

Well Enough to Work? Examining the Mental Health Outcomes of Precarious and Non-Status Migrants who are Precariously Employed in Canada

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Masters of Arts
Immigration and Settlement Studies
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Abstract

Migrants living in precarity face many barriers when navigating Canada's complex immigration system, with many losing their status through the process. Scholars have identified poor mental health outcomes of precarious and non-status migrants in Canada, but studies are scant and focus largely on fears of deportation, lack of access to health services, social exclusion, and detention. Missing from the research is how precarious employment, which precarious and non-status migrants are overrepresented in, also affects the wellbeing of these individuals. To address this gap in research, this paper explores both media coverage of this population and city council minutes from across Canada. A comparison of both reveals that there is rarely a focus on the mental health outcomes of precarious and non-status migrants, and even less discussions on employment conditions as a contributing factor. Future research is necessary to develop a better understanding of the mental health issues faced by precarious and non-status migrants. Moreover, the narrative of precarious and non-status migrants in the media and during city council meetings must focus on these individuals' mental health if we are to improve their conditions.

Keywords: non-status, precarious migrants, precarious employment, mental health

Acknowledgement

This has been a year of reckoning and action for our university. In our classes, we have discussed the harm caused to Indigenous students, faculty, and communities through our commemoration of Egerton Ryerson, an architect of Canada's residential school systems, and the ideology of settler colonialism that we as settlers maintain in upholding his name.

On his commemoration, there has been clear direction and action provided by the university community, from grassroots Indigenous student organizations like @wreckconciliation_x_university, the Indigenous-led research centre Yellowhead Institute (2021), and the University's Standing Strong Task Force (Mash Koh Wee Kah Poo Win) (2021). The central message advocated by these groups is unanimous: Ryerson must go. In turn, on August 26th, 2021, the University pledged to change its name in consultation with its community.

Yet, upon submitting my major research paper, I was informed that I must acknowledge Ryerson. This instruction contravenes the spirit of the advocacy and actions that have taken place over the past year. It is disheartening given the emphasis that our program, its faculty, and students have placed on recognizing and confronting the embeddedness and naturalization of settler colonialism in our institutions and in our ways of thinking and being.

In writing this acknowledgement, our aim is to hold ourselves and this university accountable for our readers, so you are informed of the Indigenous-led collective action that has taken place for this name change to take place, and the insistence that Ryerson continue to be commemorated. I refuse to leave unacknowledged the emotional and physical labour Indigenous students, academics, and organizers have spent in leading efforts to literally and institutionally topple Ryerson.

I understand that beyond this acknowledgement, there is concrete action I must take as an individual towards reconciliation and Indigenous resurgence in my personal and professional lives. Please accept this collective letter as a pledge on my part, a promise to embody this understanding into my everyday life, and to name and confront settler colonialism within our institutions, communities, and my own persons. This acknowledgement is in protest of the requirement that Ryerson's name be commemorated through our research.

Firstly, I want to thank my supervisor, Evan Cleave who has provided me guidance and assistance in completing this paper. He was patient, kind, and most importantly extremely helpful with his feedback and suggestions. I would not have been able to write this paper without him and I will be forever grateful to him. Next, I would like to thank my second reader, Harald Bauder, who took time out of his very busy schedule to provide his insights. Of course, I would also like to thank my family and friends for checking in on me during the process of writing this paper. Lastly, to my fellow students who inspired me every day with their curiosity, tenacity, and brilliance. Thank you for your daily motivation in helping me get through one of the toughest years of our lives.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Introduction

Immigrants with and without status face a myriad of challenges in their day-to-day lives that have repercussions for their mental health and wellbeing (Simich, 2006; Campbell et al., 2012). These groups – particularly those that face greater levels of marginalization and precariousness – do not readily receive the support that they need (Hershkowitz et al., 2020). As a result, better efforts by all levels of government are needed to provide greater levels and accessibility to support, as well as protections from the challenges that migrants face (i.e., precarious or exploitive employment). For this to be achieved, however, the issues need to become part of both public and political discourse and discussion; and it is currently unclear how issues related to mental health and wellbeing are being presented, or the salience of the issue. This Major Research Paper seeks to explore the context in which mental health issues are framed within the public discourse for two groups of migrants in Canada – those who are non-status and those who have precarious status.

Non-status migrants are individuals who have not been granted official status by the Government of Canada. How migrants become non-status is complex (Bauder, 2013). Many arrive in the country with official documents (i.e., a work, student, or visitor visa) or are fleeing persecution and thus are seeking asylum. However, many of them fall through the cracks in trying to navigate Canada's complex immigration system. An estimated 500,000 non-status migrants are living in Canada (Woudstra, 2017). The exact numbers are difficult to determine since the population in question remains largely invisible. Nonetheless, it is crucial to understand where they are coming from and their motivations for pursuing opportunities in Canada. These are known as, and will be explained in further detail later, “push” and “pull” factors. The former

drives people out of their home country (i.e., poverty, civil unrest) while the latter attracts migrants to Canada (i.e., economic opportunities, safety).

It is important, however, to note that thousands of migrants live in a perpetual state of precariousness before they ultimately become non-status (Goldring and Landolt, 2013).

Therefore, this population should also be considered in our broader understanding of individuals without status. In the context of this research, precarious immigration status refers to “both people whose legal authorization to remain in the country is temporary and/or dependent on a third party (i.e., asylum seekers, temporary foreign workers, family members awaiting sponsorship, visitors, international students, live-in caregivers, victims of human trafficking)” (Cloos et al., 2020, 4). Due to this precarity, like non-status migrants, those with precarious status are also limited to precarious employment, and as the literature will show, face similar issues that affect their mental health.

1.2. Research Context

Many migrants coming to Canada have hope to establish permanent residency in the country. However, after the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York in 2001, this has become more and more difficult. Ironically though, at the same time, Canada increased its reliance on temporary migrants significantly. The contradiction in increasing border securitization while simultaneously increasing migrant levels cannot be ignored. It gives migrants a false sense of hope to continue to enter the country through the temporary streams or as refugee claimants with the hope that they may be one of the limited numbers to secure full and permanent status.

Although many arrive in the country with official documents or with a legitimate asylum claim, migrants face a complicated immigration system that is difficult to navigate. The paperwork and bureaucracy present major roadblocks, as a simple mistake can deny you status without the opportunity to appeal the decision. Therefore, many seek professional assistance from lawyers or immigration consultants, who often make promises for permanent residency. But non-status migrants are proof that there is no guarantee in securing such status. Moreover, the determining factors for who gets status and does not are based on arbitrary considerations, such as language proficiency and “skill” level.

Regardless of their skill level, it is undeniable that migrants contribute significantly to Canadian society before they fall into the predicament of becoming precarious and those who eventually lose their status. They are mainly employed in various “low-skilled” industries, occupying jobs many Canadians are unwilling to do. These include cleaners, personal support workers, agricultural workers, food production workers, construction workers, cooks, and childcare workers, to name a few. These jobs are precarious, offering low wages, with few protections for workers, and often require long working hours. Moreover, these jobs have been deemed “essential” (George, 2020) during the pandemic, and proves how reliant we are on these migrants, who are often taken advantage of by employers. Although these issues were prevalent for decades, COVID has created more demanding work environments, and thus made the situation more challenging for migrants without official status.

Apart from acknowledging the economic contributions precarious and non-status migrants make to Canada, closer attention is needed to elucidate the human costs associated with the work these individuals do and how precarious status – or being non-status – affects their lives. This can be viewed through various lenses, but the aim is to understand the mental health

outcomes of this population through an analysis of discourse in media and local government. As the literature will demonstrate, living without status has negative impacts on the mental health of these individuals. It will also prove that precarious employment presents additional stressors. Yet, the link between lack of official status (precarious and non-status) and being precariously employed has not been explored in depth by researchers.

1.3. Research Approach and Objectives

The purpose of this paper is to *explore the topic of mental health amongst precarious and non-status migrants within public discourse to investigate how their experiences – both day-to-day and within the structures of Canadian politics and society - contribute to the adverse outcomes of this group’s overall well-being*. To achieve this, this research has two key research objectives:

RO1: identify the key nodes of public and political discourse related to mental health and wellbeing for precarious and non-status migrants.

RO2: more specifically, explore how employment is understood and presented as a driver of mental health outcomes.

This research is situated in two theoretical frameworks. The first is the push and pull theory that helps explain the movement of people from one nation state to another. This theory is important to the study because it helps us understand migrants’ motivations for moving to countries like Canada and who continue to live with precarious and no status in the country despite the many challenges it brings to their lives. The second theory is the agenda-setting theory, which explains how policy is created and public sentiments. The media plays a key role in these and this paper will show how.

To evaluate these research objectives, an extensive content analysis of both Canadian media coverage and formal political discussion (i.e., city council meetings) between 2010 and 2020 was conducted. Drawing from two newspapers (*Globe & Mail* and *Toronto Star*), one online news source (*CBC News*), and 20 city council meetings from communities across Canada, the discourse on mental health and employment was catalogued and analyzed. This approach allowed for a comprehensive analysis, as different mediums for discussion were analyzed. Additionally, by investigating both discourse around precarious and non-status migrants a larger pool of potentially marginalized groups could be explored. An implication of this is that comparisons between media coverage and how groups were discussed allowed for more complete exploration. Finally, underlying the overall goal of the research and the associated study objectives is the need to identify practical solutions to address the sources, challenges, and outcomes related to mental health among precarious and non-status migrants.

1.4. Study Importance

Media coverage of immigration issues in Canada tends to focus on border securitization, immigration fraud, Canadian opinions on immigration targets, and migrants' economic impact on Canada versus the strain they put on social services, such as health care. Interestingly, in the era of Donald Trump as the President of the United States, there was an overwhelming amount of coverage on the ills done by his administration on irregular migrants crossing the U.S.-Mexico border. However, these topics have no focus on understanding the plight of migrants in Canada, and how their lives are affected by such policies. It creates an 'us vs. them' mentality, leaving little room for compassion and care. When there is reporting on the issues facing migrants, they are vague and scant in coverage.

Precarious and non-status migrants are human beings with feelings and emotions like any Canadian or permanent resident. Therefore, this study seeks to understand the challenges they face because of their lack of status and the precarious jobs they perform. However, it does not aim to get a clinical understanding of the mental health outcomes of this population. Instead, symptoms such as anxiety, depression, sleeplessness, and stress caused by lack of status and employment conditions will be explored. The symptoms will be identified, noted for frequency of reporting, determine what is missing, and understand if there have been changes to the coverage over time. In addition, the media analysis will be contrasted with city council minutes across Canada to understand if there is any difference between what is discussed.

Advocacy groups such as the Migrant Rights Network, Migrant Workers Alliance for Change, Migrante, and the Migrant Resource Centre Canada (MRCC) have worked tirelessly to bring these issues to light. However, the general public does not get information about these groups from these organizations. Instead, it is the media that is mainly responsible for how precarious and non-status migrants are depicted.

1.5. Organization of this Major Research Paper

The paper will be presented as follows: Chapter Two will cover the literature reviewed for this paper. It will present a general understanding of precarious and non-status migrants, particularly how they fall into this unauthorized category. Moreover, the research will reveal issues facing this population and how these have an impact on the overall well-being of these individuals. Chapter Three will explain the Methods used to analyze the media and city council minutes. Chapter Four will present the findings of the analysis. Chapter Five will conclude the paper with a discussion, which includes practical implications.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

As mentioned above, an estimated half a million non-status migrants live in Canada (Woudstra, 2017). While those with precarious migrant status are estimated to be at least 700,000 (Marsden, 2018). Both groups contribute significantly to the nation's workforce. Many of these individuals live in metropolitan cities such as Toronto, Vancouver, and Montreal, occupying precarious jobs including construction, hospitality, and childcare (Gastaldo, 2012; Cloos et al., 2020). Despite their presence in the country, the experiences of non-status and precarious migrants have not been explored much by researchers. Both non-status migrants and those living with precarious immigration status share similar experiences. The main difference is the state's labelling of the former as being unauthorized while the latter is authorized to stay in the country until they officially lose their status. However, as Marsden (2018, 18) mentions, both migrant groups are bound by "features such as labour vulnerability and lack of access to social services". These factors create many issues for these migrants, which will be explored in detail below, that affect their overall well-being.

The plight of precarious and non-status migrants in Canada remains largely understudied. Of course, this population's hiddenness makes it challenging to do so. Many are afraid to speak out for fears of deportation, and others find it hard to trust large institutions. Nonetheless, despite this limitation, current scholarship of precarious and non-status migrants gives us a good look into the issues they face, including and what this paper will primarily focus on, their mental health outcomes.

2.2. Understanding Precarious and Non-Status Migrants

Non-status migrants (also referred to as undocumented, illegal, irregular) are “persons who have entered or remained in Canada without the permission of the federal government” (Hershkowitz et al., 2020, 2). The term non-status is challenged in academia, as many individuals living with insecure, precarious status have non-linear trajectories through Canada’s immigration system, moving from secure status to “illegality” to other forms of precarious status (Goldring and Landolt, 2013). For this research, non-status people are defined as (a) failed refugee claimants who remained in the country after their removal date, (b) work permit, study permit or visitor permit holders who overstayed the date on their visas (c) those who entered the country without official documents (Magalhaes et al., 2009; McDonald, 2009; Miklavcic, 2011; Campbell et al., 2012). Although precarious migrants do not fall into these categories, they are subject to the same immigration laws and thus can easily slip into “illegality.” Therefore, this group will also be considered. Moreover, non-status migrants are “invisible” to the Canadian state, thus not counted in official immigration records or statistics. Similarly, there is no recognition of “precarious migration status” by the Canadian state, and thus face a similar plight of invisibility.

2.2.1. The Rise of Non-Status Migration

Canada has a global image as a haven for refugees fleeing persecution and violence. In 2018, it resettled more refugees (28,100) than any other country in the Western world, including the United States (UNHCR, 2019). Simultaneously, the state continues to assert stricter control over its territory (Hari, 2014; Bhuyan et al., 2016). Canadian law has redefined who gets to claim refugee status, has restricted refugee claimants’ access to services, and has increased

deportations (Arbel and Brenner, 2013). The distinctions between the citizen and non-citizen are quite clear, producing “illegality” for some and precarious status for others (Goldring and Landolt, 2013). One method through which the state exerts its sovereignty is through border securitization, which has become of increased interest to politicians, policymakers, and the public since the early 2000s (Helleiner, 2013). These “unwanted” migrants are viewed as a national threat, a dilution to the national identity, and a reminder that the state has lost control (Hari, 2014). These concerns of border crossings were reinvigorated in 2017 when an influx of migrants entered Canada (Government of Canada, 2020).

Such overemphasis on irregular border crossings fails to consider the most common ways people become non-status in this country. Unlike the United States, which sees far greater numbers of unauthorized migration across the U.S.-Mexico border, most of Canada’s non-status migrant population entered the country legally as temporary migrants on student visas, working visas, or visitor visas (Magalhaes et al., 2009). To compete in the global economy, Canada has increased its reliance on temporary migration through programs like the Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP) and is admitting more international students than ever before. So much so, it has surpassed the number of permanent residents admitted into the country (Walsh, 2014; Choudry and Smith, 2016).

The TFWP allows the government and employers to implement a neoliberal agenda, with a precarious workforce subject to long hours, short contracts, and which is easily replaceable. The country has also looked to international students to supplement increased budgets to post-secondary institutions, which have seen steep declines in provincial funding (Calder et al., 2016; McCartney and Metcalfe, 2018). Moreover, the weakness of temporary status and its narrow

pathways to permanency creates vulnerabilities that increase migrants' chances of falling into precarious status and eventually becoming non-status.

2.2.2. Push and Pull Factors

Almost nothing has had as much of an impact on global migration movements in the past few decades than globalization. The opening up of economies and borders to trade, new technologies, communications, and transport has led to a rise in population movements worldwide (Walsh, 2008). The motivations of people migrating from developing countries to Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries, including Canada, remain multifaceted and cannot be explained in detail in this paper. However, recognizing some of the “push” and “pull” factors that attract migrants to Canada will help us understand why migrants who become non-status remain in the destination country rather than returning home.

Economists define “push” factors as the incentives that encourage people to leave their countries of origin and “pull” factors as those that attract them to countries like Canada (OECD, 2009). Push factors include poverty, lack of jobs, environmental destruction, and civil unrest, while pull factors include peace, higher quality of life, and education and employment opportunities (Ibid). While both factors apply to all migrants, including those who immigrate under the points system, the circumstances are highly varied for refugees and temporary migrants. Refugees are people who leave their home countries to “escape political, religious, or social persecution, or other threats to their safety and well-being” (Bodvarsson and Van den Berg, 2013, 14). While temporary migrants are from developing countries and come to Canada for economic reasons. For example, Mexico, which supplies a substantial temporary labour force

to Canada, increased outmigration at the same time it saw rising levels of unemployment and poverty (Reed, 2008).

However, it should be noted that this theory simplifies the migration process by presenting a mechanical understanding of the movement of people. In other words, migrants are not free to live and work anywhere they choose to. There is a ‘middle’ process that many people ignore or do not see that prevent people from leaving their home countries. For example, border securitization through strict immigration policy. These “border regimes,” as Georgi (2019) suggests, restrict migrants, especially those from the working class, from entering countries like Canada. Subsequent sections of this chapter will delve a little deeper into these restrictions.

2.3. A Brief History of Immigration in Canada

In an effort to attract more economic immigrants to Canada, the country’s immigration policy has seen numerous changes since the early 2000s. Not only has it become more complex but also more securitized, as evidenced above. Before the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA) came into effect in November 2002, internal threats to national security by crime and fraud was the top concern to Elinor Caplan, the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration Canada at the time, and policymakers (Pratt, 2005). However, this changed when the 9/11 attacks on September 11, 2001 were carried out in New York City and Washington, DC. Canada, following measures taken by the United States, renewed its interests in ratifying greater controls of migrants, particularly individuals entering Canada seeking to claim asylum (Okafor, 2020). The state then changed its outlook on these vulnerable individuals from “at risk” to “risky and dangerous” to curtail perceived security threats to the country (Pratt, 2005). Thus, the move towards exclusionary policies creates more precarious individuals, who, after receiving a

negative decision on their asylum claims and fear returning to the countries where they may face torture and/or death, choose to go “underground” as a means of protection.

At the same time Canada enacted IRPA, there was an increased demand by employers to meet short-term labour needs, allowing for the drafting of policies geared to temporary entry into the country (Ferrer et al., 2014). Canada’s TFWP has several channels for which employers can use migrants on a temporary basis. The program was established in 1973 to fill specific shortages in the labour market (i.e., skilled workers, seasonal agricultural workers, live-in caregivers). However, in 2002, the Liberals expanded the program to fill various low-skilled occupations (Gross, 2014). Then, with a change in government in 2008, the Conservatives enacted various measures to make it extremely difficult for “low-skilled” temporary migrants to be eligible for permanent residency (Forcier and Dufour, 2016). Moreover, for those whose work permits are attached to their employers, there becomes a reliance on the good will of the employer to renew one’s status (Cedillo et al., 2019), which leaves many temporary migrants in a precarious situation and more vulnerable to losing status if they speak out against abuse.

Simultaneously, starting in the 1990s, and increasing in the early 2000s, Canada ramped up its reliance on international students to increase revenues for public colleges and universities (McCartney and Metcalfe, 2018). These institutions, treating education as a commodity, charge international students three times (and in some cases higher) the rate domestic student pay. In 2010, international students contributed of \$4.2 billion to the Canadian gross domestic product, not to mention added contributions through personal spending and tax dollars (Calder et al., 2016). Although this presents many benefits for the state, students struggle to keep up with the costs and are forced to work, which puts their status at jeopardy. The notable case of international student Jobandeep Sandhu being arrested and detained on December 13, 2017, for

working more than the allowed 20 hours per week (Hill, 2019), proves migrants entering Canada under this stream are struggling to afford post-secondary schooling, and thus forced to break these arbitrary immigration rules.

2.4. Overview of Challenges in the Immigration System

It is evident that falling into precarious status and eventually becoming non-status has its underpinnings in a flawed immigration system that relies on temporary migrants to stimulate the economy and simultaneously closed off to those the state deems a threat. Recent calls for full and permanent status for all during the COVID-19 pandemic, including an open letter penned by Migrants Rights Network, expose these flaws, which are gendered and racialized (2020). A move to a “single-tiered” immigration system would see that all migrants, refugees, students, workers, and non-status people in the country are regularized, and all future migrants receive full permanent status. Critics of such policies argue that a move to regularize non-status individuals only reinforces state power and does not eliminate illegality (McDonald, 2009; Marsden, 2018). Moreover, such efforts in the past were a continuation of a “nation-building” project where non-status migrants were vetted for their suitability (i.e., contribution to the economy, health, etc.) (Ibid). Nonetheless, the rallying cries for full status have not stopped. Rather, they are louder now than they have ever been because of the vulnerabilities revealed by COVID.

2.4.1. Non-Status Migrants and the Immigration System

Precarious and non-status migrants face barriers to accessing education, local shelters, settlement services, health, protection from the police, and other rights (Hershkowitz et al., 2020). Municipalities across Canada, including Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver, Hamilton, and

Edmonton, have adopted “Sanctuary City” policies to extend these services to those without status (Ibid). Unfortunately, this initiative has primarily remained symbolic and has not yet translated to clear changes in policy (Wilson-Forsberg, 2018). Moreover, a particular issue that significantly affects these migrants and deserves our attention is this population’s mental health concerns. Although largely understudied, some scholars have noted how living without status negatively affects the mental health of these individuals (Campbell et al. 2012; Raymond-Flesch et al., 2014; Andersson et al., 2018; Cloos et al., 2020). Ignoring such facts is detrimental to Canadian society, as people who suffer from mental health issues are more prone to substance abuse, suffer from productivity loss, and are at higher risks of developing a physical illness, which put an economic strain on health services (Trautmann et al., 2016). Therefore, these issues must be addressed alongside the lack of access to social services.

2.4.2. Issues for Precariously-Status Migrants

Precarious migrants, unlike non-status migrants, are authorized to work in the country in which they reside. In Canada, migrants with precarious status are given temporary legal status. These include individuals on a work, study, or visitor visa or refugee claimants. Each of these categories require applicants to meet rigid requirements that will extend their temporariness or give them permanent residence. Individuals whose legal authorization depends on a third party (i.e., employer) are considered precarious migrants. Many would think if one plays by the rules, a migrant’s chance of remaining “legal” are unchallenged. However, the situation is far more complicated than this surface level of understanding (Cloos et al., 2020).

Since a migrant’s status is dependent on a third party, they are subject to abuses and exploitation, much like their non-status counterparts. For example, a woman who has entered

Canada under the family class is reliant on her spouse for permanent residency. If she is in an abusive relationship and chooses to leave, she is unable to apply for permanent residency through the means in which she entered Canada (Marsden, 2018). Of course, migrants find themselves in these predicaments all the time, and when they do, they are forced to opt for precarious employment in order to survive, further impacting their mental health outcomes.

2.5. Mental Health: Structural Causes and Effects

In the past few decades, scholars and professionals have increasingly emphasized the social determinants of health in understanding individuals' health outcomes (Braveman and Gottlieb, 2014; Raphael, 2016; Ratcliff, 2017). Acknowledging factors apart from biology, specifically socioeconomic ones, provides broader knowledge of the effects causing physical and mental medical ailments. Some researchers argue that social causes have comparable and sometimes even more significant impact on people's health outcomes than medical issues (Jemel et al., 2001; Galea et al. 2011). In Canada, the social determinants of health are: Aboriginal status, disability, early life, education, employment and working conditions, food insecurity, health services, gender and gender identity, housing, income and income distribution, race, sexual orientation, social exclusion, social safety net, and unemployment and job security (Canadian Mental Health Association, 2020).

Given the significant role immigration plays in this country, a determinant not listed above that should be considered is immigration status. Unfortunately, research of health outcomes based on immigration status remains scant. Still, some authors have shown that health characteristics of some migrant groups do differ. For example, permanent residents and refugees have access to government health insurance programs while temporary residents, refugee

claimants, those living with precarious status, and non-status migrants are denied such benefits (Oxman-Martinez, 2005; Magalhaes et al., 2009; Gushulak et al., 2010; Campbell et al., 2012). In addition, precarious and non-status migrants are significantly disadvantaged due to their invisibility. In their study, Luo and Escalante (2018) analyzed health care utilization between those with status and non-status hired farmworkers in the U.S. They found that non-status workers were less likely to use health care even when viable sources were available. Campbell (2012) and Magalhaes et al. (2009) report similar findings in Canada, arguing that non-status individuals delay care due to their lack of status and, as a result, have high unmet health needs. These were also found among individuals with precarious status (Cloos et al., 2020).

Rousseau et al. (2008) argue that providing health care to uninsured individuals, in particular those without official status, will alleviate the “public health consequences and long-term cost associated” with this issue (290). Similarly, Dr. Arnav Agarwal (in Vogel, 2019), an internal resident at the University of Toronto and signatory to a 2019 open letter calling for universal health care for all residents of Canada, regardless of status, points to early prevention in improving the health complications and conditions of non-status migrants. Although this presents one viable solution to tackling the unmet health needs of precarious and non-status individuals, it overlooks how lack of status, on the whole, contributes to poor health conditions of this population, particularly how it affects one’s mental health. Moreover, considering that Canada allocates much less of its health care budget on mental health than its OECD counterparts (Centre for Addictions and Mental Health, 2020), access to health care services alone will not address this population's poor health outcomes.

As noted above, the literature on precarious and non-status migrants in Canada remains limited. However, existing research hardly raises any debate or contention on whether living

with precarious status or without any status affects one's mental health. Although most research does not aim to clinically diagnose the mental health of precarious and non-status migrants, the findings do help set a framework in understanding the issues faced by these individuals. Most scholars agree that precarious and non-status migrants experience a great deal of stress, anxiety, and depression (Garcini et al., 2016; Santos et al., 2018; Cloos et al., 2020).

Many factors account for these individuals' adverse mental health outcomes, but the literature focuses on four key themes. These are that precarious and non-status migrants' mental health is negatively affected due to: (1) constant fears of deportation; (2) lack of access to health services; (3) isolation and social exclusion; and 4) detention. Note that not all four factors apply to every migrant. For example, a migrant family who entered Canada on visitor visas and became non-status may not be affected by isolation and social exclusion the way a precarious migrant who entered Canada alone on a work permit. However, the threat of deportation may be more imminent for the former than the latter. Additionally, one less prominent issue discussed by researchers is the employment conditions precarious and non-status migrants are forced into due to their lack of status and how this also negatively affects their mental health. Unlike the four factors noted in the literature, precarious employment affects most precarious and non-status migrants, as there are limited opportunities for other types of work due to their lack of status.

2.5.1. Constant Fears of Deportation

Proceeding a failed decision by the Canada Border Service Agency (CBSA), migrants will receive written notification of when they will be removed from Canada. Most migrants who receive this removal order choose to go into hiding to avoid deportation (Campbell, 2012). CBSA actively looks for these individuals by "going to [their] last known residence, phoning

them, going to community-based organizations where the individual seeks support, raiding shelters, searching suspected places of employment and seeking out [their] children (if applicable)” (Campbell, 2012, 167). Prominent scholars in Canada, such as Lilian Magalhaes and Laura Simich, have highlighted how constant fears of deportation take a toll on migrants’ mental health without official status. Similar findings have come out of the United States and Europe that fear of deportation and a distrust of authority figures causes a general sense of unease (Garcini et al., 2016; Teunissen et al., 2015; Myhrvold and Smastuen, 2017; Fernández-Esquer et al., 2017). Those with precarious status facing challenges renewing their visas or gaining refugee status are faced with similar fears, given that if they fail to gain status they will become non-status, and thus subject to deportation.

It is clear from qualitative studies of this population that deportation threats create a great deal of difficulty for precarious and non-status migrants. Constant fears of police and authority figures cause high levels of anxiety, worry and distress (Myhrvold and Smastuen, 2017). For example, in Joseph’s (2011) study of non-status Brazilians in the United States, respondents discussed how they could not let their guard down due to living in fear of law enforcement. This leads to sleepless nights and exhaustion (Joseph, 2011; Campbell, 2012). A study participant named ‘Gustavo’ in Joseph’s (2011, 175) paper vividly explains how “we were always afraid of the police even though we did nothing wrong. We were so afraid that we’d die of fear when we saw a police car. So, this left us feeling anxious all the time, a constant fear”. Building upon this, Garcini et al. (2016) argue that deportation fears also lead to harmful actions (i.e., domestic violence, substance abuse), which are more common among this group than migrants with status. Moreover, due to the fear of deportation, precarious and non-status migrants are significantly

restricted from accessing healthcare, which has profound implications for their overall well-being and mental health.

2.5.2. Lack of Access to Health Services

As previously discussed, precarious and non-status migrants are not covered by federally funded health programs unless in an emergency, if they are children, or for pregnant migrants (Miklavcic, 2011; Marsden, 2018). Since health care is administered through provincial governments, wherein state actors with authority provide service, these individuals avoid seeking access to such institutions for fear of deportation (Martinez et al., 2016). This leads to various unmet health needs, including mental health. Precarious and non-status migrants often wait much longer than the documented to seek care (Teunissen et al., 2015; Cloos et al., 2020). When they seek care, it is for physical health issues, but this is often met with high costs and inconsistent treatment by health care providers, which creates more mental stress (Simich, 2007; Magalhaes et al., 2009). This is evidenced in Campbell's (2012, 176) study comparing health care access in Canada based on status, where one non-status migrant stated, "...I feel pain in the anus...All of the emergency people say it's because of the stress. I asked for painkillers but he (the doctor) gave me pills instead for depression".

Many precarious and non-status migrants feel that Canada's notion of universal health care does not live up to its name. For these individuals, there is no access to this perceived 'universal health care'. Instead, they feel left out and discriminated against, which to many, seems unfair. One respondent in Simich's (2006, 25) study put it this way, "we all work, we pay taxes, and we contribute. So we deserve to be attended to in the hospitals. We deserve all the attention that they give to everyone else because we pay like everyone... I feel that there is

discrimination... If we contribute, they must attend to us”. Fortunately, in Canada, the uninsured can turn to community health centres where some precarious and non-status migrants have some hope of receiving care. However, given the constraints these centres face, including lack of provincial and federal funding (94% of them across Canada face pressures from funding shortfalls) (Canadian Association of Community Health Centres, n.d.), precarious and non-status migrants have limited options.

2.5.3. Isolation and Social Exclusion

Negative perceptions are pervasive amongst people with status and citizens of those living without status in Canada (Simich, 2006), the United States (Joseph, 2011), and Europe (Myhrvold and Smastuen, 2017). The discourse surrounding “illegal” immigration focuses on non-status migrants as an “economic and social problem” (Simich, 2006; Martinez et al., 2016). As shown above, this finds its way into policy (i.e., immigration, health care), where non-status migrants are positioned as the ‘other’ (Simich, 2006; Raymond-Flesch, 2014). This marginalization leads to loneliness.

Moreover, many precarious and non-status migrants are in the country alone, separated from family (Magalhaes et al., 2009; Fernández-Esquer et al., 2017). Most temporary immigration programs in Canada do not allow primary applicants to bring their family members. Moreover, with limited opportunities to gain permanent residency, family reunion is almost impossible. Myhrvold and Smastuen (2017) contradict the importance of family connections by claiming family creates more stress because of added responsibility. Nonetheless, most researchers agree that isolation and social exclusion, mainly due to family separation, is another factor contributing to the poor mental health outcomes of this group.

Due to their invisibility, precarious and non-status migrants are unable to create social networks, which are imperative to a sense of belonging in the host country. Non-status migrants even report facing exclusion from their ethno-racial groups, who, unlike them, were able to obtain status (Magalhaes, 2009; Joseph, 2011). Some non-status migrants reported feeling a great sense of loneliness because of this and their restricted movements (Fernández-Esquer et al., 2017; Myhrvold and Smastuen, 2017). As a result, these individuals feel that their lives have little to no meaning or value (Miklavcic, 2011). Moreover, the lack of social networks prevents them from accessing resources and assistance to navigate the immigration system.

2.5.4. Detention

Canada's immigration system, which favours temporariness, creates fewer opportunities for migrants to become permanent residents. With this legislative change, more of them fall into the non-status category, even if they are legitimate refugees, have lived and worked in the country for years, or have completed their post-secondary education in Canada. As the number of non-status migrants increases, so does enforcement to deport them out of Canada. When the Conservatives were in power, the Canada Border Services Agency's (CBSA) budget increased "from \$90 million in 2010-2011, to over \$198 million in 2012-2013" (Hussan, 2014, 1). Although it has since decreased to roughly \$656 million over five years with the Liberals, the number remains far too high (Government of Canada Budget, 2021, 144), especially since these funds can be utilized in other capacities such as distributing the money to organizations that assist precarious and non-status migrants. All this to say that detention of non-status migrants has not been mitigated.

For migrants who end up in detention, the ramifications for their mental health are detrimental. Countless studies have proven that conditions in detention are not suitable and often exacerbate mental health issues of migrants, especially refugees who have a history of untreated trauma (Newman et al., 2013; von Werthern et al., 2018). Many migrants feel shock and humiliation, uncertainty and loss of agency, and lose hope while in these facilities (Cleveland et al., 2018). Studies have found frustration, fear, persistent anxiety, depression, insomnia, and post-traumatic stress disorder, all of which lead to the mental deterioration of migrants in detention (Newman et al., 2013; von Werthern et al., 2018; Cleveland et al., 2018). Although this is most relevant to non-status migrants, precarious migrants have this ever-present reality swaying over their lives as they can lose their status too.

The average stay in detention for non-status migrants in 2019-2020 was 13.9 days (Global Detention Project: Canada, 2021). Although the length has dropped since the previous year, research has noted that even brief periods of detention can adversely impact migrants' mental health (Cleveland et al., 2018). The lasting impacts include increased clinical levels of PTSD, depression, and anxiety (Ibid). Thus, proving life after detention for non-status migrants becomes more challenging as they struggle to secure their status in the country.

2.6. Employment Conditions and Mental Health

Precarious and non-status migrants are overrepresented in low-paid and unskilled jobs, such as factory work, cooking, cleaning, and construction (Gastaldo et al., 2012; Ornek et al., 2020). Not only is the work they do more hazardous, often resulting in injuries, but they are also physically strenuous (Joseph, 2011; Gastaldo et al., 2012; Fernández-Esquer et al., 2017; Ornek et al., 2020). These migrants become more susceptible to exploitation by employers due to their

vulnerable immigration status or lack thereof (Fernández-Esquer et al., 2017; Cloos et al., 2020). In their studies of non-status Latino workers, both Gastaldo et al. (2012) and Fernández-Esquer et al. (2017) found that earnings were below minimum wage, there were deductions in pay for benefits they did not receive, individuals were forced to work overtime hours, were not allowed to take sick days, and sometimes had no days off and no breaks during working hours. Ornek et al., (2020) also found this to be the case for migrants with precarious status. Moreover, because precarious and non-status migrants rely on the “good will of the employer” (Teunissen et al. 2016, 121), their employment becomes precarious and uncertain.

Few scholars studying the mental health outcomes of precarious and non-status migrants have noted precarious work, let alone how it contributes to further stress and depression of this group. Simich (2007) makes a note of the nature of the work non-status migrants are forced into, but she does not make a connection to mental health. Although Myhrvold and Smastuen (2017) and Teunissen et al. (2016) fill this gap, they do not delve in-depth. All but one scholarly paper addresses this issue. Fernández-Esquer et al. (2017) found that “the frustration at not finding steady work, along with their sense of deception and social isolation, left them profoundly disillusioned and depressed” (14). Moreover, in their report, Gastaldo et al. (2012) also found that various “psychosocial work hazards” (i.e., fears of being detected and deported, pressures of over-performing on the job, and workplace harassment) are highly prevalent, causing a great deal of stress to non-status migrants. Lastly, a systemic review by Ornek et al., (2020) recognizes the need for this research. Nonetheless, the issue of precarious employment among this group and its effects on their mental health remains largely understudied.

2.6.1. Precarious Work and Mental Health Outcomes

Precarious employment as a social determinant of health has become more prominent in influencing people's mental health since the economic recession of 2008 (Benach et al., 2014). Although the debate remains open, countless studies have found poorer mental health outcomes for people who are precariously employed (Clark et al., 2007; Moscone et al., 2016; Llosa et al., 2018, Toivanen et al., 2020). For example, Seifert et al. (2007) show us that not only can precarious work affect the mental health of people through employment insecurity but “also through negative effects on the ability to do one's job and take pride in one's work” (299). Moreover, precariously employed people face other stress factors, such as lower pay restricting access to adequate childcare, housing, transport, and even sustaining friendships and romantic relationships, all of which are important to good mental health (Clark et al., 2007).

Adding to the literature, Han et al. (2017) also found that low income and hazardous working conditions were a constant stressor to workers (202). These findings were also presented by Simões et al. (2019), who surveyed 1607 bus drivers and conductors in Brazil and found increased mental health disorders among those who were precariously employed. She specifically found that 43% of respondents had indicated suffering from musculoskeletal pain. Precarious and non-status migrants are particularly disadvantaged in this regard as they lack the power to “demand safe working conditions and seek redress when injured” (Fernández-Esquer et al., 2017) due to their lack of status. In their report of non-status Latino workers in the Greater Toronto Area, Gastaldo et al. (2012) found that this group, in contrast to those with legal status, was subject to the dirtiest and most dangerous work at their workplaces. These exposures are chronic stressors for precariously employed non-status migrants.

Researchers have also established links between being precariously employed and the development of psychological disorders such as depression, anxiety, and sleep disorders. In their study of workforce residents from the Lombardy region of Italy, F. Moscone et al. (2016) found that temporary employment increased mental illness among respondents. Llosa et al. (2018) have also identified a positive connection between job insecurity and poor mental health. In addition to depression and anxiety, they indicate emotional exhaustion and overall satisfaction with life as two variables that are disproportionately negatively affected by precarious employment. Clarke et al. (2007) have also shown that mental health deterioration leads to adverse physical health. For example, one interviewee stated, “the stress means that sleep and stomach issues keep creeping in. Because of my work schedule, I'm often away during dinner so I eat at fast food places. ... I've gained 35 pounds [over the last four years]” (Ibid, 317). Gastaldo et al. (2012) also found this to be the case with non-status migrants, who worked precarious jobs.

2.7. Summary

The literature presented, although limited in scope, provides compelling information on the issues precarious and non-status migrants face. Not only is their mental health negatively affected by a lack of official status, but also by the working conditions many of them are forced into due to said factor. These determinants have thus far been largely unexplored in academia. Due to these individuals' invisibility, many precarious and non-status migrants fear speaking about their experiences. Thus, directing our attention to the few outlets that do share their stories is helpful in amplifying these ignored voices. Analyzing the media and city council minutes offers a good starting point to do so. The next section will explain in detail why this methodology was chosen and the perceived benefits of it.

Chapter 3: Methods

3.1. Introduction

Considering the information provided above, the mental health issues of non-status migrants who are precariously employed can no longer be ignored. The negative outcomes resulting from living without status and working in unfavourable conditions greatly impact this population. Thus, next, I will turn to the media's role in giving voice to this hidden population. The media plays a significant role in shaping public opinion on various concerns facing residents in this country. Therefore, to explore this issue, this paper analyses two newspapers, *Toronto Star* and *The Globe and Mail* and an online news source, *CBC News*. In addition, there will also be a review of city council minutes across various municipalities in Canada to see if the media's influence on public opinion is reflected in politics.

3.2. Justification of Methodology

There are several methods one can approach the topic of mental health outcomes for non-status migrants. First is through quantitative methodology, which has been the primary analytic technique in health studies (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005). In the context of this paper, this could include looking at health records of non-status migrants (i.e., from community health centres), hospitalization rates, suicide numbers, or surveying the population. However, this approach is flawed for three reasons: 1) since the population is so highly neglected the information is almost non-existent since there is no census data collected; 2) statistical data is challenging to compile since the population is difficult to find; 3) it would not provide details on what causes the mental health outcomes (i.e., fear of deportation). Whereas a qualitative content analysis "focuses on the characteristics of language as communication with attention to the content or contextual meaning

of the text” (Hiesh and Shannon, 2005, 1278). Therefore, a qualitative approach was chosen to allow for a more in-depth understanding of how being non-status and precariously employed affects the mental health of this group.

Every society must consider what issues are relevant and important for the public to address. In doing this, it implicitly determines which ones can be ignored. This is known as an agenda (Dearing and Rogers, 1996). An issue is defined as anything that is in contention (Ibid). However, some issues are not addressed due to a lack of exposure, including in the media. When issues are not discussed, they are neglected by those in public office, who have the power to put them on the agenda. This is known as the agenda-setting theory and will be utilized in this paper to understand how the media frames issues facing non-status migrants and if they are reflected in the city council minutes.

Conducting a media analysis is helpful for many reasons. First, it allows for categorization. The articles can be separated by themes, dates, and relevance. This allows us to compare the articles with the literature, understand the prevalence of the coverage, and see how it changes over time. Moreover, a media analysis provides a richness of content that other methods do not. For example, if I had decided to do interviews with precarious and non-status migrants, I would be lucky to connect with two or three individuals. However, analyzing media coverage of two newspapers and one national broadcaster provides hundreds of accounts over ten years. In addition, reading the city council minutes gives added insight into the topic being explored.

Newspapers and broadcasters continue to be an important medium for individuals to get trusted and reliable updates, especially in this age of widespread misinformation spread via social media. Since these sources are consumed daily, they disseminate everyday concerns to

readers. *Toronto Star* was selected because it is the largest daily newspaper in Canada and is read by “6 million readers every week” (LinkedIn, 2021). *The Globe and Mail* was selected because it is the second most wide-read newspaper in Canada. As Canada’s “national public news and information service” (*CBC News YouTube*, 2021), *CBC News* is significant in informing residents on various issues pertaining to Canada. Lastly, bringing in the city council minutes helps put the agenda-setting theory into context. Moreover, analyzing the media coverage with the city council minutes allows for triangulation to see any similarities or differences in how this issue is discussed.

3.3. Methods

3.3.1. Data Collection

Data for this research was collected from two broad sources: media (including two newspapers and one online news source) and city council meetings from cities in Canada (20 meetings from nine cities - Toronto, Ottawa, Hamilton, London, Sarnia, Oshawa, Regina, Vancouver, and Montreal).

Newspapers were collected using the NexisUni database. An initial set of articles were collected using a keyword string with the following terms: ‘migrant,’ ‘immigrant,’ ‘migration,’ ‘immigration,’ ‘alien,’ ‘refugee,’ ‘irregular,’ ‘precarious,’ ‘non-status,’ ‘illegal,’ ‘undocumented,’ ‘sanctuary,’ ‘sanctuary city,’ ‘deport,’ and ‘deportation.’ The articles had to be written between January 1, 2011 and December 31, 2020 – allowing for a decade of coverage to be explored. This initial search provided an initial return of 7,156 articles (*Toronto Star* = 2731, *Globe & Mail* = 3102, and *CBC News* = 1323). This initial pool was then re-examined for coverage specifically on health and wellness based on presence of keywords, including ‘health,’

‘wellness,’ ‘well-being,’ ‘mental health,’ and ‘mental well-being’ – filtering out non-relevant articles – reducing the number of articles to 1867 (*Toronto Star* = 807, *Globe & Mail* = 905, and *CBC News* = 355). Finally, this set of articles was reviewed for content and relevance. Duplicate articles and non-relevant articles were removed, leaving a final dataset of 119 articles (*Toronto Star* = 48, *The Globe & Mail* = 23, and *CBC News* = 48).

The city council minutes were drawn from cities across Canada. Targeted searches of media coverage were undertaken to determine if cities had political discussion related to non-status and precarious migrants. The process started with searching Google for any discussions at city council meetings published in news items (i.e., articles), Tweets from attendees, or short video clips. Using the dates from these items, a search was conducted on YouTube for the full meetings. The videos were then transcribed, and meeting minutes were examined to determine if content of the discussion was relevant (for example, cities that had only introduced a sanctuary city solidarity statement or outlined a process for determining the feasibility of urban sanctuary, without significant discussion were not included). This resulted in 20 meetings from nine cities being analyzed. These meetings represent a rich data source, as they allow perspectives of many people to be identified and analyzed. The 20 city council meetings represent nearly 35 hours of relevant discussion on status and precarious migrants and contain the participation of nearly 200 people. The city council meetings were all transcribed verbatim from video recordings of the meetings.

3.3.2. Content Analysis

To analyze the media and city council meetings a content analysis approach outlined by Hsieh & Shannon (2005), was used for both sources. For the media coverage, I read the articles

to gain ‘emersion of the whole’ – in essence, a general sense of the tone and content of the articles. This helped establish whether the articles had *any* relevance to precarious and non-status migrants. This began with reading a couple dozen articles in full to get a sense of what information was presented in the articles. Following this initial ‘deep dive’, relevance of each article for the analysis became easier to detect simply by scanning the papers and in some cases reading the titles. For example, articles titled with ‘Trump’ were automatically omitted due to their diversion to the topic of mental health outcomes of precarious and non-status migrants in Canada. For the newspaper articles, several dozen were read until convergence was reached – that a large enough sample had been read to provide a general perception of how and if the media covers the mental health of precarious and non-status migrants. Similarly, the transcripts of the council meetings were read to gain an understanding of content, style, and relevancy before analysis of the content was analyzed.

Once the 119 articles were narrowed down, each one was read in-depth, noting keywords related to mental health and precarious employment with each paper read. These included but were not limited to stress, depression, suicide, worry, anxiety, long working hours, exploitation, abuse, and worker rights. These keywords were then aggregated together to form themes (i.e. similar keywords would be grouped together into a larger theme). Some articles had various themes, while others had one or two. These were grouped together until the final set of themes were discovered. five prevalent themes were reoccurring throughout the coverage in relation to mental health: 1) fear of deportation, 2) family separation, 3) detention, and 4) working conditions; and 5) effects of status on mental health. Additionally, the impacts of COVID-19, while not its own theme, were examied. The content was not analyzed solely for its ‘raw content,’ but I also looked at the tone in which the articles were written. Although a quantitative

analysis was applied, noting how frequently each theme was reported on, a qualitative approach was most useful in understanding the mental health outcomes of the research population. This same approach was used in analyzing the city council minutes – where content around key nodes were coded and catalogued. For the city council minutes, all five themes were present; however, there was no discussion on the impacts of COVID-19 in the meetings that were analyzed.

3.4. Summary

The media is a powerful source of information, and thus why analyzing it clarifies various issues in society. In this case, with non-status migrants being a hidden population, the media is instrumental in revealing some of the struggles faced by this population. Moreover, in analyzing a decade of coverage, I can read the experiences of dozens of precarious and non-status migrants, which would not be possible if a quantitative approach was applied or even if I had conducted interviews with a few precarious and non-status migrants. Lastly, reviewing the city council minutes and comparing them to the media coverage will help us determine if the agenda setting theory comes into play in policies surrounding precarious and non-status migrants. The next chapter, which reveals the findings of the media and analysis and city council minutes, will look at the issues pertaining to precarious and non-status migrants, specifically how and if being non-status coupled with precarious employment affects the mental health outcomes of this vulnerable group.

Chapter 4: Findings

4.1. Introduction

The media coverage of mental health outcomes of precarious and non-status migrants has been, much like the academic literature, limited thus far. This is the case for *Toronto Star*, *The Globe and Mail*, and *CBC News*. The articles that have been published, although providing some insight, fail to delve deeper into the conditions causing poor mental health outcomes of these groups. They barely scratch the surface, presenting shallow analysis of the stories reported. Nonetheless, given the population's fear of speaking out, the light shone on these groups, even though dimly lit, has the potential to improve.

Upon analyzing the media coverage of the mental health outcomes of precarious and non-status migrants, the following themes were most prevalent in the articles in *Toronto Star*, *The Globe and Mail*, and *CBC News*: 1) fear of deportation, 2) family separation (related to isolation and social exclusion), 3) detention, 4) working conditions, and 5) effects of precarious immigration status and precarious employment on mental health. The differentiation between theme four and five is that the former focuses on the conditions of the jobs being undertaken (i.e., unsafe, long hours, "low-skilled," etc.), whereas the latter makes clear how this type of employment affects the well-being of individuals working precarious jobs.

These themes were mainly chosen based on information extracted from the literature, which were: (1) constant fears of deportation; (2) lack of access to health services; (3) isolation and social exclusion; and 4) detention. Theme five has been extracted from the research objective, which is to understand how lack of official status coupled with precarious employment affects mental health. Although lack of access to health services was discovered in the media coverage, there was either insufficient coverage or spoken in general terms without mention of

the impacts on the mental health of precarious and non-status migrants. That being said, this theme is omitted from the analysis.

Table 4.1: *A summary of the content of newspaper coverage and city council minutes*

Theme	Data Source			
	Globe & Mail	Toronto Star	CBC News	City Councils
Fear of Deportation	There were 11 articles published on this theme, three of which made mentions of mental health. Some of the issues that emerged include suicide, sadness, PTSD, sleeplessness, nightmares, worry. All but one of the articles went into detail about precarious or non-status migrants and their employment conditions. The articles were lengthy and did show compassion for the plight of this population.	There were 12 articles published on this theme, with four mentioning mental health. Some of the issues discussed include feeling unwanted and lacking freedom of movement and how this takes a toll on wellbeing. There were many missed opportunities to understand how fear of deportation affects the mental health of precarious and non-status migrants.	There were 22 articles published on this theme, 10 made mentions of mental health. Some of the issues covered include feelings of sadness, desperation, stress, worry, terror, sleeplessness, confusion, frustration, and suicide. The articles did not go into depth. The coverage, although generally compassionate, missed a level of humanity that a focus on mental health could have brought.	Four of the city council meetings discussed this theme. The discussion revolved around a fear of accessing city services. During two of these meetings speakers made a connection to mental health, including psychological harm and emotional and psychological torture caused by the fear. The tone was urgent and compassionate.
Family Separation	There were three articles published on this theme, but none of them made mentions of mental health. The coverage was very general, offering little substance on how family separation affects the mental health of precarious and non-status migrants.	There were five articles published on this theme, two made mentions of mental health. Some of the issues covered include isolation and loneliness. Although the tone of the coverage was compassionate, it provided very little	There were nine articles published on this theme, with five of them touching on mental health. Most of them were related to detention (i.e., parent detained, child spared detention) and discussed the effects on children. Some of the issues reported on include anguish, difficulty sleeping, loss of	One of the city council meetings discussed this theme. It was briefly mentioned by a non-status migrant. However, there was no connection to mental health.

		understanding of the mental health challenges.	appetite, and separation anxiety.	
Detention	There were six articles published on this theme, with three of them reporting on mental health. Some of the issues presented include suicide, isolation, feelings of sadness, and the effects of detention on children. Although the coverage was sympathetic, it lacked a greater level of humanity necessary for understanding the mental health challenges caused by detention.	There were five articles published on this theme, with everyone reporting on mental health issues. Some of these include suicide, hopelessness, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, feelings of sadness, anxiety, nightmares, and hallucinations. Although limited, the coverage provides great information on the mental health outcomes as a result of being detained.	There were nine articles published on this theme. All of them made mentions of mental health. Most of them discussed effects on children. Some of the issues discussed include stress, schizoaffective disorder, chronic psychosis, cognitive delay, isolation, depression, anxiety, feelings of sadness, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The coverage was compassionate and understanding.	One of the city council meetings discussed this theme. It was barely mentioned but did connect to mental health when spoken about.
Working Conditions	There were 13 articles published on this theme, and two of them made mentions of mental health. One of these go into depth. Some of the issues raised include long working hours, unpaid overtime, fear of reprisal if migrants speak out, unsafe working conditions, paid less than Canadians for similar	There were 31 articles published on this theme, with 18 making mentions of mental health. The issues revealed include wage theft, poor pay, working precarious jobs due to no status or precarious status, long hours, 7 days a week	There were 19 articles published on this theme, eight of them mentioning mental health. The issues covered include long working hours, exploitation (i.e., no overtime pay, less pay, wage theft), lack of workers' rights, and "low-skilled" work (i.e., cleaners, construction, food service,	Nine city council meetings discussed this theme. Some of the issues that were brought up include lack of choice in employment, working under the table, exploitation, workplace injuries, low wages, and unsafe work. The tone is which people spoke was

	<p>work, and poor living arrangements (farmworkers). For the most part the coverage, although presenting important information, does not make the connection between poor working conditions and mental health outcomes.</p>	<p>fear of reprisal for speaking out, lack basic workers' rights, death in the workplace, unsafe working conditions, limited or no health and safety training, isolation, abuse and exploitation, and poor living conditions (in the case of farmworkers). The overall tone of the articles was humane and compassionate.</p>	<p>etc.). The coverage was general and vague and did not delve deep into the mental health issues caused by such working conditions.</p>	<p>sympathetic and compassionate.</p>
<p>Precarious Employment</p>	<p>There were two articles connecting a lack of status and being precariously employed with poor mental health outcomes. As mentioned above, one of these went into detail. The article raised issues of suicide, lack of sense of belonging, feelings of sadness, feelings of shame, and feelings of worthlessness after being injured on a job. Moreover, the article does an excellent job of bringing a sense of humanity to the plight of precarious and non-status migrants.</p>	<p>There were eight articles published on mental health outcomes of non-status migrants who are precariously employed. The issues presented include stress, suicide, worry, fear, dissatisfaction with jobs, anger, depression, and feelings of weakness. These articles were presented with a great deal of humanity.</p>	<p>There were no articles published connecting lack of status and precarious work and the effects this may have on the mental health of precarious and non-status migrants.</p>	<p>One of the city council meetings made a connection between being non-status/precarious status and working precarious jobs and the effect this has on one's mental health. The tone in which it was presented was very humane.</p>

4.2. Media Analysis

4.2.1. Fear of Deportation

In covering this issue, *CBC News* published the most articles on this topic (n = 22). Of these, 10 made mentions of mental health. Feelings of sadness, desperation, stress, worry, terror, sleeplessness, confusion, frustration, and in one case suicide, were discussed. The best reporting brought in quotes from precarious or non-status migrants, such as this one:

Many of them [precarious and non-status migrants] are walking like zombies here, I can see that...Nobody knows how many of us are wandering around with tears in our eyes, many times crying silently inside subway washrooms, thinking about what the future holds for us in Canada (Brosnahan, 2014).

Nonetheless, all in all, the coverage was brief, and we barely get a deeper understanding of the severity of the challenges faced by those who are subject to deportation.

Writing on the fear of deportation, *Toronto Star* wrote 12 articles, but only four of them made mentions of mental health. One of the articles mentioned being “emotionally and mentally” relieved once they had received their official status (Keung, 2016). The reporter could have used this as an opportunity to understand what this individual felt when they had precarious status and then being non-status. Another article discussed precarious and non-status migrants avoiding health services for fear of deportation (Kamal et al., 2016). However, once again, it does not go further than one sentence that briefly mentions this topic. Two articles discuss suicide, one being an attempted suicide in a detention facility.

The Globe and Mail contained 11 articles on the fear of deportation, with three touching on the mental health impacts of this fear. The following were briefly covered: suicide, sadness, PTSD, sleeplessness, nightmares, and worry. However, like *CBC News* and *Toronto Star*, the articles presented vague coverage on this issue. This quote (in Wingrove, 2010) reveals the mental health challenges faced by migrants when facing deportation:

Charlotte Umutesi, 35-year-old elder-care worker doesn't speak much these days. When she does, she says she hardly eats and hardly sleeps, jolted awake night after night by nightmares of her past. "I'm very scared," she says quietly, wrapped in a coral-coloured scarf and sitting in the Edmonton-area home of her aunt. "They're going to kill me."

Fears of deportation are ever-present for precarious and non-status migrants. It creates anxiety among these individuals, which is harmful to the overall well-being of both groups. The media has evidenced this through the limited coverage discovered on this topic. However, the exploration of these issues needs to delve deeper for readers to truly understand the negative impact it has on one's mental health.

4.2.2. Family Separation

The theme of family separation in the three media outlets analyzed mostly covered families who had arrived in Canada together and were separated either when: a) one family member is facing deportation and the others are permitted to stay in Canada, b) parents who are non-status face deportation but the child is Canadian, or c) upon entry to Canada, parents are put in detention while the child is put in the welfare system. Regardless of how families are separated, the negative impacts on the mental health of these migrants cannot be ignored.

CBC News had the most coverage, writing nine articles on this topic. Four of these articles mentioned mental health but mainly discussed how it affects children. One article spoke to a non-status woman who was facing deportation to Hungary and would be separated from her 4-year-old Canadian son. She speaks of the incident saying:

It's the most painful thing that a parent could ever face...I lie awake at nights thinking about how I'll miss out on the little things, like his first day at school. Is he eating? Is he brushing his teeth? All those things a parent worries about (Allen, 2019).

The implication is that this non-status migrant's mental health is negatively affected by this situation, as are many who face deportation and family separation.

Toronto Star reported on family separation in five articles, with two of them very vaguely mentioning mental health. One article, Keung (2013), went into great depth covering a non-status family's journey to Canada and tells a "human side to a vulnerable population." The family did not experience family separation in the way explained earlier, but they felt loneliness not being able to be with extended family members and the inability to make other social connections (i.e., friends). Therefore, despite Canada being a safe haven from their home country Mexico, they feel like "a bird in a cage," as one of the family members proclaimed. They further express the anguish of loneliness saying:

We pay a high price to be here. We have an isolated life. We can't be with our family. We can't have a barbeque and invite everybody to come. We want to do so many things but we can't (Keung, 2013).

Like *Toronto Star*, *The Globe and Mail* presented very few articles about family separation. The news outlet wrote three articles on it, with no in-depth discussion of mental health. One article quoted Gary Anandasangaree, Liberal MP, saying the situation was a "heart wrenching experience," (Xu, 2020) but does not delve deeper.

4.2.3. Detention

With a total of seven articles, *CBC News* had the most coverage on this theme. Every one of the articles made a mention of mental health. This is not surprising given the extensive literature on the impact that detention has on migrants' mental health (Newman et al., 2013; von Werthern et al., 2018). Reports mentioned suffering, fear, sadness, stress, psychological harm, isolation, despair, trauma, depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). One report explained how migrant mothers, who are often responsible for caring for children, noticed changes in their children's behaviour and overall wellbeing because of being detained:

Their children had difficulty sleeping, lost their appetite for food and interest in play, and developed symptoms of depression and separation anxiety, as well as a variety of physical symptoms. Many of these symptoms persisted after release from detention (Harris, 2017).

Another article tells the story of the impact detention had on a young migrant woman, even after release:

It stays with you all your life. It is horrible. I don't think anyone deserves to be in a holding centre. It is jail. It was the worst week of my life...I am still very scared when I see a police officer. I hear someone knocking really hard and I think of what happened. I have flashbacks. Any letter from immigration scares me (CBC News, 2012).

Toronto Star published five articles on the detention of migrants. Similar to *CBC News*, every article made a mention of mental health. In particular, two of the articles provided many insights on the negative effects on migrants' mental health due to being detained. The first focuses on a non-status migrant, who at the time had spent more than six years in detention, presenting the hopelessness and desperation felt by the migrant:

*He takes sleeping pills just to get three or four hours of rest a night. Lately, he has been dealing with a painful stomach condition and often finds blood in his stool. "I'm 51 years old now," he says. So what am I living for?" Ali told *The Star* he has tried to kill himself three times. Once, after he was placed in solitary confinement, he says he tried to suffocate himself by stuffing toilet paper in his nose and down his throat. He says he has been put in solitary - sometimes called "segregation" - on several occasions throughout his immigration detention, including once for six consecutive months (Kennedy, 2017).*

The other describes mental health and detention through the frame of a non-status migrant woman who was detained with her Canadian child. The report notes that a psychological assessment showed "severe depression and post-traumatic stress disorder, causing her physical and mental problems including bedwetting, feelings of sadness and anxiety, thoughts of death, frequent nightmares and loss of appetite" in the child (Keung, 2017).

The Globe and Mail had six articles on detention, and three mentioned mental health. One article briefly mentioned the effect of detention on migrant children. In it, Rachel Kronick, a

child psychiatrist at Jewish General Hospital in Montreal and a professor at McGill University notes:

Our research concluded that it is never in the best interests of children to be separated from their parents, nor is it ever in the best interests of [a] child to be detained...Migrant children's right to health must be protected” (quoted in Ronskill, 2016).

Although the mention of health is general here, the presumption is that Kronick is not limiting her understanding to solely physical health, and thus why it is included in the analysis. The other two articles covered the suicide of a migrant woman who was facing deportation to Mexico, where she had an abusive boyfriend. Written by the same reporter, one of the articles spoke to Rocco Trigueros from the group ‘Mexicans Living in Vancouver,’ who called on Canadians to try to understand what non-status migrants may be going through psychologically when they are “suddenly being forced from the life they've built” and why detention could lead to suicide, as it did in the case of the migrant whose story was shared in the article (Urgmann, 2014).

4.2.4. Working conditions

Although the working conditions of precariously employed migrants are abhorrent across various industries, many of the articles analyzed covered the conditions on Canadian farms due to the COVID outbreaks that have occurred (Weikle, 2020). Migrants who work on these farms enter Canada under the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program (SAWP), the country’s longest-standing temporary migrant program (Vosko, 2018). They work on farms across the country eight months out of the year, picking, harvesting, and growing the food that comes to our breakfast, lunch, and dinner tables. Yes, these individuals have status in the country. Still, as Vosko (2018) notes in her research of SAWP workers, they are subject to deportation in the

same way that non-status migrants are, in that if they speak out on unsafe working conditions, they will not be able to return the following year. Moreover, according to Santiago Escobar, a national representative with the United Food and Commercial Workers Union (UFCW), an estimated 2,000 non-status migrants work on farms in Leamington, Ontario alone (Gatehouse, 2020), and therefore are relevant to this analysis.

Reporting on the working conditions of migrants, *Toronto Star* reported the most articles on this theme with 31 articles published. Eighteen of the articles were written before COVID, while 13 were published during the pandemic. The articles revealed that many migrants:

- 1) Work long hours (10-12 hours a day, seven days a week);
- 2) Are exploited (no overtime pay, paid less, wage theft);
- 3) Lack workers' rights (forced to do dangerous/unsafe jobs, discrimination [racism], no job security);
- 4) Experience sexual harassment;
- 5) Do not speak out on employer abuses due to fear of reprisal.

In the case of farmworkers, the articles show that employers are providing poor living conditions, often packing dozens of people in one home. This has proven to be deadly where social distancing becomes impossible, resulting in the deaths of migrants, with one known case being a non-status migrant (Gatehouse, 2020). In some cases, migrants are unable to access COVID testing and are not provided Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) (i.e., masks, gloves) that can prevent them from contracting the virus. Of the 22 articles published, 10 mentioned mental health, including no sense of belonging, fear, stress, loss of dignity, depression, mental exhaustion, negative effects on overall psychological well-being, feeling invisible, demoralized, and isolated, and in one case, suicide.

CBC News published 19 articles on this theme. Ten of the articles were written pre-COVID, while nine covered working conditions during the pandemic. The reporting was similar to *Toronto Star*, exposing migrants' working conditions, including exploitation, abuse, and lack of workers' rights. Two of the articles also showed that non-status migrants, despite having "high-skilled" jobs in their home countries, were forced into precarious jobs (i.e., cleaners, hotel maids, food service, construction, etc.). Of the 19 articles written, eight had vague mentions of mental health, using words such as stress, feeling upset, and suffering. However, apart from this, there was not much expansion on how these working conditions affect one's mental health.

The Globe and Mail published the least articles on migrants' working conditions, with 13 articles covering this theme. Five of the articles were published prior to the pandemic, and eight were published during the pandemic. Once again, the reporting was like both *Toronto Star* and *CBC News*, revealing similar findings of migrants' working conditions. Two of the articles published gave readers insight into the mental health issues that arise for precariously employed migrants, with one going into extended detail on the subject. However, this will be discussed in the section below.

4.2.5. Effects of Precarious Immigration Status and Employment on Mental Health

Considering that both precarious immigration status and precarious employment are attributed to negative mental health outcomes, we must consider these factors in conjunction. However, much like the literature, the media have missed the opportunity to explore how one's status or lack thereof coupled with precarious employment affects the well-being of people in these circumstances.

Toronto Star published eight articles that provided insight into the mental health outcomes of precarious and non-status migrants who are precariously employed. *The Globe and Mail* published two articles on these themes. *CBC News* did not publish any articles that fit this criterion.

In one article published by *Toronto Star*, Ruth Pierre-Paul, who advocates on behalf of Montreal's Haitian community, is quoted saying, “These people are living a double stress: They have to work and are on the front lines of a battle that could put them in the grave, with a status that gives them no benefits and makes them more vulnerable” (Lowrie, 2020). The pandemic has revealed these two stress factors that precarious and non-status migrants are faced with every day. However, as mentioned earlier in this paper, these problems are not new. In fact, most of the articles published by *Toronto Star* on these themes were released before the pandemic, including one that was 5000+ words and told the story of a migrant farmworker who committed suicide.

Through letter exchanges with his wife, he revealed this about his employment at the farm:

I dream of you a lot my love. I don't know what is happening with me, that every day I miss you more and more. I wish I could come back but because of you and my children, I stay for the money. My health is good, thank God, but the work is bad. You know me, I don't want people to yell at me. Today I was close to being sent back to Mexico because we don't like this boss. But the woman boss has all of our passports and I already told her she has to give it back and she doesn't want to (Mojtehedzadeh, 2019).

Another article published by *Toronto Star* reveals how stress and worry is ever-present at the workplace when they reported on a raid of non-status migrants who were “gathering for their morning pickups to job sites”:

One of my friends just walked into the Coffee Time and opened the door. Two undercover officers moved in from the parking lot and asked for his ID. He was taken to two blue vans at a parking lot behind a bingo hall. There were other Spanish guys being detained there," said Oscar, a failed refugee claimant from Costa Rica who has lived underground in Toronto for nine years... "Everyone is either staying at home today or changing their pickup spots to avoid immigration.

Everyone lives in fear. We are all afraid to leave our home," said the 43-year-old roofer (Keung, 2014).

Both articles in the *Globe and Mail* drew comparisons between non-status migrants' working conditions and the wages offered to their Canadian counterparts and how this affected their sense of belonging and worth in Canada. One article, written by Joe Friesen in 2010, goes into great depth about non-status migrants who are precariously employed. Friesen interviews a non-status migrant who recalls a time working alongside Canadians, who

worked for a big company and were getting paid \$50 an hour for doing more or less the same job. They wore steel-toed boots and used machines to lift what [he] and his colleagues tried to lug on their shoulders.

However, as a non-status worker, he had no one to bring his concerns to, including when he badly injured his hand at an industrial plant on a machine, which he claims he had little training to use safely. Fearing deportation, he urged his coworkers not to call the police. Following this incident, he has had suicidal thoughts, overdosed on pills once, and has wandered in moving traffic, stepping in front of vehicles.

3.2.6. COVID-19 Coverage

Another important thing to mention is how the coverage has evolved, especially since January 25, 2020, "when the first case of COVID-19 was reported" (CPHA, 2021). To understand this, the articles have been selected to be analyzed by year, with two categorizations: articles written pre-COVID and those written during the pandemic. Prior to the spread of COVID-19, *CBC News* published a total of 38 articles that made mentions of mental health in relation to precarious and non-status migrants. *Toronto Star* wrote 33, and *The Globe and Mail* published the least with 14 articles. In comparison, *Toronto Star* published 15 articles during the pandemic, *CBC News* published 10, and *The Globe and Mail* had 9 articles published.

The articles mentioned that COVID-19 has exacerbated already difficult working conditions that migrants are forced into. For example, *CBC News* reported the following:

Migrant workers already here have seen dramatic work intensification: 128 workers reported working for weeks without a day off, being forced to work long hours, and suffering increased strains, injuries and sickness due to increased pace of work," the report says. The report says 209 migrant workers reported increased intimidation, surveillance and threats by employers, "often under the guise of COVID-19 protocols." The report also noted a higher number of complaints from Caribbean workers, who are mostly Black men. (Harris, 2020).

Meanwhile, reporting on precarious and non-status migrants in Quebec, *The Globe and Mail* published an article on “guardian angels” who are fighting the pandemic as personal-support workers (PSWs), orderlies, cooks, and janitors (Picard, 2020). These individuals are facing deportation, despite the sacrifices they made for elderly Canadians. At the same time, Quebec announced a plan to hire 10,000 PSWs, offering three-months training and a pay of roughly \$50,000 a year. However, applicants must be Canadian. The article wraps up with a quote by Wilner Cayo of the advocacy group *Debout pour la dignité*:

These women were good when it came to working for a miserable salary... But now that this work is going to be well paid, the thank you they get is 'You can't be part of the program.'

Lastly, this quote in a *Toronto Star* article (Mojtehdzadeh, 2020) speaks to the lack of protection for precarious and non-status migrants during the pandemic:

Ariadni Marin works Monday to Saturday cleaning a large downtown Toronto grocery store. On Sundays, she rotates to a different building. She is paid \$13 an hour, she says, minus a 2.5 per cent cut her boss takes for paying cash. She does not have a face mask to wear and has to wash her plastic gloves at the end of each shift so she can reuse them. She has been provided with new cleaning agents; she says she does not know what they are and has received no training on how to use them. The new chemicals make her feel ill. "The work is very, very heavy, and no one is helping us," says Marin, who is originally from Colombia. "Sometimes they ask us to stay for longer but don't pay extra time." Testing and treatment for COVID-19 will be free to all Ontarians even if they are uninsured, the province says. But undocumented workers are not eligible for new employment insurance relief funds set up by the federal government.

The media has increased its coverage of precarious and non-status migrants and the mental health issues they face during COVID-19. However, to not do so would be cruel, especially given the increased attention and praise for essential workers. Nonetheless, the pandemic has only forced the media to put a spotlight on issues that have been prevalent for decades. So, it begs the question, will this coverage continue in a post-pandemic world?

4.3. City Council Minutes

The purpose of analyzing the City Council minutes was to determine if anything stood out as different, be it in tone, depth, or how much focus was put on non-status populations across Canada. Much like the media, city officials have largely ignored the mental health issues that precarious and non-status migrants face. Although there were opportunities for these individuals to speak and others have used the allocated time to advocate for these individuals, the stories and experiences shared were often vague and did not go into details. Nonetheless, the major themes covered include fears of deportation, family separation, detention, working conditions, and immigration status and precarious employment effects on mental health.

4.3.1. Fear of Deportation

The most common theme discussed during these meetings was a fear of accessing city services, due to fears of deportation. With various cities across Canada declaring themselves sanctuary cities, it is evident why this was of such concern to residents and other speakers. Some of the mental health issues spoken about were chronic stress, psychological or physical harm, anxiety, depression, and hopelessness. In Toronto, Fareah El Faron (Health for All, Toronto, 2015) explained how the mental health of non-status migrants affects the entire city this way:

We see youth with anxiety and depression because they are terrified at moments accessing schools where special resource officers or community resource officers are present and are afraid that they will be questioned in some way detained or deported or asked about their family's immigration status. As healthcare providers at every corner we see fear, we see pain, we see tears, and we see our patients and families who have been made into second class residents of this city. And we like our patients, also see the injustice and inhumanity in a system that forces people to hide, to feel that they are invisible, to perpetually live in fear and uncertainty. These are not conditions that ultimately lead to healthy individuals and as healthcare providers we sit here today to tell you that ultimately it does not result in a healthy city.

Additionally, during a city council meeting in Regina, Victoria Ordu, a migrant expressed how her fears of deportation led her to seek sanctuary in a church. She noted the following:

I went home thinking everything was fine, my passport was seized, and from 2011-2015 I was faced with deportation. I was faced with the punishment of forfeiting almost all three years of education after hundreds of dollars had been spent on international tuition which is a lot of money. The situation forced me to seek sanctuary, hiding in the basement of different churches in Regina for 15 months.

It is evident that fears of deportation are of great concern to precarious and non-status migrants. In the context of municipalities, lack of access to city services further exacerbates these fears. Unfortunately, despite some cities across the country declaring themselves sanctuary city, many precarious and non-status migrants do not feel safe, and their mental health outcomes are an indicator of that.

4.3.2. Family Separation

Family separation was rarely discussed during the city council meetings. When it was, unfortunately there was no mention of how this affects the mental health of precarious and non-status migrants. As the literature showed, family separation causes feelings of loneliness, which

negatively impacts people's mental health. Speaking in Regina (2017), Victoria Ordu, a migrant noted:

I came to Canada in 2009, I am come from a very poor background and I am the sixth child out of, well, I am the last one of my family. So when I came to Canada it was really hard adjusting to a new culture and a new environment and also leaving my family back at home.

We are often told of the many things migrants gain when they come to Canada, including higher wages and better job opportunities. However, we rarely are being told about what they lose. Telling stories of loss during city council meetings, specifically family separation, are important in shaping a more humane narrative of what these individuals face when they are living in precarity or without status.

4.3.3. Detention

One mention of detention was found in the city council minutes. It was from Vancouver and pertained to a woman who had committed suicide in a Canadian detention centre. This account was quite thorough and detailed, providing information on the migrants' fear of deportation due to a domestic violence situation in her home country and how detention leads to "psychological or physical harm." The following argument presented in the Vancouver (2016) council meeting by Baldwin Wong (city staffer in Vancouver from City Social Policy and Projects department) demonstrates this further:

Many individuals may not access services out of fear that disclosing their immigration status may lead to detention, psychological or physical harm or deportation. We also learned some of the key issues that affect residents with uncertain or no immigration status. They include: mental, physical health impact due to the chronic stress of living with the fear of being reported and deported.

Detention may seem irrelevant to discuss during city council meetings, as this matter falls under federal jurisdiction. However, it is important for municipalities to understand how the residents of their cities are affected because of being detained.

4.3.4. Working conditions

The working conditions that precarious and non-status migrants are forced into was also a prevalent theme. However, there was barely any mention of how this type of employment affects this group's mental health. Instead, it was spoken about in general terms. For example, in Regina (2017), Dr. Regina Kemerl stated that non-status migrants are “working under the table often [and] very vulnerable in their employment.” In Vancouver (2016), “low wages, unsafe work conditions, [and] exploitation by employers” was briefly mentioned by Baldwin Wong; with a similar sentiment being expressed in the Ottawa council meeting (2017), where Leslie Ann-Marie (executive director of Ottawa Community Services for Immigration) noted that “adults often work under the table, making them vulnerable to unregulated and unethical treatment by employers.”

Councillor Bilau expressed their frustration with the federal government in allowing such abuse and exploitation to go under the radar when they spoke at a city council meeting in

Toronto:

If there are 250,000 people in our region, these people are working. They are not out there on welfare like some tried to make it, they're out there employed and part of our communities. And the federal government that is allowing in a certain way to have them here, does not respond, does not have an adequate system to get these people here, and for example even what I mentioned, even the SINs, if the federal government really wanted to tackle this why haven't they put pictures on SINs? They know that there's thousands of people out there working with other people's SINs.

Finally, speaking at the city council meeting in Toronto (2013), Councillor Wong-Tam expressed the following:

[Non-status and precarious migrants] perform critical jobs, jobs that you and I probably don't want. Jobs that probably your parents or grandparents took on at one particular time. And they are also working these jobs under adverse work circumstances; they work the job without necessarily any type of protection.

This notion of performing critical jobs fails to present the costs of such vital work. Moreover, the migrants who are forced into these working conditions do not have much choice due to their precarious or lack of status. Omitting this key fact from the discussions will not address the root problem facing these individuals.

4.3.5. Effects of Precarious Immigration Status and Precarious Employment on Mental Health

The theme of effects of precarious immigration status and precarious employment on mental health was barely spoken about. Of all the minutes analyzed, the connection was only made at a city council meeting in Toronto (2013). It is reflected in the quote below by Councillor Wong-Tam:

...we know that individuals without legal status must accept work for low wages. They work in poor or unsafe conditions, and this impacts both their mental health as well as their physical wellbeing. It also comes home into the family structure. It's at the dinner tables, it's at the conversation pieces around the living room, it means that children are growing up in fear and their families are living in this constant state of fear.

Once again, separating precarious migrants and non-status migrants from the precarious employment they perform is impossible. This is a fact of life for these individuals. The limited acknowledgement of this during city council meetings is simply immoral. Moreover, continuing to ignore this reality will only lead to poorer mental health outcomes.

4.4. Summary

Although the city council minutes, much like the media coverage, was limited in depth and stories provided, it is helpful to analyze to get an understanding of how the media setting agenda plays out. As discussed earlier, when issues are not spoken about in the public, Canadians and permanent residents tend to ignore them or create their own perceptions of what is or is not important to discuss. Since there is so little focus on the plight of precarious and non-status migrants during these city council meetings, it conveys the message that the issues facing this group is not relevant or necessary to the average resident. Moreover, like the media coverage, the lack of emphasis on the mental health of precarious and non-status migrants misses an opportunity to convey the humanity of these individuals.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion

5.1. Discussion

The rise of temporary migration in Canada since the early 2000s has been economically beneficial for this country. As a source of cheap labour, employers can cut costs by hiring temporary migrants while making huge profits. Additionally, international students, paying high costs for tuition, also contribute significantly to Canada. Moreover, as opportunities to gain permanent residency lessen, these temporary migrants are susceptible to losing their status, which results in many challenges for these individuals, including fewer options for stable and protected employment. They are subject to increased abuse and exploitation at the hands of employers. This results in many issues, including adverse mental health outcomes, which has been proven throughout this paper.

The main objective of this study was to identify the key themes of public and political discourse related to mental health for precarious and non-status migrants. This was done through a media analysis of two major newspapers, *Toronto Star* and *The Globe and Mail*, and one online news source, *CBC News*. The study also analyzed city council minutes. The findings from both were compared to understand how the agenda setting theory fit into this topic. Although limited in coverage and discussion, the study found that precarious status and lack of status adversely affects the mental health of non-status migrants. A second objective of the study was to explore how employment is understood and presented as a driver of mental health outcomes of these groups. Again, the findings showed that reporting and discussions of precarious and non-status migrants rarely explored the mental health outcomes caused by precarious employment.

The media made little to no effort to distinguish those with precarious status and non-status migrants. Although many of the issues explored affect both groups, making the

differentiation is necessary. For example, the fear of deportation affects both groups differently. Since non-status migrants have no authorization to stay in the country, the threat is more imminent. Nonetheless, although those with precarious status are not subject to immediate deportation, if they do not adhere to the strict requirements of their visa, they can easily fall into this category. Presenting this information to the public can be useful for Canadians to understand the challenges this group faces and why so many individuals eventually become non-status. Similarly, there was no distinction made between precarious migrants and non-status migrants during the city council meetings.

Through the analysis, the media and the city council minutes have a similar approach when discussing the issues facing precarious and non-status migrants. First, the amount of focus on these groups is very limited. Given the number of articles and reports the media puts out every year, and the time allocated during the city council meetings, the discussions of precarious and non-status migrants is a drop in the bucket. Moreover, the reporting and discussions tended to be vague and rarely delved deep into the mental health outcomes as a result of lacking status and being precariously employed. Additionally, both the media and the city council minutes generally covered similar themes. Lastly, the overall tone was similar with it being generally sympathetic but could have been more humane if mental health issues were explored in detail.

5.2. Overview of Major Themes in Media and City Council Minutes

Based on the media analysis, the major themes reported by the two newspapers and one online news source were: 1) fear of deportation, 2) family separation (related to isolation and social exclusion), 3) detention, 4) working conditions, and 5) effects of precarious immigration status and precarious employment on mental health. Although there were other themes covered,

most of these were chosen as they have parallels with the literature. These themes were also found in the city council minutes. Below are the findings summarized.

As mentioned above, the fear of deportation is a constant stressor for non-status migrants. The ever-present threat of being “discovered” and removed from Canada creates high levels of anxiety, worry and distress (Myhrvold and Smastuen, 2017). Although the media rarely discussed fears of deportation in connection with employment, with the exception of the articles on farmworkers, it is directly tied to the working conditions migrants are subject to. Since there is a huge power imbalance at play, migrants fear that if they speak out on unsafe working conditions or exploitation, employers may call the authorities on them, which can ultimately lead to their deportation. Although this fear is more imminent for non-status migrants, precarious migrants also face threats of deportation since their status is reliant on a third party who have the power to take their status away at any time. Unfortunately, although all three media outlets covered fears of deportation, they rarely went in-depth on the stress of the fear of deportation causes. Like the media, the city council minutes did not make this connection. They spoke about the fear of deportation in relation to accessing city services, as many cities across Canada have declared themselves sanctuary cities or have deliberated the concept.

The theme of family separation was also reported on in the media. In the literature presented earlier in this paper, feelings of isolation among these groups are highly prevalent due to family separation. The media did not make a clear distinction between non-status migrants and those with precarious status, specifically how family separation affects these groups differently. As mentioned earlier, many temporary migrants immigrate to Canada alone, and thus are separated from the onset of their migration journey. There were not many articles written on this type of separation. Rather, the focus was for non-status migrants who were facing deportation or

put in detention and separated from family members who were also in Canada. Although this is important to cover, the social isolation that many non-status and precarious migrants face comes in many forms and need to be discussed so the average reader understands the full breadth of mental health challenges faced by this population. The city council minutes revealed that this theme was discussed even less in city councils than in the media. Moreover, in the few cities it was brought up, it was only briefly mentioned. There was no recognition of how family separation affects the mental health of precarious and non-status migrants.

Another theme that was covered by the media outlets analyzed was detention. Most of the reporting on detention focused on the impact it has on children. However, there were some articles that presented the adverse mental health outcomes for adult migrants. These include post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, depression, sleeplessness, and suicide, among many other outcomes. It was also revealed that migrants must live with the ramifications of detention even after they are released. Of all the themes, the articles written on detention explicitly mentioned negative mental health outcomes for migrants. However, like the theme of fear of deportation, detention was treated as a stand-alone issue. For example, no articles looked at how people who have been released from detention and then have to work precarious jobs are affected by these two contributing factors. The theme of detention was only discussed once in the sampled city council meetings. It was in relation to a suicide that occurred in a facility in Vancouver. This presented a worst-case scenario if precarious and non-status migrants cannot access city services. There was no exploration of the negative affects to one's mental health after release.

The theme of working conditions was widely reported on, especially since the start of the pandemic. The literature has proven that poor working conditions, such as low pay, long working

hours, lack of worker protections, abuse, and exploitation, results in poor mental health outcomes. Unfortunately, many of the articles did not reveal the mental health outcomes as a result of these working conditions. Instead, they were mostly informative, declaring the importance of this workforce to Canadian society. Like the media, there was extensive discussion within the political discussions that were analyzed on the working conditions precarious and non-status migrants are forced into. This makes sense considering that precarious and non-status migrants are concentrated mainly in major cities, where most of this work is centred. Similarly, though, the discussion rarely made mentions of how this kind of work may affect the mental health of these groups.

Lastly, there was the theme of precarious employment in relation to being a precarious or non-status migrant and how both effects the mental health of these groups. As noted throughout this paper, migrants without official status are often pushed into precarious employment since they have limited options in the labour market. Due to their lack of status, they are subject to higher levels of abuse and exploitation because employers know that they will not speak up for themselves for fear of reprisal, including arrest and ultimately deportation. The media rarely reported how both these contributing factors affects the mental health of this population, which has been proven through the literature. The city council minutes revealed the same, as there were rarely any discussions on how lack of status coupled with precarious employment may negatively affect the mental health of precarious and non-status migrants.

Another important thing to note is that precarious and non-status migrants may face all these issues or a select few at any given time. For example, a precarious migrant who entered Canada alone may be suffering from family separation and poor working conditions. Whereas a non-status family may have gone through immigration detention and upon release forced to work

precarious jobs. Regardless of the issues these migrants face, the reason is directly tied to their lack of official status in the country. The media outlets and city council deliberations failed to share these varying experiences.

5.3. Saliency of Discourse

All in all, the media does not go far enough to showcase the issues facing non-status migrants. An analysis of two newspapers has demonstrated this, *Toronto Star* and *The Globe and Mail*, and one online news source, *CBC News*. Although these outlets have shed some light, which can be argued is better than no attention, the focus is rarely on how living in Canada without official status and being precariously employed affects this population's mental health. In saying this, there is a level of humanity missing from the overall coverage. However, it should be noted that *Toronto Star*, in comparison to *The Globe and Mail* and *CBC News*, was the most humane when discussing the issues mentioned above, offering far more detailed and lengthy accounts of non-status migrants' stories.

Unfortunately, the city council minutes offered similar insights, but much like the media, there has not been enough attention on this population. With cities bearing much of the financial and societal costs for the neglect faced by non-status migrants, more time should be allocated during these meetings to discuss the mental health outcomes of these groups. Nonetheless, from the few accounts provided, the general tone has mainly been compassionate and sympathetic.

5.4. COVID-19

The increased media coverage of non-status migrants during the pandemic makes complete sense. COVID-19 has ravaged our world since its emergence and has profoundly

impacted migrants, especially those working on the frontlines to fight the virus. Many, including the Government of Canada, have deemed the work migrants do as “essential.” As a result, on April 14, 2021, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) created a new pathway to permanent residency for these individuals, opening 90,000 spots for “workers and international graduates who are actively contributing to Canada’s economy” (IRCC, 2021). However, one must meet many eligibility requirements, including possessing a valid temporary resident status (IRCC, Public Policies, 2021). This leaves out the thousands of non-status migrants who also contribute significantly to the Canadian economy, working essential occupations that are precarious, offering low wages, with few protections for workers, and often require long working hours.

Abuse and exploitation of migrant workers is rampant in these industries. They are often afraid to speak out for fear of reprisal (i.e., deportation), and these fears have only amplified since the start of the pandemic, with many reporting increased mental health stress. The first major stressor comes from the virus itself. Having to work in “essential services,” many non-status and precarious migrants are forced to go into the physical work environment, where the chances of contracting COVID are much higher than someone who has been afforded the privilege to work from home. As George Slavich, Ph.D., director of the Laboratory for Stress Assessment and Research at the University of California in Los Angeles, says, “the pandemic for a lot of people is a major health scare...you have this threat in the air of you potentially contracting it at any given time” (quoted in Nelson and Kaminsky, 2020, 679). Despite these warranted fears, many non-status and precarious workers avoid the vaccine for fear their information will be shared with the authorities (Bains, 2021; Hamilton, 2021), which could ultimately lead to their deportation.

In addition, another stressor caused by COVID has to do with employment. Regardless of status, many people have been laid off, have faced major changes to their work environment, or have quit due to fear of contracting the virus in the workplace (Nelson and Kaminsky, 2020, 679). Being laid off or quitting creates a significant disruption to the lives of migrants, who already face financial stresses, including providing remittances for their family in their home countries (Moran, 2020). Unlike their Canadian counterparts, migrant workers were not eligible for the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) and later the Employment Insurance benefits (EI). Others, like any other Canadian or permanent resident, worry that if they continue with their employment, they may contract the virus and spread it to loved ones. A non-status migrant living in Montreal for the past 8 years, sharing her story with the Migrant Rights Network, said this, “I stopped working at the beginning of the pandemic because I was worried about exposing my mother to the virus, as her health is very fragile” (2020, n.p.). Lastly, for those who continue with their employment, many migrants have been forced to work more hours with added pressures to perform. For example, care workers have been forced to work longer hours since people have been advised to stay at home to prevent the spread of the virus (Caregivers Action Centre, 2020).

The conditions in which these individuals are forced to work in have always been deplorable. Canada's Chief Public Health Officer Dr. Theresa Tam acknowledged this when she said, “The virus didn't create new inequities in our society; it exposed them and underscored the impacts of the social policies on our health status” (CBC News, 2020). Unfortunately, though, despite their immense contributions to the Canadian labour force, non-status migrants have remained largely invisible in the eyes of Canadians and permanent residents. With no pathway to permanent residency offered by the Government of Canada, these individuals are pushed further

to the margins and thus subject to higher levels of abuse and exploitation. Furthermore, the mental health outcomes of this group are even less known since the research remains so limited. However, the available literature proves that being non-status and precariously employed does negatively affect the mental health outcomes of individuals.

Non-status migrants are an invisible group in Canadian society. Their invisibility leaves them more vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. Moreover, the isolation they face, due to their lack of status, makes it difficult for them to truly be a part of a society that claims to value the labour they contribute to Canada. This isolation coupled with maltreatment from employers has proven to be detrimental to the mental health of non-status migrants. And as echoed earlier, if their well-being is compromised, so is the overall well-being of the cities they live in. Nonetheless, we continue to ignore them, pushing them further into the shadows.

Although the media has given some voice to these individuals throughout the pandemic, they have not been consistent in their coverage over the past ten years. The reporting has been limited and of little substance. When the selected media outlets report on this group, it is often regarding border securitization, how their use of city services will impact Canadians, or discussing how our neighbours to the South handle its non-status migrant population. The articles that focus on the plight of non-status migrants are vague, offer quotes of little to no substance and give the reader no insight into the mental health challenges.

In a statement to the press, Premier Doug Ford stated, “We're Canada. We aren't some third-world nation that you have to run from the authorities” (Aum and Grant, 2020), when asked to comment on farm workers who avoided getting tested for COVID for fears that if they tested positive they would be deported. Unfortunately, Ford’s words fall flat for the estimated 500,000 non-status migrants who live in a constant state of fear, that if discovered, they will in fact be

detained and eventually deported. These fears have been prevalent for decades, further demonstrating that this *is* Canada and has been for a long time.

It should not take a global pandemic to bring attention to the issues faced by non-status migrants who, as Clifford McCarten, immigration and refugee lawyer, says, “[work] in fields like cleaning, maintenance, construction, food service...not glamorous work, but yet this is the stuff that keeps the country going” (Wiens, 2017). Moreover, the reporting by media outlets, such as *Toronto Star*, *CBC News*, and *The Globe and Mail*, need to do better in helping Canadians understand how the situation non-status migrants live and work in is detrimental to their mental health. This understanding can permeate our political structures, which are also not giving these issues enough attention, as demonstrated through city council minutes. Furthermore, it can also lead to improved immigration policy that treats all migrants entering Canada as equal, rather than differentiating some as “low-skilled” and others as “high-skilled,” which further marginalizes non-status migrants who contribute significantly to this country regardless of how we have branded them.

5.5. Practical Implications

To end this paper, here are a few concrete suggestions that can help alleviate some of the mental health issues faced by precarious and non-status migrants, some of the most vulnerable people in our society. As well, some of these suggestions can help change the way these two groups are perceived by the public. They are as follows:

- 1) Joining the countless advocacy groups and migrants who have been calling for full and permanent resident status for all migrants, including those who do not have status in Canada, the Government of Canada needs to enact a single tiered immigration

- system, that treats all migrants as equal without differentiating classifications such as skill level. This means giving all migrants a clear pathway and easy access to rights and citizenship.
- 2) Until this can happen, precarious and non-status migrants must be protected by providing city services without fear. Although various cities across Canada have implemented sanctuary city policies, the reality is precarious and non-status migrants continue to avoid service use that can better their mental health for fear that they will be reported to CBSA. To ensure safe access, city service staff need better training and education regarding precarious and non-status migrants.
 - 3) The notion of universal health care needs to live up to its name by providing health coverage to all present in Canada. By this I mean anyone that is in the geographical boundaries of the nation state that is Canada. This would include all migrants, regardless of immigration status (i.e., temporary foreign workers, precarious migrants. It would also include those who are non-status. As mentioned earlier, if this group in society suffers, so does the rest of the country. Starting with preventative measures can be helpful in mitigating long-term mental health issues, such as depression, anxiety, stress, and suicide.
 - 4) Media outlets, such as the ones analyzed in this paper, must make a better effort to report on issues facing precarious and non-status migrants. This would include increased coverage and more humane coverage, specifically regarding the mental health outcomes of this group. Journalists must also ask more focused questions when interviewing precarious and non-status migrants in order to extract stories that will get to the mental health challenges faced by these groups.

5) Those in positions of power need to engage the public on issues facing precarious and non-status migrants through political discourse. Like the suggestion for the media, this can happen through increased dialogue (i.e., during city council meetings). If we continue to ignore the plight of these migrants, their mental health will only worsen. That is why there should be a city council meeting at least once a year that focuses solely on the challenges faced by precarious and non-status migrants. This will allow attendees to speak more in depth of the mental health issues they face due to lacking status and how precarious work further exacerbates these problems.

This list is not meant to be exhaustive. Of course, there are a plethora of other actions to be taken to improve the lives of precarious and non-status migrants. Instead, the hope is that these suggestions will motivate people, institutions, policymakers, journalists, and politicians to act. The time to do so is now, as it may improve the mental health of these populations.

5.6. Strengths of the Study

As precarious and non-status migrants rise in numbers in Canada, the issues discussed in this paper will become more prevalent. It is important to understand how the media frames the issues, as this has an impact on how the public views these groups. Moreover, government officials have the power to implement better policies that can protect precarious and non-status migrants. Therefore, if presented with humane and compassionate stories, they may put these issues on their agenda. This study is the first of its kind in Canada to analyze both media and city council minutes to understand how this population's mental health is affected by their lack of status and the working conditions they are forced into.

The study has analyzed 119 articles over a 10-year period, collecting various stories from precarious and non-status migrants. It also reviewed city council minutes from across Canada, which allowed for comparison between media and political discourse. Given the limited time to research this topic, the findings present a good starting point in understanding the mental health issues facing these groups. The chosen method allowed for this, whereas a different one (i.e., interviews) may not have given the stigma surrounding mental health.

The challenges precarious and non-status migrants face is largely unknown. This is demonstrated through the limited literature, scant media coverage, and few city council meeting deliberations. Although the spotlight has increased during the pandemic, these issues have been prominent for decades. However, as our understanding of mental health evolves and we seek to reach more Canadians with this knowledge, this needs to extend to precarious and non-status migrants. This study has demonstrated that the mental health outcomes of this population is adversely affected due to lack of status, which is caused by fears of deportation, family separation, social isolation, and detention. Moreover, since they do not have official status in the country, they are forced into precarious employment, which also negatively affects their mental health.

Overall, the findings in this research contribute to a topic that is of great importance, not only to precarious and non-status migrants, but all residents of Canada. It can help the media understand their responsibility in reporting these issues in a more humane and compassionate way, as well as allocating more coverage on the topic of mental health. Additionally, city councillors can review the findings and consciously implement more discussions of precarious and non-status migrants during their meetings. The study provides a different perspective to the existing literature and discussions of precarious and non-status migrants, moving away from

simply the contributions this population makes to Canada towards the ramifications of said contributions.

5.7. Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

Although the study was able to contribute to the existing research on the topic of mental health of precarious and non-status migrants, there were some limitations. The first limitation is there was scant literature to base the study on. Due to this population's invisibility, issues surrounding precarious and non-status migrants is largely understudied. As previously mentioned, getting the trust of these individuals is difficult and thus studying these groups is not possible unless rapport is built, which could be lengthy. Therefore, as an understudied topic, there is a possibility that something is missing from the analysis and, moreover, experiences of precarious and non-status migrants in relation to their mental health outcomes. Nonetheless, the issues presented in this paper is based on the information provided in the literature, migrant rights organizations, media and city council minutes, which is what is readily available.

Another limitation is the time frame provided to complete the study. Future research should look at more articles than the 119 articles analyzed in this paper. Moreover, scanning headlines and quick reads of the hundreds of articles presents a problem, as some articles that may have been relevant to the study may have been missed. Nonetheless, given the large sample size, there were enough articles in the study to give a good picture of some of the issues faced by precarious and non-status migrants. Future research could include more media outlets or different media sources (i.e., social media – YouTube; documentaries).

Furthermore, a media analysis and review of city council minutes, although unique, does not allow for in-depth understanding of mental health issues facing precarious and non-status

migrants. The media coverage and city council discussions on this population, as evidenced throughout this paper, has been limited. Additionally, future studies should include mental health researchers who would be able to add expert knowledge and insights. These individuals could delve deeper into the mental health outcomes of living without official status and being precariously employed.

It may be helpful to conduct this research through different methods than the one presented in this study. This could include primary data collection, such as surveys. Another method could explore interviews, which would allow for detailed and up-to-date accounts of the issues faced by precarious and non-status migrants. Of course, as previously mentioned, this would require researchers to develop the trust of the population considered for such a study. Therefore, if not possible, future research could speak to different groups who are in close contact with precarious and non-status migrants, such as employers, advocates working with these groups, city councillors, or service workers (i.e., health workers).

5.8. Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to explore the mental health outcomes of precarious and non-status migrants and the factors that contribute to this, specifically lacking official status and being precariously employed. Understanding how migrants fall into precarity and become non-status and the issues associated with this allowed for a strong foundation for this study. An analysis of two newspapers, an online news source, and city council minutes provided better understanding of how media shapes narratives of precarious and non-status migrants and how these depictions are reflected in politics.

The study revealed three major findings: 1) the mental health outcomes of precarious and non-status migrants is adversely affected by their lack of status, which is caused by fears of deportation, family separation, social isolation, lack of access to health services, and detention; 2) precarious employment, including poor working conditions, lack of worker protections, abuse and exploitation, further exacerbates negative mental health of precarious and non-status migrants; 3) these issues, although given some exposure by the media and during city council meetings, is largely neglected by these institutions and thus ignored by the public.

A final thought to wrap the paper is to remind readers that as temporary migration to Canada increases and limited access to permanent residency, so will precarious and non-status migrant populations. That means the negative mental health outcomes faced by these groups is not going away. We need to collectively think about the ramifications of this on society. What does it mean when the people we have deemed “essential” during the pandemic, and who supposedly contribute significantly to Canada’s economy, are suffering in silence? This is a question policy makers, government officials, and all residents of this country need to focus more on. The hope is this study can move the needle forward to do just that.

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