THE EFFECT OF NATIONALISM ON REFUGEE INTEGRATION IN TEXAS METROPOLITAN AREAS FROM 2008-2018: AN INTEGRATIVE LITERATURE REVIEW

An Undergraduate Research Scholars Thesis

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ABSTRACT

The Effect of Nationalism on Refugee Integration in Texas Metropolitan Areas from 2008-2018:
An Integrative Literature Review

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Refugee integration is a relevant issue for policymakers and non-governmental organizations, however minimal research has explored modern refugee integration in the United States. An exploratory study identified relevant literature, which was reviewed critically and synthesized to generate new ideas and provide direction for further research. Emerging attitudes of nationalism demonstrated through political rhetoric and news media were found to have minimal influence on refugees' integration processes into Texas metropolitan areas. Most refugees in Texas are achieving the desired outcome (i.e., self-sufficiency) of the United States Refugee Admissions Program. Inconclusive evidence exists to determine if refugees are successful in all integration phases when entering Texas host communities. The phenomena under study, refugees' successful integration into Texas host communities, remains an inconclusive outcome. Future studies should examine host communities' perspectives to explore the effects of nationalism on refugees' integration processes. A need exists for consensus building and refinement on the definition of refugee integration, prioritizing the importance of integration as a two-way process.

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KEY WORDS

- Refugee integration

- Refugee resettlement

- Nationalism

- Labor force

- Texas

- Host community

INTRODUCTION

The Congress declares that it is the historic policy of the United States to respond

to the urgent needs of persons subject to persecution in their homelands… The

Congress further declares that it is the policy of the United States to encourage

all nations to provide assistance and resettlement opportunities to refugees to the

fullest extent possible (Refugee Act of 1980).

The United States (U.S.) has long been a desired refugee resettlement country (Capps et. al, 2015), successfully resettling tens of thousands every year. Refugee resettlement is described by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) as "a process beginning with the identification and assessment of applicants, extending to reception on arrival in a resettlement country and including longer term integration into the receiving community" (UNHCR, 2002, p. 9). While refugee resettlement is clearly defined, Oduntan and Ruthven (2017) noted a lack of clarity and/or consensus definition for refugee integration in the literature. Similarly, the concept of integration is often discussed with a variety of meanings (Ager & Strang, 2008). Juzwiak, Siegel, and McGregor (2016) referred to the topic as an "extremely complex concept" (p. 6) characterized by a "diversity of definitions" (Hamberger, 2009, p. 2). Klarenbeek (2019) described the importance of reconceptualizing refugee integration as a two-way process, which is supported by Filippo Grandi (2016 as cited in Spindler, 2016, para. 4) stating

Integration is a dynamic two-way process which requires both the individual and society

to make considerable efforts. In order to play a full role in the social, economic, and

cultural life of their host country, refugees need to achieve equality of rights and

opportunities.

An expectation of this study is to refine the definition of refugee integration based on the existing discussion of the topic.

While reports (Capps et. al, 2015) note the historical success of refugee resettlement in the U.S., the topic of future successful integration lacks much clarity. Changing dynamics in local U.S. communities and the global emergence of nationalism influence refugee integration into local host communities (Bieber, 2018). Minimal research exists which explores integration from the perspectives of the host community. A lack of longitudinal studies expanding over multiple years also contributes to an unclear understanding of refugee integration in the U.S.

The researcher elected to analyze refugee integration in the U.S. from 2008-2018 to explore the wide array of national events which occurred during the selected time period. The most recent market crash (prior to the crisis in 2020) occurred in 2008, influencing unemployment and creating competition for low-wage positions. Exploring integration from 2008-2018 may reveal possible refugee versus citizen competition for the same jobs. Furthermore, 2018 provides a broad view of the shift in national rhetoric capturing the two-year post-Trump election hubris.

Texas has historically played an important role in refugee resettlement in the U.S., hosting the second largest population of refugees resettled from 2008-2018; the U.S. accepted 692,308 refugees from 2008-2018, resettling 69,287 in Texas (Refugee Processing Center, 2019). Because of Texas' role in refugee resettlement in the U.S., it is important to study refugee integration in Texas. Examining labor forces in Texas offers the potential to identify barriers to successful refugee integration, as integration into the workforce is a major factor in long-term

integration success (Richard & Leader, 2018). Additionally, this research may identify public

education programming needs, provided by AgriLife Extension in selected Texas communities.

Refugee integration is a relevant issue for policymakers and non-governmental

organizations. Minimal research has explored modern refugee integration in the U.S. What issues

do refugees encounter when integrating into U.S.' host communities? Does nationalism influence

refugee integration? What are the effects of xenophobia and/or cultural conflict in refugee

integration situations in U.S. cities? Does refugee integration in selected Texas cities affect

localized labor (agriculture, construction, and manufacturing) forces? The purpose of this study

was to determine issues in refugee integration in select Texas metropolitan areas from 2008-

2018. Researching refugee integration in the U.S. can contribute to policy development and

identify future areas of research. Salehyan (2019) noted the importance of academics conducting

unbiased research on refugee integration, emphasizing the need for impartial scholarly research

to be separated from advocacy groups pursuing policy agendas.

CHAPTER I

REFUGEE INTEGRATION

According to the UNHCR, the world is experiencing the highest level of displacement ever recorded with approximately 25.9 million refugees (UNHCR, 2019). Due to the rise in the global refugee population, there is increased importance on refugee resettlement and integration issues. Refugee integration issues in the U.S. impact multiple facets of society, including local host communities and policy. It is important for researchers and policymakers alike to understand the issues of refugee integration.

Refugee Integration in the U.S.

The U.S. has a long history of accepting and settling refugees. In recent years, much attention was given to the U.S Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP). Concerns about national security and program costs are prevalent (Evans & Fitzgerald, 2017). To better understand refugee integration, it is important to examine its history in the U.S. The Refugee Act of 1980 served as the initial legislative document regarding refugee services, creating the basis for implementation of the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (Brown & Scribner, 2014). The U.S. demonstrated a laissez-faire approach regarding refugees before the Refugee Act of 1980, reacting to sudden fluxes of migration based on international crises. Several events led to the standardization of refugee admissions, one of the most notable being the Cuban refugee crisis in the mid-century. Congress passed the Refugee Act of 1980, which continues to shape refugee admissions and resettlement in the U.S.

Under the Refugee Act of 1980, the president determines the maximum number of refugees to be admitted during the fiscal year, providing an opportunity for flexibility based on

ongoing humanitarian crises in the world. The limits have ranged from 80,000 in 2008 to 110,000 in 2017 (American Immigration Council, 2019). Despite current global events resulting in the largest number of displaced people and refugees in modern history (UNHCR, 2019), the refugee ceiling for 2020 was 18,000 (Presidential Memorandum, 2019). Decreasing the refugee ceiling from standard numbers set by previous presidential administrations increases the importance of understanding the phenomenon of refugee integration in the U.S.

The process of admitting and settling refugees in the U.S. is convoluted, involving multiple government and volunteer agencies. Refugees must be processed and vetted before receiving conditional acceptance resettlement (American Immigration Council, 2019). Refugees begin their journey to the U.S. after receiving acceptance for resettlement. Upon arrival, national and local volunteer agencies aid in resettlement processes with the ultimate goal of successful integration through refugees' self-sufficiency.

While the process of admitting and settling refugees is complex, measuring the success of refugee integration is equally as intricate. Ager and Strang (2008) identified ten domains of successful refugee integration across four categories: markers and means, social connection, facilitators, and foundation.

Markers and Means

Ager and Strang (2008) characterized refugee integration as a system of markers and means comprising employment, education, housing, and healthcare. When combined, these markers change one's status from state-dependent to self-sufficient, which is the key goal of the USRAP. While the markers and means of refugee integration are the most studied and clearly defined aspects of integration (Jacobsen et al., 2019), a knowledge gap exists because of limited research on how refugees fare socially and economically (Evans & Fitzgerald, 2017).

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To promote self-sufficiency, volunteer agencies temporarily assist refugees with basic needs during the first 30 days and offer additional support for enrollment into federal programs such as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Medicaid, and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). Eligibility for assistance varies from five to seven years after entry (Siskin, 2016). These federal programs exist for a limited time to support the program's desired outcome of self-sufficiency. Research shows while refugees' dependence on federal programs decrease over time, refugees continue to rely on public services at a higher rate than the natural-born population (Capps et. al, 2015). A notable indicator of self-sufficiency is economic success, confirmed by Richard and Leader (2018) and Waweru (2008). Several components were identified as key factors for economic self-sufficiency: current economic environment of the host countries and cities, refugees' level of education, and the geographical dynamics of host cities.

The economic environment of host countries influences refugee integration in many ways, mostly through employment. Refugees fleeing war and persecution seldom take into consideration their future economic environment, further emphasizing its importance for host governments and organizations to consider. Refugees entering the U.S. during the 2007-2009 economic recession experienced negative effects because of difficulty in finding employment. In one instance, a luxury hotel owner in Phoenix known for hiring many refugees decreased refugee hires from 200 to 60 because of the 2007-2009 economic conditions (Nightingale, 2012). Additionally, Capps et. al (2015) determined refugees demonstrated lower levels of economic success than non-refugee immigrants and the U.S. born population from 2009-2011, noting the negative economic impact the 2007-2009 recession created on low skilled workers.

Refugees' prior levels of education is often disregarded when providing initial placements for employment in host communities. Lester (2014) referred to the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program as a "one-size-fits-all approach" (p. 3), disregarding varying levels of refugees' education. Lester noted refugees with higher levels of education were frustrated with the system based on their initial placement for employment services. Similar frustrations existed outside the U.S., as in the UK where specialized assistance was recommended for refugees with higher levels of education and previous work experience entering host communities (Morrice, 2009).

Host city dynamics are another key factor to successful refugee integration, as Brandt (2010) mentioned the important role geography plays within the process of integration. Numerous facets within host cities such as access to housing, education, and public resources creates the potential to assist or hinder refugees' ability to successfully integrate. While considering host city dynamics may help refugees obtain self-sufficiency, the complex process of refugee resettlement in the U.S. often overlooks such considerations.

Access to healthcare is another key component of successful refugee integration. Many Refugees entering the U.S. have experienced emotional trauma, increasing their susceptibility to mental health illnesses (Mkanta, Ibekwe, Mejia de Grubb, & Korupolu, 2017). Cheung and Phillimore (2017) described level of education and language competency as two critical factors with respect to obtaining healthcare. All of the markers and means identified by Ager and Strang (2008) correlate to obtaining self-sufficiency.

Social Connections

Social connections are another key indicator of successful refugee integration. Social connections can be described as social bridges, social bonds, and social links (Ager & Strang,

2008) involving relationships between refugees and similar (ethnic, cultural, or religious) groups, local communities, and the state. Bernstein and DuBois (2018) describe social connections as an important aspect of refugee integration, however they note the difficulty to explore the topic based on census data. Social connections emphasize the importance of integration as a two-way process between refugees and host communities, which is supported by Strang and Ager's (2010) study which noted the importance of host communities developing a "proactive strategy to create spaces for meeting and exchange" (p. 599).

Informational, emotional, and capacity-building resources were identified as key benefits of social connections (Atfield, Brahmbhatt, & O'Toole, 2007). Social connections offer the potential to provide information to refugees regarding urgent needs such jobs, education, and access to healthcare (Atfield, Brahmbhatt, & O'Toole, 2007). Additionally, social connections are believed to promote emotional health benefits within refugees (Ager & Stang, 2008). While several factors related to migration pose the threat to refugees' mental and physical health, refugees with access to like-minded community are less likely to suffer from depression (Beiser, 1993 as cited in Ager & Strang, 2008). Capacity building can also be referred to as social capital, which is known as a network of relationships which provides access to resources and opportunities (Allen, 2009).

Oduntan and Ruthven (2019) discovered refugees' social needs often develop after physiological and safety needs have been met, which is supported by Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Maslow, 1943). Access to language resources was identified as a critical component prior to the development of social needs, which can be alleviated through ESL classes focused on 'survival English' (Allen, 2009). Social connections are also largely related to other factors such as education and cultural knowledge.

Facilitators

Ager and Strang (2008) determined language/cultural knowledge and safety/stability were necessary factors to facilitate local integration. The topic of language knowledge is replete within the literature, often identified as one of the most critical factors of integration (Alencar, 2018). Refugees' language ability often influences their capacity to obtain employment, education, and healthcare. A refugees' cultural knowledge is also an important factor of integration, influencing the ways refugees navigate public services and integrate socially. Cultural knowledge can be described as the knowledge of procedures, as well as customs and norms (Ager & Strang, 2008). When discussing refugees' acquisition of cultural knowledge, it is critical to distinguish between integration and assimilation (Grzymala-Kazlowska & Phillimore, 2018), as refugee integration is described as a two-way process emphasizing the adaption to one culture and the welcoming from another (UNHCR, 2002).

The domain of safety and stability refers to how refugees feel about their city, neighborhood, or community. Ager and Strang (2008) noted most refugees needed to feel safe in order to feel integrated. Two common concerns revealed within the domain of safety and stability were crime and harassment (Alencar, 2018). Experiences involving racism and discrimination often hinder refugee integration (Grzymala-Kazlowska & Phillimore, 2018), further emphasizing the importance of safety and stability as a domain of successful integration.

Foundation

The process of becoming self-sufficient strongly correlates to the foundational aspect of integration. Ager and Strang (2008) state the domains of rights and citizenship create "a necessary foundation for a shared understanding of what integration is and how it may be measured" (p. 173). Marshall (1950) referred to citizenship as access to political, civil, and social

rights. While an understanding rights and citizenship is necessary to generate an understanding of integration, Ager and Strang (2008) refer to the foundational domain as one of the most confusing domains of integration. An explanation for discrepancies within the foundational domain can be attributed to varying understandings of citizenship and rights within a country.

Many factors such as the historical roots and migration history of the country contribute to a multiplicity of understandings regarding citizenship and rights (Justwan, 2015). The process of obtaining citizenship further differs based on a country's understanding of statehood and naturalization. The U.S. has long been referred to as a country of immigrants, championing the Latin term 'e pluribus Unum,' out of many, one. The sentiment expressed from 'e pluribus Unum' demonstrates the commitment as a nation to remain united under the principles and values expressed by our founding fathers. Patriotism and nationalism have long been part of citizenship education in the U.S., however Barrow (2017) notes the potential danger of "ethnocentrism and exceptionalism" (p. 163) developing when a lack of global awareness exists. The study of the foundational domain leads to further questions about the influence of nationalism on refugee integration in the U.S.

CHAPTER II

NATIONALISM

Nationalism is "a sense of national consciousness exalting one nation above all others and placing primary emphasis on promotion of its culture and interests as opposed to those of other nations or supranational groups" (Merriam-Webster, 2019). Nationalism may affect refugee integration in U.S. cities. Studying the effects of nationalism on refugee integration may help us understand integration issues from the perspectives of refugees and host communities.

Nationalism is a complex and multidimensional topic. Kosterman and Feshbach (1989) described the ideology of nationalism as an attitude of national superiority and dominance, simultaneous with downgrading expressions toward other nations. It is important to distinguish between nationalism and patriotism, which Merriam-Webster (2020) defines as "love for or devotion to one's country." Li and Brewer (2004) differentiate between patriotism and nationalism by describing patriotism as the positive manifestation of national identity, while Wimmer (2019) notes patriotism is often correlated to civic nationalism as opposed to ethnic nationalism. Distinguishing between nationalism and patriotism allows scholars to obtain a better understanding of attitudes towards refugees in the U.S.

Nationalism has notably been on the rise in the U.S., confirmed by many studies (Altbach & de Wit, 2017; Bieber, 2018; Bonikowski, 2016) describing increasing nationalistic beliefs among global societies and local communities in the U.S. In the context of modern democracies, nationalistic ideologies demonstrated by political elites can influence the practices of everyday people. This belief is consistent with Muller's (2008) claim that nationalism is a product of culture, it is deliberately constructed and politically manufactured. Nationalistic ideologies may

influence social interactions and worldviews in the U.S, as restrictive beliefs of rights and citizenship can lead to anti-immigrant attitudes (Bonikowski, 2016). Anti-immigrant or anti-refugee attitudes can be described as xenophobia, which is defined as the "fear and hatred of strangers or foreigners or of anything that is strange or foreign" (Merriam-Webster, 2020).

Xenophobic attitudes can serve as a barrier to refugee integration. Fear and national rhetoric, two factors which can contribute to the development of xenophobic attitudes, are often generated by politicians and the media (Weng & Choi, 2019). The September 11 attacks against the U.S. and the Paris bombing of 2015 were two primary incidents identified in the literature which have been used by politicians and the media to generate fear and influence U.S. citizens' perception of foreigners (Jungkunz, Helbling, & Schwemmer, 2018). National security concerns are often cited as part of the anti-refugee discussion (Bernstein & DuBois, 2018), however Nowrasteh's (2019) study noted 25 of the 3,391,203 refugees entering the U.S. from 1975-2017 have attempted terrorist attacks in the U.S. Nowrasteh (2019) further stated only three of the 25 attacks were successful, resulting in a total of three deaths; all attacks were conducted prior to 1980, when increased security standards were implemented as a result of the Refugee Act of 1980. Despite evidence revealing no direct correlation to current refugees and terrorism, negative attitudes persist. A possible explanation for this negative stigma can be attributed to growing anti-Muslim or Islamophobic rhetoric in Western countries (Mohamed & Bastug, 2020).

While Americans may associate anti-Muslim or Islamophobic attitudes with refugees, the U.S. has accepted more Christian refugees than Muslim refugees over recent years; the U.S. accepted approximately 310,700 Muslim refugees compared to 464,700 Christian refugees from 2001-2019 (Krogstad, 2019). Islamophobic attitudes are believed to be attributed to the negative portrayal of refugees by the media and politicians, as studies (Esses, Medianu, & Lawson, 2013)

show media sources and politicians influence the perceived threat presented by refugees to local host communities.

Understanding host communities' attitudes towards refugees may offer valuable insights into the integration process, as host communities are critical components of refugee integration. The UN described integration as a two-way process which places demands on host communities and refugees alike (UNHCR, 2013). Klarenbeek (2019) further emphasized the significant role host communities play in integration, stating "In the field of integration research, we find a (tacit) consensus that integration is a two-way process" (p. 1). While host communities play a vital role in integration in the U.S., studies show Americans have been consistent in disapproving of accepting refugees for much of the 20th century (Krogstad, 2019). A possible explanation for host communities in the U.S. demonstrating negative or indifferent attitudes towards refugees may be attributed to social turtling; social turtling alludes to the withdrawal of a turtle into its shell and takes place when a person experiences ethnically diverse settings (Putnam, 2007). Increased diversity in local communities can cause members of host communities to withdraw and perceive foreigners as threats.

Bonikowski (2016) noted multiculturalism and globalization were two factors which contributed to Americans feeling their way of life was threatened. Perceived threats from multiculturalism are often demonstrated by xenophobic or Islamophobic attitudes, resulting in an unfavorable perception towards refugees. The perceived threat of globalization has led to the development of an "America first" mindset (Ansar, 2019). This "America first," nationalistic attitude results in anti-refugee rhetoric and emphasizes the competition for jobs. A participant in Weng and Choi's (2019) study discussed increased competition created by refugees, stating

"they're going to take our jobs" (p. 9). An increase in nationalism in the U.S. raises questions on how localized labor forces are affected.

CHAPTER III

LABOR FORCE (AGRICULTURE, CONSTRUCTION, AND MANUFACTURING)

Refugees fill a gap in the U.S. labor force created by aging populations and increasing shortages of skilled workers (Desiderio, 2016; Vespa, Armstrong, & Medina, 2018). While a scarcity of academic research exists discussing refugee integration into labor markets in the U.S., recent research has demonstrated refugees' employment levels increase over time (Bernstein & DuBois, 2018), confirmed by Evans and Fitzgerald's (2017) findings which stated refugees participate in the labor force at a higher rate compared to a similar aged U.S. born population within six years of integration.

Refugees' high participation in the workforce may be attributed to their willingness to do jobs deemed undesirable by Americans. One dairy farmer (as cited in Salant et al., 2017) discussed the positive impact of refugees on the agricultural labor force, stating

> *The average American does not want to do these milking jobs. Now, the refugees are coming on the scene and they have more of a desire and motivation to work in the fields, and the dairies ....Refugees have filled a real gap in the workforce.* (p. 30)

While some may perceive refugees as an economic threat and the source of unnecessary competition for U.S. jobs, studies demonstrate refugees fill a gap in the U.S. labor force.

In addition to refugees filling a gap in the labor force, refugees have also been noted to provide economic benefits to host communities (New American Economy, 2017). The entrepreneurship of refugees serves as a primary method in which refugees provide economic benefits to host communities. In 2015, the U.S. was home to approximately 181,000 refugee

entrepreneurs, generating an estimated yearly income of 4.6 billion dollars (New American Economy, 2017). While studies illustrate refugees positively impact host community economies, Alrawadieh, Karayilan, and Cetin (2019) noted host communities were generally unaware of the economic benefits provided by refugees. The rise of nationalism can influence host communities' perceptions of labor integration of refugees in the U.S., confirmed by Pope (2017),

> *Despite the economic benefits offered by immigrants, the nationalist trends sweeping Europe and the United States suggest that these benefits have little impact on the anxiety and fears of native-born communities concerned about the threats to their own livelihood, cultures, and way of life.* (p. 5)

Despite social or cultural barriers such as racial discrimination and lack of language skills, refugees have high levels of employment in the U.S. While refugees maintain high levels of employment, Desiderio (2016) noted refugees are more likely to be overqualified than other migrant groups and are often overrepresented in low paying and low skilled jobs. Refugees may compromise for low paying and low skilled jobs because of the emphasis the USRAP places on early employment. Common low paying jobs fulfilled by refugees include agricultural, construction, and manufacturing labor jobs (Desiderio, 2016). Refugees seek opportunities where jobs are available, often resettling in rural metropolitan areas such as the Texas panhandle; the metropolitan area of Amarillo, Texas contains one of the highest concentrations of refugees in the U.S. (Kallick & Mathema, 2016).

Texas was the leading destination for refugees without prior connections to the U.S. from 2005-2010 (Dagnelie et al., 2018). A possible reason for Texas accepting large quantities of refugees with no U.S. connections could be attributed to the opportunity for refugees to

successfully integrate into the labor market because of the state's strong economy. Texas has the second largest economy in the U.S. (Forbes, 2019), making it a viable destination for refugee resettlement. Within Texas, refugees often flock to the panhandle where meat processing plants generate large numbers of low skilled labor positions. Low skilled positions in the Texas panhandle were traditionally filled with illegal workers, but are now being filled with refugees (Miroff, 2018).

Moore County, located less than an hour from Amarillo in the Texas panhandle, hosts a number of low skilled labor opportunities at meat processing plants, feedlots, and dairies. One of the leading employers in Moore County is JBS Cactus Beef Plant. The company employs upward of 3,000 people, most of whom are refugees or immigrants. An increase in low skilled jobs have caused the demographics of Moore County to shift dramatically over recent years, transitioning the historically majority white population to an estimated 80% nonwhite population (Burnett, 2019). In the 2016 presidential election, Trump won Moore County by 75% (Politico, 2016), yet Moore County Judge Rowdy Rhoades discussed the growing tolerance within the county by stating

> *You know what, it's kinda like gettin' fat. You don't get fat all at once. You put weight on a little at a time. So you adjust, you change your clothes, you go up a size or two. You notice it, but you adapt.* (para. 31)

Despite increasing anti-refugee rhetoric on a national level, Moore County appears to successfully resettle and integrate refugees leading to further questions on how host community attitudes influence refugee integration.

CHAPTER IV

METHODS

The purpose of this research was to determine issues in refugee integration in select Texas metropolitan areas from 2008-2018. The research questions were:

- What issues do refugees encounter when integrating into U.S.' host communities?

- Does nationalism influence refugee integration?

- What are the effects of xenophobia and/or cultural conflict in refugee integration situations in U.S. cities?

- Does refugee integration in selected Texas cities affect localized labor (agriculture, construction, and manufacturing) forces?

An integrative literature review (ILR) was used to explore these questions. An ILR has the potential to provide critical synthesis about issues in refugee integration in Texas metropolitan areas. Analysis of the complexities of refugee integration offers the potential to better understand integration issues from the perspectives of refugees and host communities. Weng and Choi (2019) noted the importance of understanding host communities' perspectives when considering the atmosphere regarding refugees and immigration. This topic is of current interest in the U.S. because of uncertainties surrounding the future of the USRAP. This research may guide future studies on the effects of nationalism from the perspectives of refugees and host communities.

A qualitative design (Patton, 2002) was used, affording appropriate research methods to seek a greater understanding of the identified phenomenon. The particular phenomenon under

exploration was identified as refugee integration in Texas metropolitan cities. A combination of conventional content analysis and directed content analysis were used to explore the identified phenomenon because of the exploratory nature of the research. The use of conventional content analysis allowed themes to emerge from the data throughout the duration of the study, while directed content analysis provided a pre-identified framework for exploration of the data (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Content analysis allows researchers to study the behavior of humans by examining their communications (Fraenkel et al., 2019). One form of content analysis research is accomplished through an ILR, which constitutes the primary methodology in this study. ILR is an appropriate research method when exploring new or emerging topics from a growing body of literature (Torraco, 2016). This ILR reviewed critically an existing body of literature to synthesize new ideas about the effect of nationalism on refugee integration in selected Texas' metropolitan areas from 2008-2018. The steps for conducting an ILR include searching the literature, identifying articles, extracting data, and synthesizing.

Two search engines (Google Scholar and Nexis Uni) were utilized to identify possible data sources for this study. Google Scholar and Nexis Uni are easily accessible online databases providing researchers access to a variety of sources, including scholarly articles, news reports, and government publications. These sources provided search parameters beneficial for this study, allowing the researcher to access literature from 2008-2018 with the use of pre-identified keywords.

The following keywords were used to guide the search for relevant literature, identifying possible articles for inclusion in this study: city, policy, refugee, refugee integration, refugee resettlement, Texas, United States, and xenophobia. Searches are illustrated in *Table 1* in the *Appendix*. All searches were conducted from 2008-2018 and excluded books, theses,

dissertations, and duplicates. *Table 2* demonstrates the criteria for retaining or discarding

literature.

Table 2.

Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria for Retaining or Discarding Literature

Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Articles were *included* in the study if any combination of the following topics were discussed or reflected. Refugee resettlement or integration in the U.S. Major examples include:	Articles were excluded if they primarily focused on any combination of the following topics:
Outcomes of refugee integration	Migrants or migrant children
Host community attitudes towards refugees	Detention centers
National rhetoric towards refugees	Tent cities
Public perception of refugees	Hurricanes/floods or other natural disasters
Barriers to refugee integration	* articles mentioning Office of Refugee Resettlement that did not meet inclusion criteria were also excluded
Economic impact of refugees	
Refugee resettlement organizations	

Data were collected from a total of 60 articles and media sources from 2008-2018. After

identifying articles, the researcher conducted a staged review. Torraco (2005) describes a staged

review as an initial review of article abstracts followed by a more in-depth review of the

literature. Articles were identified by similar publication type, ensuring similar topics were

addressed consistently throughout the study. Conventional content analysis methods were used

when analyzing media sources, allowing themes to emerge from the data. Conventional content

analysis is recommended when little existing research or theory is available on a topic (Hsieh &

Shannon, 2005) and was an appropriate method to review media sources because of the lack of

consistent jargon used within the literature and media sources. The use of directed content analysis allowed predetermined themes to be used when reviewing journals and reports/law reviews/papers. Articles were coded by theming the data, capturing the essence of the text (Onwuegbuzie, Frels, & Hwang, 2016).

The author synthesized representative literature and generated new ideas on the topic, such that future research for refugee integration in selected Texas cities is guided by this study. Generating a research agenda is one form of synthesis identified as a result of ILR (Torraco, 2016).

CHAPTER V

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Articles ($N = 60$) meeting inclusion criteria were identified for this study by exploring the existing body of literature. Articles were classified into three categories (see *Figure 1*), as articles from major U.S newspapers ($n = 25$), reports/law reviews/papers ($n = 21$), and academic journals ($n = 14$). Characteristics of included articles are described further in *Table 3* in the *Appendix*.
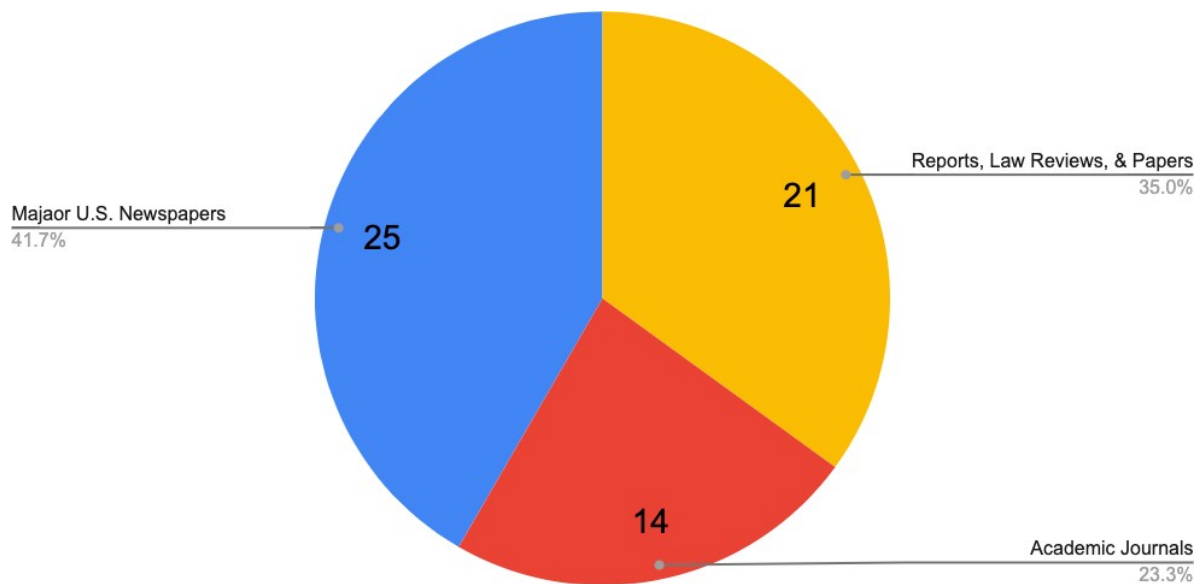
Figure 1: Categories of articles included in the study.

Newspaper articles were included in addition to scholarly articles and government/non-profit publications to allow for a more holistic analysis to be conducted, comparing the growing body of literature with attitudes demonstrated by media sources. The years of publication are portrayed in *Figure 2*, further revealing the recent emergence of this topic within the selected literature from 2008-2018.
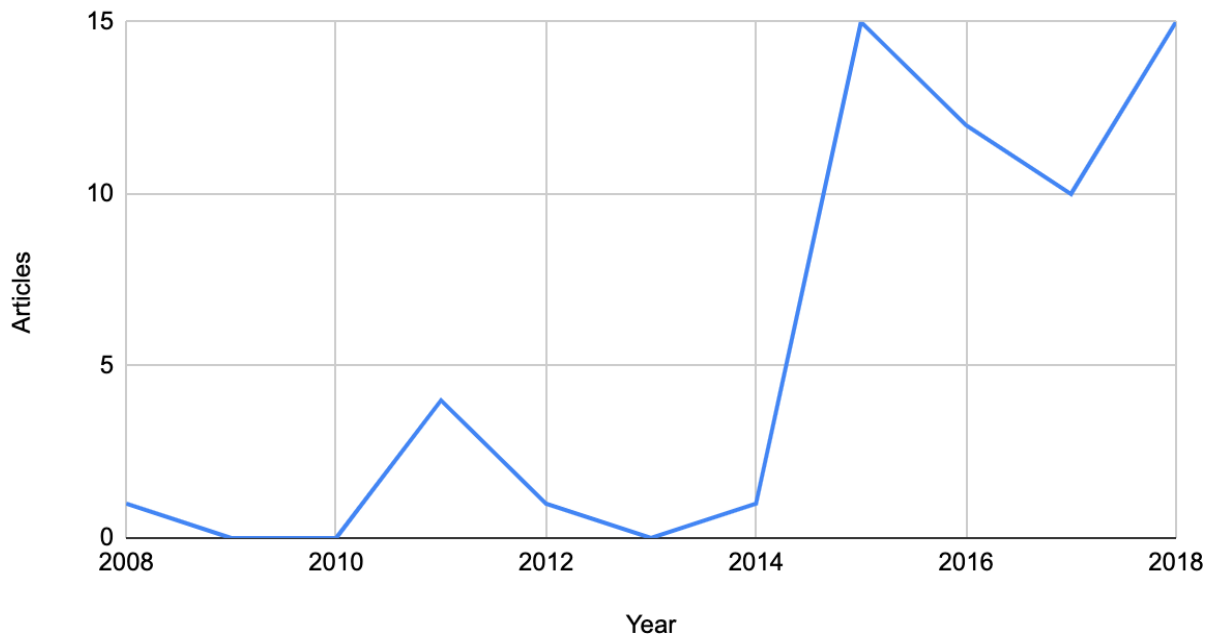
Year of Publication

Figure 2: Years of article publications from 2008-2018.

A conceptual or thematic structure served as an appropriate avenue to discuss the findings of an ILR due to the prevalence of major themes consistent throughout the literature (Torraco, 2016).

Pre-Identified Themes

The following themes were pre-identified based on existing theory outlined by Ager and Strang (2008): *Markers and Means*, *Social Connections*, *Facilitators*, and *Foundation*; directed content analysis was used to explore pre-identified themes within articles categorized as academic journals and reports/law reviews/papers (*n* = 35). The frequencies of pre-identified themes within the selected literature are outlined in *Table 4*.

Table 4.

Domains of Refugee Integration (n = 35).

Pre-Identified Themes	*f*(%)
Markers and Means	31(89%)
Social Connections	25(71%)
Facilitators	24(69%)
Foundation	18(51%)

Analyzing the frequency of pre-identified themes discussed in articles selected for this study demonstrates a knowledge gap exists within the current body of literature on refugee integration in the U.S. All categories were discussed within the reviewed literature at a frequency of greater than 50%, but minimal research was found where all areas of refugee integration identified by Ager and Strang (2008) were explored.

Markers and Means

The literature was replete with information discussing *markers and means*. Much of the literature focused on the domain of employment, although education, housing, and healthcare were also noted. *Markers and means* can be demonstrated by refugees achieving self-sufficiency, which was determined to be a key goal of the USRAP. A possible explanation for much research existing within the category of *markers and means* may be attributed to access to quantifiable data such as employment levels or statistics demonstrating refugees' usage of public services. The analyzed studies demonstrated refugees have success obtaining early employment, effectively minimizing use of public services; such results are supported by many studies (Bernstein & DuBois, 2018; Evans & Fitzgerald, 2017; New American Economy, 2017).

Social Connections

Recent studies illustrate a rising trend in research exploring the influence social connections have on the refugee integration process in the U.S. Social connections are essential to the integration process, often influencing many other domains of integration. The primary example derived from the literature examined the relationship between social connections and refugees as entrepreneurs, raising the question of how social connections assist in the process of refugees achieving self-sufficiency. Social connections can offer insight into existing dynamics between refugees and host communities.

Facilitators

Knowledge of language/culture was revealed as the primary domain discussed within the literature on facilitators, while little research existed where the domain of safety and stability was explored. Studies focused on language ability, classifying knowledge of English as essential for refugees integrating into U.S. host communities. Language ability was correlated with refugees' ability to obtain employment, access healthcare resources, and navigate public services (Halpern, 2008; Njororai & Lee, 2017). Cultural knowledge and refugees' language ability were determined to be related to host community dynamics, but little research explored the relationship.

Foundation

The concept of foundation was the least prevalent category within the reviewed literature. Researchers described the difficulty to analyze the foundational area of integration due to a lack of data describing the civic involvement of refugees. Research discussing refugees' enrollment in citizenship preparation classes or data describing refugees' attainment of U.S. citizenship may offer beneficial contributions to the existing research on the foundational aspect

of integration, in addition to the overall discussion on refugee integration in the U.S. Obtaining citizenship was viewed as a key milestone for refugees achieving integration into host communities.

Emergent Themes

All articles ($N = 60$) were reviewed and coded through conventional content analysis, revealing three primary themes: *national rhetoric*, *host community involvement*, and *economic impact*. The frequencies of emergent themes determined through critical analysis of the selected literature are outlined in *Table 5*.

Table 5.

Factors of Refugee Integration (N = 60).

Emergent Themes (N = 60)	*f*(%)
National Rhetoric	40(67%)
Host Community Involvement	32(53%)
Economic Impact	24(40%)

Examining various types of articles offers beneficial insight into the topic of refugee integration in the U.S., providing the opportunity to compare data from scholarly publications with attitudes expressed in major U.S. newspapers.

National Rhetoric

National rhetoric demonstrated by political figures and media sources influence local communities and their perception of refugees, but appear to have little effect on the refugee integration process. An increase in nationalistic ideas within the U.S. was revealed by analysis of the literature, confirming the belief of Bonikowski (2016) and Bieber (2018). The Paris attack in 2015 served as the most notable event over the span of 2008-2018, resulting in an increase of

anti-refugee rhetoric in the U.S. Multiple state and national figures questioned the safety of the USRAP after the attack, generating waves of uncertainty regarding the program. Despite increased uncertainty surrounding the USRAP, refugees appear to continue integrating into host communities in the U.S.

Host Community Involvement

Trends demonstrate more research analyzing the influence of host communities in the integration process; however, a knowledge gap still exists. Stories of host communities supporting refugees existed despite increasing anti-refugee rhetoric; positive stories of accepting host communities were far less prevalent than attitudes of fear or xenophobia. The analyzed research supported the findings of Klarenbeek (2019), emphasizing the need for refugee integration to be reconceptualized as a two-way process.

Economic Impact

Much existing research demonstrates the positive economic impact refugees have on host communities. Refugees contribute to communities by filling low-skilled labor positions, starting businesses through entrepreneurial efforts, and paying taxes. While some communities may view refugees as a financial burden, studies state refugees generally contribute more financially than they receive in services (Bernstein & DuBois, 2018). Most host communities identified in the examined literature were unaware of economic benefits refugees provide. Examining refugees' economic impact from the perspective of host communities may provide new understanding into the integration process.

CONCLUSION

Summary

Studies confirmed that refugees appeared to be integrating successfully in U.S. host communities despite emerging attitudes of nationalism demonstrated through political rhetoric in the news media. While anti-refugee rhetoric was prevalent in Texas, nationalism had minimal influence on refugees' integration processes into Texas metropolitan areas. Furthermore, refugee integration was believed to positively contribute to host communities economically and culturally. Long-term economic benefits often outweigh the costs of resettling refugees, as refugees transition from state-dependent to self-sufficient; during the transition from state-dependent to self-sufficient, refugees culturally enrich communities by providing increased diversity through community events and entrepreneurship. The research confirmed the researcher's beliefs that all domains of integration were linked, however few studies have examined all domains of refugee integration in the U.S. Additional research on a national scale is warranted.

Limitations

Refugee integration remains an emerging topic, but articles published outside of the identified frame were not selected for review. The researcher was limited to articles generated from searches within the existing literature from 2008-2018. A lack of previous research on refugee integration in Texas led to difficulties in determining issues in refugee integration in selected Texas metropolitan areas. Furthermore, newspaper articles included in this study may represent various biases and should be regarded as such; accordingly, a wider frame may

illuminate additional factors influencing refugees' integration processes in Texas and nationwide.

Future Recommendations

Academic research exploring refugee integration can generate valuable insights about current barriers prohibiting refugees' integration into U.S. host communities. Future studies should examine refugee integration from host communities' perspectives. Host communities play vital roles in the integration process; studying their perspectives may reveal new issues facing refugees and host communities. With the rise of nationalism globally and in the U.S., further study is needed to explore the effect of nationalism on refugees integrating into other host communities. Longitudinal studies may contribute greatly to the literature, as few studies have examined long-term integration into U.S host communities. Research on refugee integration in the U.S. will provide opportunities for greater understanding of the phenomenon.

APPENDIX A

 Table 1 describes the various searches conducted by the researcher to obtain the literature used in the ILR. A total of four searches were conducted using a combination of search engines and keywords, generating 107 articles. Articles were reviewed and the researcher determined 60 of the identified articles met the inclusion criteria for the study.

Table 1.

Descriptors of Searches

Data Set	Search Engine	Keywords	Results Generated	Articles Included
1	Nexis Uni (LexisNexis)	"Refugee" & title(Texas) *Search within results: Resettlement, jobs, fear	54	25
2	Google Scholar	"in Texas", "refugee resettlement", "city", policy, xenophobia	17	11
3	Google Scholar	"refugee integration" "in Texas"	20	14
4	Google Scholar	"refugee integration in the United States"	16	10

APPENDIX B

Table 3 describes the articles which were included in the study. The table includes the selected articles' author(s) and year, publication type, and publisher. The articles' publication type differentiates between academic journals, articles from major U.S. newspapers, government or nonprofit reports, law reviews, and academic papers.

Table 3.

Characteristics of Articles Included in Study

Author(s)	Publication Type	Publisher
Batalova, Fix, & Bachmeier (2016)	Report	Migration Policy Institute
Campbell (2015)	Law Review	West Virginia Law Review
Critelli (2015)	Academic Journal	Journal of International Migration & Integration
Desiderio (2016)	Report	Migration Policy Institute
Diven & Immerfall (2018)	Paper	Zeitschrift für Vergleichende Politikwissenschaft
Dunklin & Schmall (2015)	Major U.S Newspaper	The Tampa Tribune
Eby, Iverson, Smyers, & Kekic (2011)	Academic Journal	Journal of Refugee Studies
Erden (2017)	Academic Journal	Journal of International Migration & Integration
Fabos, Pilgrim, Said-Ali, Krahe, & Ostiller (2015)	Paper	Clark University
Fedde (2015)	Major U.S Newspaper	The Christian Science Monitor
Fernandez (2015)	Major U.S Newspaper	The New York Times
Fernandez (2015)	Major U.S Newspaper	The New York Times

Table 3 Continued		
Author(s)	**Publication Type**	**Publisher**
Fernandez (2016)	Major U.S Newspaper	The New York Times
Fernandez (2016)	Major U.S Newspaper	The New York Times
Fernandez (2016)	Major U.S Newspaper	The New York Times
Fernandez & Preston (2015)	Major U.S Newspaper	The New York Times
Fernandez & Stack (2016)	Major U.S Newspaper	The New York Times
Fix, Hooper, & Zong (2017)	Report	Migration Policy Institute
Freed, Moulton, Anupindi, & Leach (2018)	Report	Unitarian Universalist Service Committee
Freudenberg & Halberstadt (2018)	Academic Journal	Management Issues – Problemy Zarzdzania
Gitau (2015)	Major U.S Newspaper	The Christian Science Monitor
Graauw & Bloemraad (2017)	Academic Journal	Journal on Migration & Human Security
Halpern (2008)	Report	U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation
Harder, Figueroaa, Gilluma, Hangartner, Laitina, & Hainmuelle (2018)	Paper	Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences
Harvard Immigration and Refugee Clinical Program (2018)	Law Review	Texas A&M Law Review
Hennessy-Fiske (2015)	Major U.S Newspaper	The Tampa Tribune (Florida)
Hing (2011)	Law Review	Loyola Journal of Public Interest Law
Hoogland & DeHoog (2011)	Paper	Sociation Today
Hooper, Zong, Capps, & Fix (2016)	Report	Migration Policy Institute
Horn, Piescher, Shannon, Hong, & Benton (2017)	Academic Journal	Children and Youth Services Review
Jani & Reisch (2018)	Academic Journal	Children and Youth Services Review

Table 3 Continued		
Author(s)	**Publication Type**	**Publisher**
Jimenez (2011)	Academic Journal	Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies
Journal on Migration & Humane Security (2018)	Academic Journal	Journal on Migration & Human Security
Kerwin (2018)	Academic Journal	Journal on Migration and Human Security
Lee, Choi, Proulx, & Cornwell (2015)	Academic Journal	Asian American Journal of Psychology
Lilly (2012)	Major U.S Newspaper	The Christian Science Monitor
McGurn (2014)	Major U.S Newspaper	The New York Post
Merchant & Slodysko (2015)	Major U.S Newspaper	The Tampa Tribune
Merchant & Slodysko (2015)	Major U.S Newspaper	St. Louis Post Dispatch (Missouri)
Nessel (2017)	Law Review	Georgetown Immigration Law Journal
Ngo Usadi (2018)	Major U.S Newspaper	The Christian Science Monitor
Njororai & Lee (2017)	Academic Journal	International Social Work
Park, Zong, & Batalova (2018)	Report	Migration Policy Institute
Pritchett (2017)	Law Review	Wyoming Law Review
Puma, Lichtenstein, & Stein (2018)	Academic Journal	Journal of Refugee Studies
Robbins & Hughes (2015)	Major U.S Newspaper	The New York Times
Rodriguez, H Skott-Myhre, & K Skott-Myhre (2018)	Academic Journal	Child & Youth Services
Roman & Sagas (2018-2019)	Law Review	Rutgers Law Record
Romero & Jordan (2017)	Major U.S Newspaper	The New York Times
Stempel & Qais (2018)	Paper	Leibniz Information Centre for Economics
Teasley, Nevarez, & Frost (2017)	Paper	National Association of Social Workers

Table 3 Continued		
Author(s)	**Publication Type**	**Publisher**
The Associated Press (2015)	Major U.S Newspaper	The New York Times
The Associated Press (2016)	Major U.S Newspaper	The New York Times
The Associated Press (2016)	Major U.S Newspaper	The New York Times
Thompson (2016)	Major U.S Newspaper	The Christian Science Monitor
Tumulty (2018)	Major U.S Newspaper	The Washington Post
University of Washington (2018)	Report	University of Washington
Ura (2016)	Major U.S Newspaper	The Washington Post
Welch (2017)	Report	Haas Institute
Yun Tan (2016)	Major U.S Newspaper	The Christian Science Monitor

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