, but the perspective seems to have shifted. In 2021, news articles such as "US Announces Limited Resettlement Programme" (published in the New York Times) and "UK Announces Limited Resettlement Programme" (published in the Guardian) portrayed the act of resettlement from a security perspective, which

might suggest that migrants were seen as possible risks. By 2022, there was a change in emphasis. The prominence of security concerns diminished, with a shift in attention towards internal settings, such as public pressure affecting resettlement quotas in the UK, and international reactions, as mentioned by The New York Times, which cited resettlement quotas as a response to "global pressure". This change may be attributed to a confluence of factors, including the developing dynamics of the war. As the initial impact of the conflict diminished, the media may have felt less compelled to highlight the security risk presented by refugees. The framing of these concerns by the media was impacted by policy changes in resettlement programs or international collaboration on the situation.

There is a noticeable change in how integration attempts are depicted. In 2021, news articles such as "Syrian Schools Overwhelmed" (published in the New York Times) and "Syrian Doctors Struggle to Rebuild Lives" (also published in the New York Times) highlighted the difficulties encountered by refugees, perhaps portraying them as a source of hardship. Nevertheless, in 2022, news articles such as "Syrian Schools Embrace Culturally Responsive Curriculum" (published by the New York Times) and "Syrian-Led Community Centers Provide Safe Spaces" (published by the Guardian) focused on showcasing solutions, efforts led by refugees, and the beneficial impact that refugees may have. Direct your attention on strategies and actions that will lead to lasting and sustainable outcomes. As the crisis evolved into a more protracted scenario, the media may have been compelled to emphasize the significance of achieving effective integration for both refugees and host populations. The public's perspective on refugees underwent a significant change, leading to a shift in how the media portrayed them.

The investigation uncovers an intricate interaction of variables that influence the depiction of Syrian refugees in Western print media. Although the humanitarian issue continues to be a cause for worry, there is an increasing emphasis on finding solutions and recognizing the good contributions of refugee agencies. Nevertheless, it is crucial to recognize the possibility of biases, such as minimizing the international accountability for the war or disregarding the difficulties encountered by some refugees throughout the process of integration.

Press coverage of Syrian refugees in the West reveals several aspects of hidden political objectives and power structures. Reports such as "Europe Debates Resettlement of Syrian

Refugees" (NYT, 2021) and "UK Announces Limited Resettlement Programme" (Guardian, 2021) cast refugees in a security-oriented light, which may indicate a political objective centering on issues of national security. Western countries are shown as strong organizations that decide who gets protection, while migrants are seen as possible dangers, in this framing.

News headlines that draw attention to the plight of refugees, like the one titled "Syrian Children Face Hunger" published by the New York Times in 2021, have the power to elicit compassion and may divert focus away from the culpability of Western countries in instigating or exacerbating the Syrian crisis. This perspective portrays Western countries as altruistic suppliers of assistance, while minimizing their involvement in causing relocation. News headlines such as "Syrian Refugee Crisis Creates Strain on European Resources" (Guardian, 2021) depict refugees as a source of pressure on the economy of European countries. This framing illustrates a power imbalance in which Western countries possess resources and authority over refugee resettlement, perhaps overlooking their historical engagement in the Middle East or the enduring economic advantages that refugees may provide.

News headlines such as "Syrian Women Lead Grassroots Movements for Peace" (NYT, 2021) and "Syrian Activists Use Drones to Document Human Rights Abuses" (Guardian, 2022) emphasize the active role of refugees in lobbying for their own rights and their home country. This contradicts the depiction of refugees as passive recipients of circumstances and demonstrates a possible change in the way the media tells their stories, recognizing the strength and ability of refugees to overcome problems. News articles such as "Syrian-Owned Businesses Thrive in Diverse Neighborhoods" (NYT, 2022) or "Syrian Youths Organize Cultural Events" (Guardian, 2022) highlight the positive integration efforts of refugees and present them as valuable contributions to their host cultures. This disrupts the power hierarchy that portrays refugees only as beneficiaries of assistance and instead empowers them as engaged contributors in the process of constructing new livelihoods.

Western print media depictions of Syrian refugees exhibit a lack of neutrality. These phenomena include intricate power structures and political motives. While many narratives emphasize the hardship and potential weight of migrants, others are increasingly recognizing the autonomy and positive contributions of refugees. An essential examination is necessary to

comprehend the fundamental power dynamics and the possible prejudices influencing popular views of the Syrian refugee situation.

This study is strengthened by aligning these findings with earlier research on how refugees are portrayed in the media. Consistent with previous research, our study indicated that humanitarian concerns were stable, but security issues changed emphasis or were less important over time (Ramasubramanian and Miles, 2018; Chouliaraki and Zaborowski, 2017). That media narratives may change over time is supported by this. In addition, the recent focus on empowering refugees and facilitating their assimilation into host communities is a direct result of the criticisms levelled by Bayrakli and Hafez (2014). Consistent with critical refugee studies that draw attention to the power dynamics influencing media coverage, this research also reveals possible biases, such as minimizing international responsibility. The findings of this study add to the growing body of evidence that shows how media representations of Syrian refugees are multifaceted and susceptible to bias. It is essential to approach these intricacies and possible biases with a critical eye, as stressed throughout this work.

The portrayal of Syrian refugees in the 2021 and 2022 headlines of The New York Times (US) and The Guardian (UK) was the subject of this critical discourse research. The results show that the prevailing narratives have changed. Security issues have either faded into the background or taken a back seat to humanitarian concerns, which have not changed. More and more, we are seeing optimistic depictions of refugee agency and integration initiatives. On the other hand, several biases were pointed out, such as ignoring the whole extent of integration difficulties or minimizing the role of foreign players in the crisis. There are power dynamics at work in the media's depictions of refugees; some stories may portray them as a danger or a burden, while others highlight their positive contributions. In general, the research indicates that media coverage of Syrian refugees could be more nuanced; yet, in order to spot such biases and comprehend the intricate interaction of circumstances, a critical perspective is required.

This critical discourse analysis (CDA) looked at the headlines from The Guardian (UK) and The New York Times (US) from 2021 and 2022 and how they depicted Syrian refugees. The results show that the prevailing narratives have changed, which is in line with the CDA theoretical framework and displacement discourses. The prevalence of humanitarian narratives



emphasizes the human cost of the war, in line with the framework's emphasis on how the media influences attitudes. The change in security concerns, away from seeing migrants as dangers and towards analyzing local situations or foreign reactions, is in line with the idea of "discourses of displacement" where stories may change over time. As CDA promotes investigating power relations and the representation of certain groups, the increasing focus on refugee agency and positive integration initiatives may signal a shift towards more nuanced media depictions.

The biases that have been found, such as the tendency to minimize global responsibility, are in line with CDA's emphasis on the ways in which hidden ideologies shape media coverage. The idea of "discourses of displacement" suggests that stories may fail to convey the complexities of a situation, which is consistent with ignoring the whole extent of integration issues. Media representations that mirror power dynamics at work are in harmony with CDA and displacement discourses. Media portrayals may be influenced by power dynamics; some headlines portray refugees negatively, while others highlight their positive contributions. In general, the results back up the selected theoretical model. The media's coverage of Syrian refugees was analyzed using critical race theory (CDA) and the idea of discourses of displacement. This analysis exposed the complex web of power relations, possible biases, and the ever-changing nature of media narratives. Still, a critical eye is still required for a complete comprehension of these intricacies, as the research shows.

## **Conclusion**

This study conducted a critical discourse analysis (CDA) to investigate the portrayal of Syrian refugees in the headlines of The New York Times (US) and The Guardian (UK) throughout the years 2021 and 2022. The results indicate a change in prevailing discussions around this intricate matter. The Syrian war continues to have a significant impact on human welfare, as seen by the persistent focus on humanitarian issues. There was a change in security concerns. Originally seen from the perspective of possible risks presented by refugees, the attention shifted towards internal situations or global reactions. This is consistent with the idea of "discourses of displacement," which refers to the way narratives may change and develop over a period of time. An encouraging trend is the increasing focus on effective integration initiatives and the empowerment of refugees themselves. Headlines are increasingly highlighting projects

generated by refugees, their cultural contributions, and their leadership in campaigning for their home countries. This undermines the depiction of migrant's only as passive recipients of harm and indicates a possible shift towards more subtle and detailed representations in the media.

Nevertheless, some biases were also uncovered by the investigation. The media's biases are on display when they fail to adequately address the Syrian refugee crisis or when they fail to acknowledge the full extent of the integration issues faced by the refugees. These results are in line with CDA's emphasis on the ways in which hidden ideologies shape media coverage. A fundamental principle of both CDA and displacement discourses is that the media's representation of refugees mirrors underlying power relations. The fact that some news articles portray migrants as a danger or a burden and others highlight their positive contributions shows how power dynamics influence media portrayals.

In summary, the analysis indicates a shift towards a more subtle depiction of Syrian refugees in Western print media. Nevertheless, it is necessary to use a critical lens in order to fully grasp these intricacies. By recognizing possible biases and the complex interaction of variables that influence media coverage, we may get a more comprehensive understanding of the Syrian refugee crisis and the media's role in molding public opinions. Further investigation might be conducted in future study to go further into these results. This could include analyzing the visual elements that accompany the headlines or doing detailed assessments of particular refugee narratives portrayed in the media. Furthermore, examining the impact of social media on molding public discussions around Syrian refugees would provide a more thorough comprehension of the informational environment. In essence, doing a thorough analysis of how the media presents the Syrian refugee issue enables us to go beyond oversimplified stories and promote better-informed and empathetic reactions.

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