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Constructing Latinx and Mexican Migrant Men in Canada: A Scoping Review of Governance, Parliamentary Discourse, and Media Representation

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Study protocol

Keywords: Canada, Latin American men, Transnational masculinity, Governance, Media representation, Immigration policy

Posted Date: April 9th, 2026

DOI: https://doi.org/10.21203/rs.3.rs-9306424/v1

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Additional Declarations: No competing interests reported.

Abstract

Background

Migration governance in Canada operates not only through legislation and policy but also through parliamentary discourse and media representation. Latin American migrant men are central to temporary labour programs and refugee processes in Canada, yet research remains fragmented across migration studies, gender and masculinities scholarship, labour policy, and media analysis. No comprehensive review has examined how governance, masculinity, and representation intersect across legal, political, and media domains in the Canadian context. This scoping review aims to map and synthesize scholarship examining how adult Latin American migrant men in Canada are constructed and governed within legal and policy frameworks, and how they are represented across political discourse, civil society engagement, and media reporting.

Methods

This scoping review will be conducted in accordance with the JBI methodology for scoping reviews and reported in accordance with the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses extension for Scoping Reviews. Sources published in English, French, or Spanish from 2002 onwards will be considered. Eligible sources must focus on adult Latin American migrant men aged 18 years and older residing in Canada, including temporary foreign workers, permanent residents, refugees, asylum seekers, and undocumented migrants, and must substantively engage with legal or policy frameworks, parliamentary or political discourse, civil society engagement, or media representation. Multidisciplinary academic databases, parliamentary archives, legal repositories, media databases, and grey literature sources will be systematically searched. Two independent reviewers will conduct title and abstract screening and full-text review, followed by structured data extraction using a standardized tool. Extracted data will be analyzed descriptively and thematically, and findings will be presented in tabular and narrative formats, accompanied by a flow diagram of the study selection process.

Discussion

This scoping review will produce a comprehensive map of scholarship on how Latin American migrant men are constructed and governed across legal, political, and media domains in Canada. Findings are expected to inform future interdisciplinary scholarship and contribute to policy analysis concerning racialized migrant men within Canada's migration system.

Review Registration:

This scoping review has been registered with Open Science Framework (https://osf.io/ky7n3)

Background

Migration has long shaped Canada's demographic growth, labour markets, and national identity[1]. In recent decades, migration from Latin America, including Mexico, Central America, South America, and the Caribbean, has become increasingly prominent[2,3]. Mexican and other Latin American nationals enter Canada through multiple pathways, including Temporary Foreign Worker programs, agricultural labour agreements, skilled migration streams, refugee resettlement, and asylum claims[4]. Mexicans are among the largest groups in temporary labour programs and have constituted the largest group of asylum claimants in recent years[2]. Latin American migration is therefore structurally embedded within Canada's contemporary migration regime rather than marginal to it.

Canada's expanding reliance on temporary foreign labour in agriculture, construction, food processing, and service sectors has intensified scrutiny of labour precarity, employer dependency, and restricted access to permanent residence[5]. The Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program (SAWP), established in 1966 and extended to Mexico in 1974, remains the most institutionalized agricultural stream. Governed through bilateral agreements, Labour Market Impact Assessments (LMIAs), and employer-tied work permits, it exemplifies a migration system that is formally regulated yet structurally unequal[2,4,6]. Newer initiatives, including the Canada–Guatemala Temporary Guest Worker Program (TGWP), diversify recruitment while consolidating reliance on racialized migrant labour in the low-wage sector[7]. Mexican nationals remain the largest group in agricultural streams, followed by Guatemalan workers[9–11]. Migration governance in Canada operates through layered and mutually reinforcing regulatory structures. Federal authorities manage admissions and LMIAs, while provinces oversee labour standards enforcement[12]. Employer-tied permits restrict mobility, create asymmetrical power relations, and discourage reporting of workplace abuses[11]. Transnational recruitment intermediaries further shape access to migration pathways[2,7,10]. Taken together, these mechanisms reveal a regime of stratified rights that organizes mobility, productivity, and belonging along differentiated lines.

In the Canadian context, governance extends beyond formal law. For example, temporary labour programs, refugee determination procedures under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA) of 2002, and visa regimes intersect with ministerial rhetoric, civil society advocacy, and media representation[2]. Migration policy, therefore, operates simultaneously as regulation and discourse, structuring labour supply and border control while producing hierarchies of desirability, productivity, and risk. Migrant men are alternately framed as economically valuable, culturally incompatible, vulnerable, threatening, or burdensome[13]. Canadian media frequently reproduces these binaries, framing migrants as either indispensable workers or security concerns[14]. Nevertheless, scholarship has not systematically examined how Latin American migrant men are constructed across these legal, parliamentary, and media domains as a coherent object of governance.

Latin American migrant men represent a heterogeneous yet analytically distinct population within Canada's migration system[2]. They arrive through agricultural labour programs, construction and service

work, skilled migration streams, refugee claims, and family reunification[9]. Their trajectories are shaped by transnational economic pressures, racialization, labour market segmentation, and gendered expectations of breadwinning and productivity [15]. While labour migration has become increasingly masculinized globally, with the proportion of migrant men compared to women increasing from 1.2% in 2000 to 3.8% in 2022[16], gender remains under-theorized within Canadian migration governance[17]. A synthesis of knowledge is particularly urgent given that temporary labour programs, especially in agriculture and other physically intensive sectors, are structured around masculinized ideals of endurance, discipline, and productivity. These are the ideals that rest on the presumption of disposable male labour, constructing migrant men's bodies as compliant, risk-tolerant, and expendable[13].

Research on migrant masculinities demonstrates that migration entails negotiation between pre-migration norms and host-society expectations rather than a linear transformation[18]. Nonetheless, migrant men are often rendered visible primarily as labourers, security risks, culturally problematic subjects, or economically instrumental actors. Dominant narratives mobilize tropes of criminality, hypersexuality, labour competition, and patriarchal traditionalism[19]. Migrant men from the Global South remain underrepresented in Canadian scholarship[13]. A mapping of research on migrant masculinity in Canada between 2000 and 2023 by Sowad and Lafrance[17] identified 39 peer-reviewed studies, of which only one focused specifically on Latin American migrants. Despite their demographic presence and political visibility, Latin American migrant men have not been systematically examined as a distinct category across legal, parliamentary, and media frameworks.

Existing scholarship on Latin American migrant men in Canada is dispersed across migration studies, gender studies, labour policy, political science, and media scholarship. Labour and migration studies document precarious employment conditions, employer dependency, restricted mobility, and uneven enforcement within temporary programs[5]. Historical analyses of the SAWP demonstrate how racialized hierarchies structured recruitment and constrained access to permanent status[6]. Research with other migrant men across forced migration pathways has also shown a trend of economic downgrading and marginalization[8]. Feminist and critical migration scholars emphasize intersectional analyses of race, class, gender, and migration status[20,21]. However, few studies integrate legal mechanisms such as LMIAs and employer-sponsored permits with media discourse to examine how Latin American migrant men are discursively constructed[14]. Conceptual approaches, including governmentality, racialized governance, critical discourse analysis, and masculinities theory, remain unevenly applied and rarely mapped. This fragmentation obscures how regulatory instruments, political rhetoric, and media narratives converge to constitute migrant men as kinds of governable subjects.

A scoping review is therefore necessary to systematically map the breadth and nature of existing research, clarify how governance, masculinity, and representation are conceptualized, and identify critical gaps. Foregrounding masculinity as a category of governance rather than a demographic characteristic can help us disrupt structural conditions and how migrant men are positioned through assumptions about productivity, discipline, risk, and integration. Although prior reviews have addressed migrant health,

labour precarity, refugee policy, media representation, and transnational masculinities[17,22–24], none have synthesized how Latin American migrant men are constructed across legal frameworks, political discourse, civil society engagement, and media reporting in Canada.

A preliminary search of PROSPERO, PubMed, Open Science Framework, the Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews, and JBI Evidence Synthesis identified no current or in-progress scoping or systematic reviews addressing this focus. This absence underscores a significant gap in the literature. The objective of this scoping review is therefore to map and synthesize scholarship examining how adult Latin American migrant men in Canada are constructed and governed within legal and policy frameworks, and how these constructions are reproduced, contested, or transformed across parliamentary and political discourse, civil society engagement, and media reporting.

Review questions

Main question

1. What is the current state and scope of scholarship on Latin American migrant men in Canada in relation to legal and policy frameworks, political discourse, and media representation, and what conceptual and methodological gaps remain?

Sub-questions

1. How are Latin American migrant men constructed and governed within Canadian legal, legislative, and policy frameworks?
2. How are Latin American migrant men represented in political discourse, civil society engagement, and media reporting in Canada?
3. What conceptual and methodological approaches have been used to examine governance and representation of Latin American migrant men in Canada?

Inclusion criteria

Participants

This scoping review will consider publications focused on Latin American migrant men living in Canada. This includes temporary migrant workers, permanent residents, refugees, asylum seekers, and undocumented migrant men aged 18 years and older. Studies including minors, women, non-binary, and transgender people will be excluded unless findings are disaggregated and specifically report on adult men.

Concept

This review will consider publications that examine legal, legislative, and policy frameworks shaping migration and belonging, including laws, statutes, regulations, governance structures, and government or

policy reports. It will also include studies analyzing political actors (e.g., politicians and lawmakers) and civil society engagement in relation to migration. In addition, the review will consider research examining media portrayals, news reporting, and public discourse concerning Latin American migrant men. Studies must substantively engage with at least one of these governance, legislative, or representational dimensions regarding Latin American and/or Mexican migrant men in Canada.

Context

The review will consider studies focused on migrant men in Canada from Latin American countries, including Mexico in North America; Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and Panama in Central America; Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Brazil, Paraguay, Chile, Argentina, and Uruguay in South America; and Cuba. Studies that combine Latin American and Non-Latin American countries will be considered for inclusion if the findings are reported separately for migrant men from Latin American countries. Studies about migrant men in Canada from Non-Latin American countries will be excluded.

Types of sources

This scoping review will consider a wide range of sources to thoroughly map scholarship and public materials on Latin American migrant men in Canada. Empirical studies using quantitative, qualitative, or mixed-methods approaches will be eligible for inclusion. In addition to primary empirical research, systematic reviews, scoping reviews, opinion papers, and theoretical or conceptual articles will also be included if they substantially address governance or representation. Theses and dissertations will be included to capture emerging scholarship and reduce publication bias. Relevant policy and legal materials, such as legislation, statutes, regulatory documents, government reports, committee proceedings, and judicial decisions, will be considered. Grey literature, including government-commissioned research and civil society publications, will be included if publicly accessible. Media materials, such as mainstream newspaper articles and analyses of media representation, will be included. Sources must meaningfully engage with at least one of the review's core domains: legal and policy frameworks, parliamentary or political discourse, civil society engagement, or media representation of Latin American migrant men in Canada.

Methods

The proposed scoping review will be conducted in accordance with the JBI methodology for scoping reviews[25] and reported in line with the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses extension for Scoping Reviews (PRISMA-ScR)[26]. This protocol has been registered with Open Science Framework (https://osf.io/ky7n3).

Search strategy

The search strategy will aim to identify both published and unpublished primary studies, reviews, and legal, academic and policy literature. An initial, limited search of Sociological Abstracts (ProQuest) and Social Sciences Abstracts (EBSCO) was conducted to identify articles on the topic. The words contained in the titles, abstracts, and keywords of relevant articles, along with the index terms used to describe them, were used to develop a comprehensive search strategy for Sociological Abstracts (ProQuest) (see Appendix I). This search strategy, including all identified keywords and index terms, will be tailored to each information source. The reference lists of articles included in the review will also be screened for additional relevant papers. Studies published in French or Spanish will also be included alongside English, and the research team will translate them as needed using DeepL (https://www.deepl.com/en/translator). Sources will be limited to materials published from 2002 onwards, beginning with the implementation of IRPA, which replaced the Immigration Act of 1976, to capture contemporary policy changes while referencing historical scholarship as needed[27].

To gather a comprehensive range of evidence, we will systematically search both academic and policy-oriented sources. Academic databases will include Sociological Abstracts (ProQuest), Social Sciences Abstracts (EBSCO H.W. Wilson), Web of Science Core Collection (Clarivate), Canadian Business & Current Affairs Database (ProQuest), HeinOnline (Law Journal Library), and ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Citation Index, ensuring coverage across migration studies, gender and masculinities scholarship, legal analysis, political science, public policy, and interdisciplinary social science research. To capture media and public discourse, searches will be conducted in the Canadian Newsstream Collection (ProQuest) and Nexis Uni (News). Parliamentary and legislative materials, legal decisions, and jurisprudence will be accessed via Nexis Uni (Legal), Legal Scholarship Network (SSRN), Lexis Advance Quicklaw and the Canadian Legal Information Institute (CanLII). Grey literature, including civil society reports and policy documents, will be retrieved through Canada Commons. Additionally, Google Scholar will be used to identify supplementary sources and ensure comprehensive retrieval of relevant full-text materials.

Study selection

Following the database and grey literature searches, all identified citations will be imported into Covidence (Veritas Health Innovation, Melbourne, Australia) systematic review software, and duplicates will be removed. Prior to full screening, a pilot test of the selection process will be conducted to ensure consistency among reviewers and to refine the eligibility criteria if necessary. A random sample of 16 titles and abstracts will be selected from the retrieved records. All members of the review team will independently screen these records using the predefined eligibility criteria. The team will then meet to discuss discrepancies, clarify interpretations of the criteria, and refine the eligibility guidance where necessary. Screening of the full dataset will begin only once a minimum agreement level of 75% among reviewers is reached.

Following the pilot test, titles and abstracts will be independently screened by two reviewers to assess compliance with the inclusion criteria for the review. Potentially relevant papers will be retrieved in full

and will be examined in detail against the inclusion criteria by two independent reviewers. Reasons for exclusion at the full-text stage will be documented and reported in the final scoping review. Any disagreements between reviewers at any stage of screening will be resolved through discussion or, if consensus cannot be reached, by involving a third reviewer. The results of the search and study selection process will be thoroughly reported in the final scoping review, including a PRISMA flow diagram[28] to visually summarize the screening and inclusion process.

Data extraction

Data will be extracted from publications included in the scoping review by two independent reviewers using a standardized data extraction tool developed by the reviewers (see Appendix II). The extracted data will include detailed information on the study population, including Latin American migrant men in Canada; the key concepts examined, such as legal and policy frameworks, governance structures, political actors, civil society engagement, and media portrayals; the context, including Canadian provinces and migration categories; study design and methodological approaches; and key findings relevant to the main review question and sub-questions.

The data extraction form will be piloted before full implementation, with each reviewer independently extracting data from three sources and comparing results to ensure consistency and clarity. The tool will be refined iteratively as needed throughout the extraction process, and any modifications will be documented in the final scoping review. Any disagreements between reviewers will be resolved through discussion, and if consensus cannot be reached, a third reviewer will be consulted. When necessary, authors of included studies will be contacted up to two times to request missing or clarifying information.

Data analysis and presentation

The extracted data will be analyzed descriptively and thematically to map the scope, characteristics, and patterns of scholarship on Latin American migrant men in Canada. Following scoping review principles, the focus will be on describing and mapping the evidence rather than synthesizing results or assessing certainty, which is beyond the scope of this review.

Descriptive analysis[29] will summarize the characteristics of the included sources by year of publication, type of source (e.g., peer-reviewed article, dissertation, government document, parliamentary material, media analysis, civil society report), disciplinary orientation, methodological design, migration category examined, and geographical focus (provincial or national). Frequency counts and cross-tabulations will allow the identification of temporal trends, research attention concentrations, and underrepresented areas.

In addition, a qualitative content analysis[30] will be conducted to categorize and describe how Latin American migrant men are represented and governed across legal frameworks, parliamentary discourse, political rhetoric, civil society engagement, and media narratives. This will involve finding recurring

discursive themes, governance rationalities, and representations related to labour productivity, risk, security, cultural difference, integration, and vulnerability. Patterns in methodological approaches and theoretical frameworks across studies will also be documented. Importantly, this analysis will remain descriptive, mapping and categorizing evidence without attempting interpretive synthesis, in line with scoping review methodology.

Findings will be presented in both tabular and narrative formats to clearly convey the mapped evidence. Summary tables will outline the study characteristics, the governance domains addressed, temporal trends, disciplinary focus, methodological approaches, the theoretical frameworks employed, and the key findings. A thematic narrative will integrate these findings, illustrating how legal, political, and media constructions intersect and where fragmentation or underrepresentation persists. Each category presented in the tables and figures will include a descriptive explanation that aligns with the review objectives and research questions. This approach will ensure transparency, identify dominant narratives and conceptual trends, and highlight critical gaps to inform future interdisciplinary research and policy analysis.

Abbreviations

SAWP: Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program

LMIA: Labour Market Impact Assessment

TGWP: Temporary Guest Worker Program

IRPA: Immigration and Refugee Protection Act

JBI: Joanna Briggs Institute

PRISMA: Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses

PRISMA-ScR: Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses Extension for Scoping Reviews

SSRN: Social Science Research Network

Declarations

Ethics approval and consent to participate

This study will use secondary data from published articles; therefore, it does not require ethical approval and consent.

Funding

This project has been funded by the ERC Advanced Grant MENBELONG, Belonging for Single Migrant Men: A Cross-Country Comparative Perspective, awarded to Gökçe Yurdakul (Project Number: 101200781).

Author Contribution

All authors contributed to the study's conceptualization. All authors contributed to the design of the methodology, including the search strategy. ASMS drafted and revised the manuscript based on the critical appraisal of NC, GY, and BZ. NC supervised the protocol development process. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

Acknowledgement

Jessica Mussell (subject librarian for Child and Youth Care, Health Information Science, Nursing, Social Work, and Continuing Studies) and David Boudinot (subject librarian for Gender Studies and Indigenous Studies) at the University of Victoria Library, Victoria, Canada, for their expert guidance in developing and refining the search strategy and for their support in strengthening the comprehensiveness and methodological aspects of this scoping review protocol.

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