

HOST COMMUNITIES' PERCEPTIONS OF REFUGEES IN NORTH DAKOTA AND
PERCEIVED IMPACTS OF REFUGEES ON NORTH DAKOTA COMMUNITIES

A Thesis
Submitted to the Graduate Faculty
of the
North Dakota State University
of Agriculture and Applied Science

By
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In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of
MASTER OF SCIENCE

Major Department:
Sociology and Anthropology

May 2017

Fargo, North Dakota

North Dakota State University
Graduate School

Title

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ABSTRACT

This study identifies host communities' perceptions of refugees and perceived impacts of refugees on North Dakota communities by analyzing a 2015 petition against future refugee resettlement using Braun and Clarke's guide to thematic analysis. I identify two host community perceptions of refugees: refugees as "other," and refugees as a potential threat to the security of individuals, the community, and the nation. I also identify three perceived impacts of refugees: privation of American citizens, and the beliefs that refugees exert pressure on public services, and refugees are ruining the American way of life. Using Intergroup Threat Theory to interpret the perceptions and perceived impacts of refugees reveals that realistic threat posed by refugees is more significant to petitioners compared to symbolic threat. In other words, petitioners seem to consider refugees as a greater threat to their economic power, well-being, and tangible resources than to their values, beliefs, and worldviews.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my advisor Dr. Pamela Emanuelson for her patience, motivation, and support in overcoming numerous obstacles I have been facing throughout this research. Besides my advisor, I would like to thank the rest of my thesis committee: Dr. Dennis Cooley, Dr. Gary Goreham, and Dr. Christopher Whitsel for their insightful comments and encouragement. I would also like to thank the Northern Plains Ethics Institute (NPEI) for funding my graduate assistantship. I also extend my sincere gratitude to Yoke-Sim Gunaratne, the Director of Cultural Diversity Resources, for giving me an opportunity to join her team as an intern. Finally yet importantly, I would like to thank my husband, my parents and my sister for always being there for me.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my husband Felix.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CBP	Customs and Border Protection
CHIP	Children’s Health Insurance Program
ELL	English Language Learning
GDP.....	Gross Domestic Product
ITT	Intergroup Threat Theory
LSS.....	Lutheran Social Services
NATO	Northern Atlantic Treaty Organization
RCA	Refugee Cash Assistance
RMA	Refugee Medical Assistance
SSI.....	Supplemental Security Income
TANF	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
UNHCR.....	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
USCIS	United States Citizenship and Immigration Services
USRAP.....	United States Refugee Admissions Program
WF.....	Wilson Fish

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Although North Dakota has been resettling refugees since 1997, evidence suggests that North Dakota residents' concerns on resettlement are recent. On August 6th 2015, WDAY Valley News Live aired “Fargo and West Fargo could see 350 refugees move to cities by the end of September” (Burner 2015), and shortly thereafter North Dakota residents began an on-line petition against future resettlement of refugees (WDAY Valley News Live 2015). The petition was two-fold: petitioners demanded that the state legislature grant residents of North Dakota the right to vote on further refugee resettlement and that Lutheran Social Services (LSS), the non-profit agency that resettles refugees in North Dakota, release all data on funding for refugee programs (Change.Org 2015). As of November 27th 2015, 3,257 residents of North Dakota and residents of other states such as Minnesota, Nebraska, Ohio, Florida, Texas, Utah, Kentucky, Washington, Indiana, and Idaho had signed the petition (Change.Org 2015).

The petition gave signees the opportunity to provide an explanation for supporting the petition. By critically examining petitioners' comments, this research identifies North Dakota residents' perceptions of refugees and the perceived consequences of refugee resettlement. The residents' perceptions are identified using thematic analysis, and then interpreted using Intergroup Threat Theory (ITT).

Despite evidence from studies conducted in Europe, Africa and Australia showing that immigrants' method of entry, refugee or asylum status, and demographic factors influence community attitudes toward immigrants (Codjoe, Quartey, Tagoe, and Reed 2013; Croucher 2013; Banks 2012; McKay, Thomas, and Kneebone 2012; Alix-Garcia and Saah 2009; Naidoo 2009; Phillimore and Goodson 2006; Verkuyten 2004; Hernes and Knudsen 1992), most studies conducted in the United States make no distinctions between immigrant sub-groups (Turper,

Iyengar, Aarts, and van Gervan 2015; Garcia and Davidson 2013; Woods 2011; Fennelly 2008; Raiya, Pargament, Mahoney, and Trevino 2008; Fennelly and Federico 2007; Rohmann, Florack, Piontkowski 2006; Mayda 2004). Attitudes toward refugees, in particular, are understudied in the United States (Bullard 2015, Murray and Marx 2013). Out of the two studies on the subject, only one is centered in a rural area with low-density populations (Bullard 2015).^{1,2}As such, little is known about attitudes toward refugees within the United States in general, and in low-density population, rural host communities such as those in North Dakota.

There is a lack of qualitative studies on attitudes toward refugees in the United States, with the two studies on the subject taking a quantitative approach (Bullard 2015, Murray and Marx 2013). Although findings of quantitative studies contribute to the literature, they are not ideal for capturing elements of behavior and attitudes that are not quantifiable. Instead of attempting to quantify participants' perceptions, this study draws on participants own words and social experiences to identify their beliefs of refugees and justifications for opposing refugee resettlement. In addition, since the theory used to interpret the findings of this study focuses on cognitive, affective, and behavioral responses to out-group threats, a qualitative approach is the most appropriate.

¹ Bullard (2015) was conducted in Mississippi. The population of Mississippi is 4.5 times higher than the population of North Dakota (2,967,297:672,591) (U. S. Census Bureau 2016). In addition, Mississippi is not a predominantly white state like North Dakota. Mississippi has only a 57.4% white population when North Dakota has an 87% white population (U. S. Census Bureau 2016).

² Prior international and local studies, which examined attitudes toward refugees, were predominantly conducted in heterogeneous, high-density, and urban areas (Onzima, Ayiko, Govule, Oryem 2015; Murray and Marx 2013; Codjoe, Quartey, Tagoe, and Reed 2013; McKay, Thomas, and Kneebone 2012; Banks 2012; Alix-Garcia and Saah 2009; Verkuyten 2004; Hernes and Knudsen 1992).

At the conclusion of the study, I identify host communities' perceptions of refugees and perceived impacts of refugees on North Dakota communities. These perceptions are analyzed using ITT. I then compare the perceived impacts in rural areas to observations of immigrant impact on communities.

The remainder of the thesis is divided into six chapters. The second chapter presents background information on immigrant classifications, refugee statistics, history of refugee legislation, and refugee related programs. The third chapter discusses prior research on attitudes of host communities toward refugees, and impacts of refugees on host communities. The fourth chapter explains ITT, which is used to interpret the findings of this study. The fifth chapter discusses the method of data analysis, methodology, and limitations of the data. The sixth chapter presents the findings of the investigation and theoretical interpretations of the findings. The seventh chapter summarizes the findings of this study, and discusses implications for practice and directions for future research.

CHAPTER 2: BACKGROUND

This chapter presents some background information relevant for the research presented in this thesis. Section 2.1 presents information about immigration classifications, which influence the attitudes toward immigrants. Section 2.2 presents statistics on refugees at both national and regional levels, and information on refugees' regions of origin. Section 2.3 provides an overview of refugee legislation, and refugee related programs including Wilson/Fish alternative program and Lutheran Social Services New Americans program. Information presented in Sections 2.2 and 2.3 provide context to examine if host communities' perceptions of refugees differ from statistical evidence and information on refugee related programs.

2.1. Immigration Classifications

Depending on their method of entry, authorized or unauthorized immigrants can be classified as permanent resident aliens, illegal aliens, or non-immigrants. The permanent residents are aliens³ admitted to the United States as lawful permanent residents (U. S. Dept. of Homeland Security 2016). The latter are also referred to as resident aliens, green card holders, or immigrants. The illegal aliens are immigrants who enter the United States “without inspection” or legal permission (U. S. Dept. of Homeland Security 2016). They are commonly referred to as unauthorized immigrants, undocumented immigrants, or undocumented aliens (U. S. Dept. of Homeland Security 2016). Illegal immigrants also include non-immigrants that fail to leave the United States when their permissible time expires. Non-immigrants are “aliens who seek temporary entry into the United States for a specific purpose” (U. S. Dept. of Homeland Security 2016: no pagination).⁴

³ Any person who is not a citizen or national of the United States (U. S. Dept. of Homeland Security 2016).

⁴ Non-immigrants must have permanent resident status in another country to qualify for the required non-immigrant classification. Non-immigrants include: “foreign government officials, visitors for business and for pleasure, aliens

Refugees and asylees are legal immigrants that do not enter the United States as permanent residents or non-immigrants. Instead, refugees and asylees enter the United States through authorized methods as non-permanent residents for humanitarian emergency reasons. On the one hand, refugees and asylees are similar to each other because they are “unable or unwilling to return to their country of nationality because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion” (Martin and Yankay 2014:1). On the other hand, refugees and asylees differ from each other based on how they request admission. Refugee status is granted to people who apply for admission while outside of the United States, and asylum status is granted to people who apply for admission while in the United States or at a United States port of entry (Martin and Yankay 2014). Although upon arrival refugees and asylees are not classified as lawful permanent residents, both refugees and asylees become “eligible to adjust to lawful permanent resident status” one year after their continuous presence in the United States (U. S. Dept. of Homeland Security 2016: no pagination).

Refugees who enter the United States without permanent residency status are not considered unauthorized immigrants because they are subjected to intensive biographic and biometric security checks prior to entering the country. The United States Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) has a priority process in place to identify the eligible refugee individuals and groups for resettlement in the US. Priority is given to 1) “individuals referred by the United National High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), a US Embassy, or a non-government organization”; 2) “groups of special humanitarian concern”, and 3) “family reunification cases”

in transit through the United States, treaty traders and investors, students, international representatives, temporary workers and trainees, representatives of foreign information media, exchange visitors, fiancé(e)s of United State citizens, intra-company transferees, NATO officials, religious workers, and some other” (U. S. Dept. of Homeland Security 2016).

(Mossaad 2016: 2). After a referral is provided, a resettlement support center working under cooperative agreement with the U. S. Department of State (DOS) conducts a pre-screening interview with the applicant and submits the completed application to the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). Then, a USCIS officer interviews the applicant to determine if he or she is credible, meets the definition of refugee, and is eligible for resettlement in the United States (Mossaad 2016). In this stage, applicants are required to complete the necessary biometric checks, additional biographic tests, and medical exams prior to obtaining approval (Mossaad 2016). The applicants who obtain approval for travel are screened prior to boarding based on travel information collected by the Customs and Border Protection (CBP) (USCIS 2015). Based on the screen results, the CBP determines if the applicant should be admitted to the United States (USCIS 2015).

Asylees who enter countries without a valid visa are not considered unauthorized immigrants because they are protected by the right of asylum (right of political asylum) which recognizes that asylees have valid reasons for entering without a visa (Asylum Seeker Resource Center 2013). Thus, asylees are permitted to enter countries without prior authorization. For example, some Asylees who ask for protection at Australian land and sea border arrive without valid visas (McKay et al. 2012). These asylees are detained in Australian detention facilities for identity, security, and health checks, and until their legal statuses are resolved (Asylum Seeker Resource Center 2013; McKay et al. 2012). Usually, the process takes several months but in certain instances, the process can take years (McKay et al. 2012).

This research focuses on attitudes expressed in a petition against refugee resettlement. With the data set available, it is not possible to assess respondents' abilities to distinguish between refugees, asylees or other types of immigrants accepted into the United States.

However, I do feel that an analysis of the petition will reveal attitudes minimally toward refugees with the idea that these attitudes might extend to include other immigrant groups.

The following section presents statistics on refugees at both national and regional levels. The section provides information on the annual number of refugees admitted to the United States, and refugees' regions of origin. Such information is helpful to understand if host communities' observations on refugees differ from statistical evidence on refugees in the United States and North Dakota.

2.2. Statistics on Refugees at National and Regional Levels

2.2.1. National Level

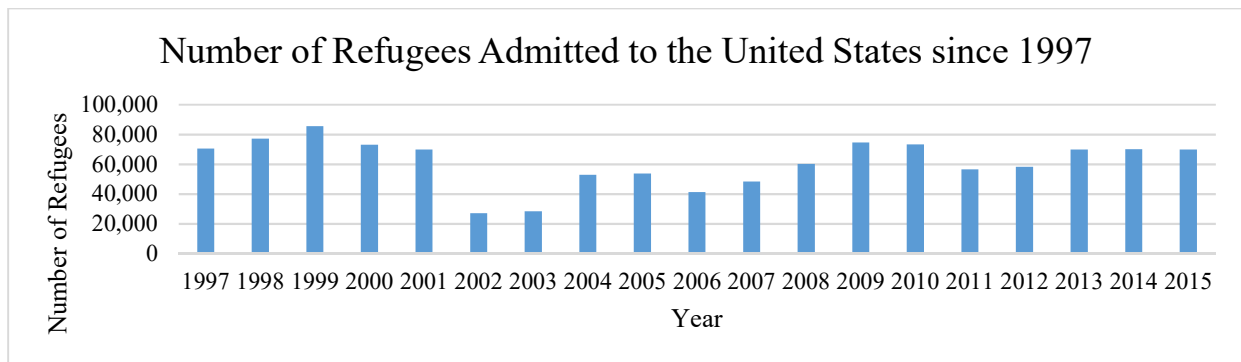


Figure 1. Number of Refugees Admitted to the United States from 1997 to 2015 (U. S. Department of State Bureau of Population 2016)

From 1997 to 2015, the United States has resettled an average of 61,000 refugees each year (U. S. Department of State Bureau of Population 2016). From 2013 to 2015, an average of 70,000 refugees were resettled (Mossaad 2016). The refugees in the United States come from Burma, Bhutan, Iraq, Ukraine, Vietnam, Russia, Liberia, Iran, Somalia, Laos, and Cuba. Since 2008, the majority of refugees have come from Burma, Bhutan, Iraq, and Somalia (U. S. Department of State Bureau of Population 2016).

2.2.2. Regional Level

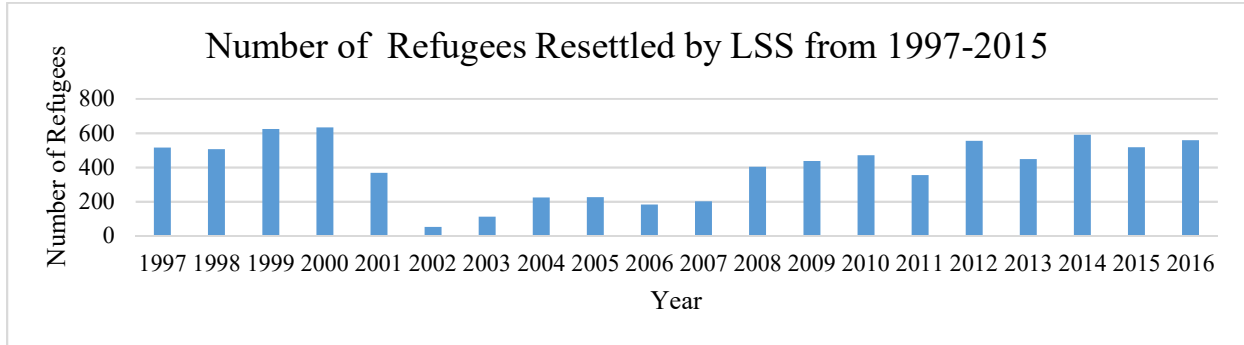


Figure 2. Number of Refugees Resettled by LSS from 1997 to 2015 (Lutheran Social Services 2017)

Since 1997, Lutheran Social Services (LSS) has resettled an average of 400 refugees in North Dakota each year. By fiscal year 2016, nearly 7,780 refugees have resettled in Fargo, West Fargo, Grand Forks, and Bismarck (Lutheran Social Services 2017). It is projected that LSS will resettle 475 refugees in Fargo, Grand Forks, and Bismarck in fiscal year 2017 (Arick 2015). The refugees in North Dakota come from 35 different countries (Ross 2014) including Bhutan, Iraq, Somalia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Cambodia, Sudan, Eritrea, Afghanistan, Nepal, Burma, Iran, Ethiopia, India, Jordan, Pakistan, and Vietnam (Lutheran Social Services 2017). The majority of refugees resettled in North Dakota since 2001 arrived from Bhutan (39 percent), Iraq (26 percent), and Somalia (24 percent) (Arick 2015).

The exact number of refugees currently residing in North Dakota is unknown. The total number of refugees in North Dakota may not be accurate as a result of secondary migration. After the initial resettlement, refugees are permitted to resettle elsewhere in the United States, which is referred to as secondary migration. At present, the federal, state, or local government agencies do not track in and out migration of refugees (CRP Partner Organizations 2015). As a result, the exact number of refugees currently living in North Dakota may be higher or lower than 7,780.

Secondary migration has implications for funding of refugee services. Although the potential to attract refugees could be seen as an economic benefit, secondary migration can lead to negative consequences (CRP Partner Organizations 2015). Federal funding is usually provided to meet the basic requirements of the initially resettled refugees. When refugees move as secondary migrants, they may still need help to resettle in the new state (Shir, Kimsey, Downs-Karkos 2014). Since funds allocated for refugees are already spent on housing, job training, English Language training, and medical and financial assistance by the previous state, there are no funds left to transfer to the new state (Shir, Kimsey, Downs-Karkos 2014). As a result, when refugees move, the available funds, resources, and public services are not typically sufficient to provide services to both new and previously resettled refugees (CRP Partner Organizations 2015).⁵ Such instances can result in greater demand for services and insufficient resources (CRP Partner Organizations 2015).

2.3. Overview of Refugee Legislation and Refugee Related Programs

2.3.1 Refugee Legislation from 1948 to 1980

The development of different refugee acts from 1948 to 1980 are briefly reviewed in order to set the historical context for this analysis. Although multiple refugee acts were enacted between 1948 to 1960 to respond to specific world events, the Refugee Act of 1980 was created as a permanent and systematic procedure to admit refugees into the United States. As a result, since 1980, the United States has not enacted any other refugee acts.

The Displaced Persons Act of 1948 was the first refugee legislation enacted in the United States. The legislation brought 400,000 Europeans, who were fleeing to countries such as Austria, Italy, and France because of fear of persecution by the Nazi government in Germany

⁵ The new community may not have a refugee agency, and may lack affordable housing, schools, and job opportunities.

(Mossaad 2016; U. S. Congress 1948). Natives of Czechoslovakia who fled the country because of fear of persecution were also eligible to enter the United States by the Act of 1948 (U. S. Congress 1948).

After that, the Refugee Relief Act, Hungarian Escape Act, and Fair Share Refugee Act were enacted in 1953, 1958, and 1960 respectively (Mossaad 2016). Although the 1948 Act eased the refugee crisis in Europe, refugees continued to reside in Europe, Middle East, and Asia. In order to relieve refugees and orphans of the latter regions, the United States Congress enacted the 1953 Refugee Relief Act (Operations Coordinating Board 1954). The Act brought German expellees,⁶ and refugees from communist, communist-dominant, or communist occupied areas, and refugees from areas subjected to natural disasters or in the midst of military operations (Operations Coordinating Board 1954). The 1958 Hungarian Escape Act was enacted to accommodate refugees of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution (Pastor 2016). As a result of the Act, the United States brought over 30,000 Hungarian nationals in 1958 (Pastor 2016). The Fair Share Refugee Act of 1960 authorized the Attorney General to parole alien-refugee-escapees for humanitarian reasons,⁷ and bring more Hungarian refugees and Indochinese parolees in the 1970s (Mossaad 2016).

In 1967, the United Nations Protocol related to the Status of Refugees prohibited “any nation from returning a refugee to a country where his or her life or freedom would be threatened” (Mossaad 2016: 2). In 1968, the United States endorsed the United Nations protocol. Between 1975 and 1979, the United States admitted around 300,000 Vietnamese and Cambodian

⁶ Refugees of German ethnic origin or people who were forcibly removed from or forced to flee from Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Rumania, and Yugoslavia.

⁷ During urgent humanitarian crises, the Attorney General has the discretionary authority to allow otherwise inadmissible individuals to enter into the United States for a temporary period. Although parole does not constitute an admission to the United States and convey any benefits to the parolee, the parolee has the opportunity to adjust to permanent resident status after one year (USCIS 2017).

refugees in the aftermath of the Vietnam War (National Archives Foundation 2017). During this time, refugee applications to the United States could not be approved because the annual ceiling for refugees was much lower than the number of refugee applications (National Archives Foundation 2017).⁸ Therefore from 1975 to 1979, refugees were paroled into the United States under parole authority granted by the Attorney General (U. S. Dept. of Homeland Security 2016).

Since the ceiling for refugee admission was low, the United States implemented the Refugee Act of 1980, raising the annual ceiling from 17,400 to 50,000 (National Archives Foundation 2017). The Act allowed 50,000 refugees to be admitted to the United States from 1980 to 1982 (National Archives Foundation 2017; U. S. Congress 1980). After the fiscal year 1982, the President has determined the number of refugees admitted to the United States before the beginning of the fiscal year after consulting with Congress (U. S. Dept. of Homeland Security 2016; Refugee Act 1980). The Refugee Act of 1980 also established a common definition for refugees that is geographically and politically neutral, and a clear distinction between refugees and asylum status (Mossaad 2016).⁹

As the review shows, the United States enacted multiple refugee acts between 1948 to 1960, until the Refugee Act of 1980 was created as a permanent and systematic procedure to admit refugees. At the same time, although most of the acts before the 1960s predominantly admitted refugees of European origin, by the end of the 1970s the trend had shifted to other global regions such as Asia, Central Asia, and Africa. At present, most refugees come from Africa, Asia, and the Middle East where humanitarian crises currently exist.

⁸ Before 1980, the annual refugee ceiling was 17,400 (National Archives Foundation 2017).

⁹ See section 2.1 immigration classifications for refugee and asylee definitions.

2.3.2. Refugee Related Programs

2.3.2.1. Wilson/Fish alternative program

When refugees arrive in the United States, they receive assistance and social services through the Wilson/Fish (WF) alternative program.¹⁰ The objectives of the program include increasing early employment and self-sufficiency opportunities for refugees, encouraging coordination among voluntary resettlement agencies and service providers, and ensuring existence of assistance programs in every state that resettles refugees (Office of Refugee Resettlement 2016). To achieve these objectives, the program provides financial assistance, medical assistance, and social services such as employment services, intensive case management services, English language training, translation and interpretation services, and social services to refugees (Office of Refugee Resettlement 2016). The following section briefly discusses each assistance program and social service.

The Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA)¹¹ provides financial support to meet the subsistence needs of refugees for up to eight months after arrival in the United States.¹² Refugees who are eligible for the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)¹³ or Supplemental Security Income (SSI)¹⁴ are not eligible for WF RCA (Office of Refugee Resettlement 2016). The Refugee Medical Assistance (RMA) ensures that refugees who are not eligible for Medicaid and

¹⁰ The WF program was established as an alternative to the traditional state administered refugee programs for providing assistance (financial and medical), and social services. The grantees of the WF programs are States, voluntary resettlement agencies, and a private non-profit agency. At present, the WF programs are operated in the following 12 states: Alabama, Alaska, Colorado, Idaho, Kentucky, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Nevada, North Dakota, South Dakota, Tennessee, and California (county program in San Diego) (Office of Refugee Resettlement 2016).

¹¹ Refugees in North Dakota receive \$ 925 as RCA (Stanwood 2015).

¹² The program sites will determine the eligibility of refugees on a monthly basis and will reduce the cash assistance payment based on the income from employment (Office of Refugee Resettlement 2016).

¹³ TANF is a program designed to help needy families achieve self-sufficiency. States receive block grants to design and operate TANF programs (U. S. Dept. of Health and Human Services 2015).

¹⁴ SSI is a Federal income supplement program funded by general tax revenue not Social Security taxes (U. S. Social Security Administration 2016).

Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) have access to medical services comparable to those provided by the state Medicaid (Office of Refugee Resettlement 2016). RMA is only provided in circumstances where a state chooses to discontinue refugee programs or if a more suitable private medical plan or provider is available to provide services to refugees at a more affordable cost (Office of Refugee Resettlement 2016).

Employment services place refugees between the ages 18 and 64 in appropriate jobs as soon as possible, so they can become self-sufficient before the end of the eight-month RCA eligibility period (Office of Refugee Resettlement 2016). Employment services also provide services to address skills, needs, and barriers identified by the Family Support Services Program (FSSP) (Office of Refugee Resettlement 2016). English Language Training (ELT) services assist refugees to enroll in ELT classes, record attendance, and assess progress of the enrolled refugees (Office of Refugee Resettlement 2016). If refugees do not participate in ELT when ELT is indicated as a requirement for employment, it will be considered as grounds for terminating RCA (Office of Refugee Resettlement 2016).

Intensive case management provides effective and timely services to refugees with special needs,¹⁵ and refugees facing other issues related to housing, employment authorization document, and social security to achieve self-sufficiency (Office of Refugee Resettlement 2016).¹⁶ The selected refugees receive intensive case management services for one year after their arrival (Office of Refugee Resettlement 2016). Translation and interpreter services provide culturally and linguistically appropriate services to refugees (Office of Refugee Resettlement 2016).¹⁷

2.3.2.2. Lutheran Social Services new Americans program

Lutheran Social Services (LSS) of North Dakota plays a significant role in welcoming refugees, assisting refugees with initial processes required for successful resettlement, and equipping refugees with tools to become self-sufficient. LSS is the only grantee of the WF program resettling refugees in North Dakota (Lutheran Social Services 2017). There are three LSS agencies, one each in Fargo, Bismarck, and Grand Forks. The agencies work in collaboration with national¹⁸ and community¹⁹ level partners to help refugees succeed in their new environments (Lutheran Social Services 2017).

¹⁵ Refugees with special needs include “single mothers,” “elderly refugees without a support system,” “refugees experiencing social or psychological challenges,” “refugees who are HIV positive,” “refugees with physical disabilities or medical conditions,” and “refugees who have a history of suicidal risk factors” (Office of Refugee Resettlement 2016:9).

¹⁶ Intensive case management services help refugees to become self-sufficient by referring them to support services, removing barriers to success, and monitoring progress (Office of Refugee Resettlement 2016).

¹⁷ Translation and interpreter services are responsible for providing necessary documents related to policies and forms in each refugee’s language. The documents and forms should include information on “eligibility, duration and amount of cash assistance payments, participation requirements, penalties for non-cooperation, and rights and responsibilities” (Office of Refugee Resettlement 2016:14). The staffing and documents will be adjusted based on the needs of the refugees receiving assistance (Office of Refugee Resettlement 2016).

¹⁸ National level partners include Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services, Episcopal Migration Ministries, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Office of Refugee Resettlement, and Department of State.

¹⁹ Local partners include Fargo, West Fargo, Bismarck, and Grand Forks public schools, Family Healthcare Center, Cass County Social Services, Cultural Diversity Resources, CHARISM, Fargo Police Department Cultural Liaison, and Global Friends (Lutheran Social Services 2017).

LSS provides different services to refugees to achieve economic stability while contributing to the local economy. The case-management program is responsible for securing an apartment for refugees,²⁰ assisting refugees to apply for Social Security cards, registering adults and children in English Language Learning (ELL) classes and public education programs, providing assistance in setting up medical appointments and applying for other support services, and preparing a self-sufficiency plan together with clients and employment specialists (Lutheran Social Services 2017). The refugee-employment services are responsible for working with area employers looking for workers, and assisting refugees to find employment as soon as possible (Lutheran Social Services 2017).

²⁰ Case management services representatives meet with refugee families at the airport, transports them to their apartment, and provide deposit and first month's rent, basic furnishings, clothing and a two-week supply of food (Lutheran Social Services 2017).

CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviews literature on host communities' attitudes toward immigrants, and impacts of immigrants on communities. There is a lack of empirical research on attitudes toward refugees and impacts of refugees in the United States. Thus, the review draws on a range of qualitative and quantitative studies conducted in Australia, Europe, Africa, and the Middle East on authorized and unauthorized immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers outside of the United States. The review utilizes sources such as books, published and unpublished research studies, case studies, and news articles. Section 3.1 presents literature on how immigrants' methods of entry, demographic factors, and social factors influence host communities' attitudes. Section 3.2 presents literature on positive and negative impacts of immigrants on host communities.

3.1. Literature on Attitudes of Host Communities toward Refugees

Evidence suggests that immigrants' methods of entry, refugee and asylee statuses, demographic factors, and social milieu affect host communities' attitudes toward immigrants. These factors shape how communities view immigrants, communities' preference levels of immigrants, and support for immigration and immigration related policies. The literature presented in the following section addresses the aforementioned in detail.

3.1.1. Influence of Method of Entry, Refugee/Asylee Statuses on Attitudes

There is a general movement within studied host communities to restrict the flow of unauthorized immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers (Ceobanu and Escandell 2010; Richmond 2002; Hovey et al. 2000), however that restriction is more severe when communities perceive that immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers are entering through unauthorized methods. For example, host communities along the Mexican border express more prejudice and anxiety toward unauthorized immigrants, and perceive unauthorized immigrants as a greater threat to their

cultural and moral values, and overall welfare compared to authorized immigrants (Murray and Marx 2013). In Australia, hostility toward asylum seekers arriving by boat without valid visas has increased over time compared to other immigrants arriving with visas. Between 1999 and 2001, and between 2008 and 2010, Australia received about 12,000 and 9,000 asylum seekers by boat respectively (McKay et al. 2012). Two opinion polls conducted during these periods show that negative public reaction toward asylum seekers arriving by boat had increased from 50 percent in 2001 to 75 percent in 2010 (McKay et al. 2012).

Following McKay et al. (2012), lower acceptance of unauthorized immigrants is a consequence of negative views held regarding the character of unauthorized immigrants. For example, Australians use labels such as “illegal,” “illegal asylum seekers,” “queue jumpers,” and “criminals” to express their negative attitudes toward asylees without visas (McKay et al. 2012). Australians view asylees without a visa as people who exploit or cheat systems, which are implemented to ensure proper procedures are being followed (McKay et al. 2012).

Holding such negative attitudes toward immigrants can influence important behaviors within host communities, including voting decisions on immigrant related policies (Verkuyten 2004) and active opposition to increasing immigration (Mayda 2004). Past attempts by American voters attest to efforts on supporting policies that impact immigrants. In 1994, California voters passed proposition 187²¹ to deny unauthorized immigrants from receiving public social services such as welfare benefits, public education, and health care (Cox 2013; Schuck 1995). In 2011, South Carolina passed Bill 20 to authorize law enforcement officers to determine the immigration status of immigrants during any lawful stop and convict immigrants who fail to

²¹ Although the proposed law was passed by the voters, it was not enforced (Cox 2013).

carry official legal status verification documents (Fandl 2015).²² In addition, in 2011, Alabama enacted the Beason-Hammon Alabama Taxpayer and Citizen Protection Act (HB 56) to “make it unlawful for unlawful aliens to apply for work in the state, prohibit tax deductions for service payments to unlawful aliens, and make it a civil offense for an employer to dismiss a lawful worker while retaining an unlawful alien worker” (Fandl 2015:539).

3.1.2. Influence of Demographic Factors and Social Milieu on Attitudes

Besides method of entry, and refugee and asylee statuses, immigrants’ demographic factors also influence community attitudes. Demographic factors such as race, ethnicity, religion, country/region of origin, gender, education level, skill level, occupation, skin complexion, and economic status affect host community attitudes toward immigrants (Bullard 2015; Turper et al. 2015; Garcia and Davidson 2013; Marx, Ko, and Murray 2012; Woods 2011; Raiya et al. 2008). These demographic factors not only affect attitudes toward immigrants (Murray and Marx 2013; Raiya et al. 2008; Hernes and Knudsen 1992) but also the level of acceptance rates for potential immigrants (Turper et al. 2015). For example, Americans prefer Hispanic immigrants over Middle Eastern immigrants (Turper et al. 2015), as well as Jewish and Asian refugees over refugees from other religions and regions (Bullard 2015). However, Americans perceive ‘whites’ as more American in comparison to immigrants from other racial and ethnic groups (Devos and Banaji 2005). Such partialities and perceptions suggest that Americans prefer immigrants from countries more similar to their own than immigrants from countries that are racially and ethnically distinct (Turper et al. 2015; Devos and Banaji 2005).

Host communities’ attitudes toward immigrants vary based on immigrants’ skill levels and education. This variance in attitudes toward immigrants tend to be contradictory. On the one

²² Legal status verification documents include, but are not limited to, U. S. passport, certificate of naturalization, certificate of U. S. citizenship, valid state issued driver’s license.

hand, American residents who identify immigrants as having similar work-related skills and traits²³ to them feel that immigrants pose a threat to their job security. Such circumstances can influence the residents to feel threatened by immigrants and express more prejudicial attitudes toward immigrants (Zárate, Garcia, Garza, and Hitlan 2004).²⁴ On the other hand, residents are eager to accept skilled immigrants who are more likely to contribute to the national economy and are less likely to depend on government benefits compared to unskilled immigrants (Turper et al. 2015).²⁵ Similarly, residents' support for immigration also varies depending on immigrants' economic status and presence of family dependents. Americans prefer single immigrants over immigrants with families in low economic status conditions (Turper et al. 2015). However, Americans prefer immigrants with families over single immigrants when immigrants with families belong to high economic statuses (Turper et al. 2015).

Demographic factors within a host community including gender, education, race, and skill level are positively correlated to pro-immigration attitudes (Bullard 2015; Garcia and Davidson 2013; Berg 2010; Fennelly and Fedrico 2007; Hainmueller and Hiscox 2007; Mayda 2004; Kim 2001). Although women become less positive as they get older, in general, women hold relatively more positive attitudes toward immigrants compared to men (Hernes and Knudsen 1992). In particular, women with higher levels of education express pro-immigrant attitudes compared to men with similar levels of education (Berg 2010). Similarly, highly educated, white, native-born Americans express positive attitudes toward immigrants compared to African Americans regardless of the level of education of the latter (Berg 2010). Furthermore,

²³ Examples of work related traits: ambitious, competitive, disciplined, hardworking, motivated, organized, punctual, and systematic (Zárate et al. 2004).

²⁴ Prejudicial attitudes include hostility, dislike, disregard, rejection, hatred, and superiority (Zárate et al. 2004).

²⁵ For example, Americans express prejudicial attitudes toward immigrants when immigrants have similar work skills and traits to them when American and Dutch residents favor immigrants with higher occupational and educational credentials over lower occupational and educational credentials (Turper et al. 2015; Berg 2010).

highly educated residents are more likely to support immigration regardless of immigrants' skill levels (Hainmueller and Hiscox 2007; Hernes and Knudsen 1992). In addition, a survey conducted in 23 different countries, including the United States, found that individuals with higher levels of skill in wealthier countries²⁶ are more likely to be pro-immigrant compared to individuals in poorer countries (O'Rourke and Sinnott 2006).²⁷

Residents may feel threatened by the presence of immigrants from different religions and tend to act less receptive toward them (Bullard 2015; Raiya et al. 2008). In the United States, in a sample of 197 Christian undergraduate participants, 13.7 to 28 percent believe that Muslims are a threat to Christian values and teachings (Raiya et al. 2008). Although the figures are relatively low, the researchers suggest that the figures are noteworthy considering that the sample was composed of presumably more educated and less religious participants compared to a general population. The researchers assume that the percentages would be higher for less educated, more religious samples (Raiya et al. 2008). Supporting the latter assumption, Bullard (2015) finds that Christian residents are less supportive of increasing the acceptance of refugees to the United States compared to residents who did not identify themselves with a religion.

Rural and urban residents' lower acceptance of immigrants is largely influenced by a few social and economic concerns. The opposition to immigration in rural areas is influenced by immigrants' perceived impacts on the crime rates and competition for jobs (Garcia and Davidson 2013). The opposition to immigration in urban areas is similarly influenced by perceived impacts on the local economy, crime rates, and competition for jobs (Garcia and Davidson 2013).

In addition, urban and rural American residents feel threatened when immigrants do not conform to the values embodied in presumed American identities. Both urban and rural

²⁶ High per capita Gross Domestic Product (GDP) countries.

²⁷ Low per capita GDP countries.

American residents equally value a set of core virtues embodied in the American identity (Fennelly 2008; Sears and Henry 2003). Thus, Americans would expect immigrants to conform to American virtues such as hard work, obedience, self-sufficiency, punctuality, sexual oppression, thrift (Sears and Henry 2003), English language proficiency, honesty, familial connections (Garcia and Davidson 2013), patriotism, and loyalty (Benjamin 2009). When immigrants' virtues are perceived to be in conflict with said virtues, Americans tend to perceive immigrants as a threat to their traditional values. Non-conformists of American traditional values of importance were considered violators in the past (Sears and Henry 2003). In addition, although rural residents are highly invested in the notion of American identity, it is not seen as an attitude determinant for rural residents in predicting opposition to immigration (Garcia and Davidson 2013). On the contrary, American identity is seen as an important attitude determinant for urban residents in predicting opposition to immigration (Garcia and Davidson 2013).

Rural residents feel threatened and act less receptive when immigrants are from a lesser known and more visibly distinct culture. In the past, immigrants predominantly resettled in the metropolitan areas. However, over the past two decades, resettlement has been shifting away from urban areas to rural areas where cost of living is comparatively low (Garcia and Davidson 2013; Nezer, 2013; Fennelly 2008). Since most of the rural areas are homogenous communities, immigrants can be easily identified as a new population (Nezer, 2013; Rubin 1994). Sudden influx of a diverse population who are culturally, racially, and religiously different can unsettle the localities' historically stable notions of belonging (Nezer 2013; Collins, 2013; Rubin 1994). Since rural residents are not accustomed to the presence of immigrants from diverse cultures, and are uncertain about problems that may arise with immigration (Garcia and Davidson 2013), immigrants presence may seemingly threaten the localities distinct traditional world-view and

way of life (Fennelly 2008; Zárate et al. 2004). As a result, immigrants can be viewed as a threat to local values consequently generating negative attitudes toward immigrants (Zárate et al. 2004).

Urban and less educated residents are more likely to perceive that immigrants lead to crime and other social ills, and express negative attitudes toward immigrants (Hainmueller and Hiscox 2007; Palmer 1996). Urban residents in the United States are more concerned about immigrants worsening crime problems than their rural counterparts (Garcia and Davidson 2013). Residents who perceive immigrants worsen crime problems are more likely to prefer decreased immigration (Garcia and Davidson 2013) or oppose immigration (Hainmueller and Hiscox 2007). However, this perception is most prevalent among the less educated residents, with more educated residents less likely to perceive that immigrants lead to increased crime rates and social ills (Hainmueller and Hiscox 2007).

Differences in interpersonal traits also influence residents to evaluate immigrants more negatively. American residents express more prejudicial attitudes toward Mexican immigrants when there are differences between their interpersonal traits such as affection, friendliness, generosity, humbleness, kindness, lovingness, and passion (Zárate et al. 2004). The residents perceive immigrants who are different in interpersonal traits as a threat to their socio-cultural values and consequently evaluate immigrants more negatively (Zárate et al. 2004).

Perceiving immigrants as a threat to individuals, communities, and national security, and possibility of warfare influence residents' hostility toward immigrants. The levels of perceived threats hiked significantly in the United States after the 9/11 world trade center attack escalating prejudicial attitudes toward Muslim immigrants (Woods 2011; Raiya et al. 2008). In the aftermath of the attack, Americans perceived an increased threat to their personal safety, and

safety of the communities, and the nation (Woods 2011). In response to the perceived threat, Americans expressed negative attitudes toward Muslim immigrants by favoring politicians who supported restrictions on immigration, placing more emphasis on security, and be more willing than before to punish immigrants who violated assumed American values (Woods 2011).

Competition for resources and available quality of public services also affect residents' support for immigration policies (Esses, Dovidio, Jackson, and Armstrong 2001; Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco 1995). When immigrants are perceived as competition for resources, people who are pessimistic about their own and the nation's economic well-being are more likely to support restricting legal immigration (Pantoja 2006). In addition, when resources are scarce, locals are more inclined to act favorably toward in-group members than out-group members (Baumeister and Bushman 2008). In addition, negative attitudes arise from fear over the lower quality of healthcare and education services (Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco 1995). Feelings of fear vary based on the capacity of the relevant service (Hovey et al. 2000).

Popular mass media representations of immigrants can influence residents to view immigrants negatively and develop anxiety, especially when residents lack knowledge of and contact with immigrants. Mass media often presents stereotypical and distorted representations of immigrant groups (Banks 2012; McKay et al. 2010; Ungerleider 1991). Such representations often contribute to the depiction of immigrants as criminal, deviant, and dangerous groups and individuals. For example, Latino immigrants are often portrayed as “drunks, crooks (robbers, drug dealers), gang members, gardeners, or farmhands” (Hovey et al. 2000: 171). These negative portrayals contradict views that delineate the true American as hardworking, patriotic, and loyal (Benjamin 2009). Negative media portrayals also construct immigrants as feared subjects and confirm immigrants as deviants and strangers (Banks 2012). Since popular mass media acts as

the primary conduit of information that disseminates knowledge about immigrants, distorted representations of immigrants can influence residents to generate anxieties without much knowledge of and personal contact with immigrants (Banks 2012; McKay et al. 2010).

3.2. Literature on Impacts of Immigrants on Host Communities

Immigration has a number of known impacts and assumed impacts on host communities. This section discusses both positive and negative impacts, and perceived negative impacts of immigrants on global host communities. As previously mentioned, since there is a lack of research on impacts of refugees in the United States, the review includes findings from countries and regions such as Jordan, Western Tanzania, Africa, and Europe, outside of the United States. Furthermore, the Positive Impacts and Negative Impacts sections (3.2.1) draw on literature on refugees while the Perceived Negative Impacts of Immigrants section (3.2.2) draws on literature on authorized and unauthorized immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers.

3.2.1. Positive and Negative Impacts of Refugees

3.2.1.1. Positive impacts

Few prior studies have focused on presenting positive impacts of refugees on host communities (Grindheim 2013; Codjoe et al. 2013; Zetter 2010). According to these studies, refugees bring economic benefits and infrastructural developmental potential to their host communities. For example, refugees in Franklin, Ohio contribute to the local economy as consumers and small-business owners. Ohio refugees' household spending in 2015 is \$ 36.9 million and their total contribution to the local economy is \$ 1.6 billion (CRP Partner Organizations 2015). Furthermore, about 873 refugee-owned businesses in Columbus Ohio employ over 3,900 workers. In Franklin, the rate of refugee entrepreneurship (13.6 percent) is twice the general Franklin County rate of entrepreneurship (6.5 percent) (CRP Partner

Organizations 2015). Similarly, refugees in North Dakota also contribute to the local economy as homeowners and taxpayers. According to Valley News Live, a report indicates that at least 100 refugee families in North Dakota own houses and pay about \$200,000 in taxes (Stanwood 2015).

Refugees also stimulate the growth of the host economy through other direct and indirect means. Refugees directly influence the expansion of the local market by increasing the demand for local food produce and commodities such as building materials (Grindheim 2013; Codjoe et al. 2013; Zetter 2010). Increased food, housing, and land prices bring more income to local farmers, and landowners (Mercy Corps 2012; Alix-Garcia and Saah 2009). At the same time, the presence of refugees indirectly contributes to the built and social capitals of the host communities. The host communities could seemingly benefit from assistance programs that provide infrastructure and welfare services to refugees in need (Zetter 2010).

3.2.1.2. Negative impacts

Between 2011 and 2012 alone, 14,000 Syrian refugees arrived in Jordan (Mercy Corps 2012). An assessment performed by Mercy Corps humanitarian agency identifies that the increasing tension between Jordanian host community members and refugees is a result of pressure placed on local resources by the rapid influx of refugees.²⁸ Jordanian host communities are frustrated due to elevated rents and the plummeted availability of housing caused by the refugee influx (Mercy Corps 2012). The study noted that many residents complain that they have been priced out of their own housing market, and that skyrocketing rental prices force residents to pay a significant amount of their monthly income toward rent (Mercy Corps 2012). Although host community residents are aware that refugees are also adversely affected by exorbitant prices charged by opportunistic property owners, residents insist on a solution that favors them over

²⁸ Based on data gathered through focus groups and key informant interviews.

refugees (Mercy Corps 2012). Host community residents also demand to charge a fair rent and protect them from excessive prices that result from high demand for housing (Mercy Corps 2012).

Studies also indicate that competition over resources can have both positive and negative economic impacts on communities (Mercy Corps 2012; Alix-Garcia and Saah 2009; Chambers 1986). Between 1993 and 1998 because of refugee influx, residents of Western Tanzania experienced increases in the prices of locally produced and consumed agricultural goods. Increases in prices due to refugee demand for food positively affected the local producers and negatively affected the consumers (Alix-Garcia and Saah 2009). Thus, the study suggests that policymakers should be concerned about price increases resulting from refugee demand when developing policies in order to avoid any adverse impacts on local consumers (Alix-Garcia and Saah 2009).

3.2.2. Perceived Negative Impacts of Immigrants

Host community residents perceive immigrants as a burden on the economy, public services such as education, and housing (Codjoe et al. 2013; Cox 2013; Nezer 2013; Mercy Corps 2012; Naidoo 2005; Burns and Gimpel 2000; Hovey et al. 2000; Zetter 2010), and also as a competition for jobs (Cox 2013; Mercy Corps 2012; Hovey et al. 2000; Richmond 2002; Rubin 1994). In recent years, these concerns have influenced several countries to implement tighter immigration control policies (Hainmueller and Hiscox 2007). The following section discusses the negative socio-economic impacts of immigrants in detail.

Refugees are considered an economic burden by countries and states facing economic difficulties. African host communities claim that refugees residing in Africa are “imposing additional costs on already economically hard-pressed public and social welfare budgets,

arresting economic growth,” and “distorting markets” (Zetter 2010: 50). In the United States, states experiencing financial difficulties and members living in those communities have become resentful toward refugees in regards to the actual use of federal funds to supplement medical, education, housing, and transportation needs of refugees (Nezer 2013).

Residents view immigrants as a burden on social services assuming that immigrants subtract more from the government and taxpayers than they contribute to the local economy as taxpayers and employees. Many Americans perceive unauthorized immigrants as a burden on social services on the basis that social benefits unauthorized immigrants receive are provided at the expense of tax paying Americans (Cox 2013), and immigrants’ tax contributions may be minimal (Burns and Gimpel 2000). Many Europeans perceive immigrants as a burden on social services on the basis that they subtract more from the government than they pay back in taxes (Hainmueller and Hiscox. 2007). A survey conducted in 24 different countries, including United States finds that many residents perceive asylees as a drain on welfare system assuming that asylees are prohibited to work (O’Rourke and Sinnott 2006). Moreover, residents who perceive immigrants as a burden on social services are more likely to express negative attitudes toward immigration (Cox 2013).

Some host community residents of California view unauthorized immigrants as a burden on school services. These residents are more in favor of providing healthcare services for unauthorized immigrants than providing school services. The host community residents perceive children of unauthorized immigrants as contributing to overcrowded classrooms, which lowers the quality of public education (Hovey et al. 2000).

Apart from unauthorized immigrants' children, refugee children are also seen as a burden on school services. Different learning techniques and language abilities of refugee students²⁹ exert pressure on teachers who have to equip refugee students with necessary academic, social, and linguistic skills while attempting to create conditions for them to participate in the ongoing school curriculum demands (Naidoo 2005). The task becomes more challenging when teachers lack experience in teaching students whose first language is not English. In most instances, the schools, and staff are ill equipped and under-resourced to cater to the needs of the increasing number of refugee students (Naidoo 2005).

Immigrants are also perceived as competition for jobs. There are concerns that immigrants may take jobs away from local residents (Hainmueller and Hiscox 2007; Palmer 1996). When immigrants are perceived as a competition for jobs and willing to work for low wages (Cox 2013; Mercy Corps 2012), they are seen as a threat because they are hired for jobs that would supposedly have gone to local residents (Zárate et al. 2004). Furthermore, opposition to immigration increases during periods of recession or high unemployment (Mercy Corps 2012; Hovey et al. 2000; Palmer 1996; Rubin 1994). When residents become unemployed, they are more likely to believe that immigrants take jobs away from the native-born (Palmer 1996). In such instances, residents become anti-immigrant but not anti-refugee, on the belief that refugees are not authorized to work, therefore not a competition for jobs (O'Rourke and Sinnott 2006). In addition, competition for employment opportunities between immigrants and residents can also increase the existing ethnic and political tensions among diverse groups (Richmond 2002).

²⁹ Some African refugee students come from agricultural backgrounds that use oral tradition for learning and do not include any form of writing.

CHAPTER 4: INTERGROUP THREAT THEORY

This chapter introduces Intergroup Threat Theory (ITT), which is used to interpret the findings of this study. Section 4.1 discusses the two types of perceived intergroup threat: realistic and symbolic. Section 4.2 discusses the four antecedents that influence perceptions of intergroup threat. Section 4.3 discusses the resulting negative emotions and attitudes of perceived threat.

4.1. Intergroup Threat Theory

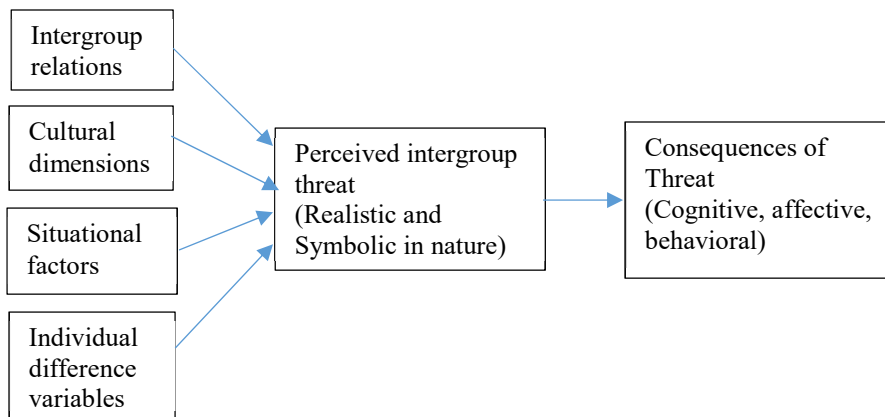


Figure 3. Antecedents of Perceived Threat and Resulting Effects (Stephan, Ybarra, and Morrison 2009)

According to ITT, intergroup threat is experienced when one group perceives that another group is in a position to harm them (Stephan et al. 2009). ITT does not take into account the actual threat posed toward the in-group by the out-group, but rather it considers the degree of threat perceived by members of the in-group (Stephan et al. 2009). Figure 3 illustrates the relations theorized by ITT. As shown, antecedents that affect perceptions of intergroup threat can be classified into four distinct groups, each to be discussed in turn below. The four classifications for antecedents are relationship between the in-group and the out-group (intergroup relations), recognizable traditional values specific to cultures (cultural dimensions), situations in which the intergroup interaction occurs (situational factors), and individuals' relationships with the in-group and the out-group (individual difference variables). These groups of antecedents affect

people’s perception of other groups as a threat to their well-being and resources (realistic), or value systems (symbolic). As shown in Figure 3, when people feel threatened by other groups, they express cognitive, affective, and behavioral responses. The theory is presented in the following order. First, a typology of threats will be presented and explained. Then, the various elements of the model presented in Figure 3 will be taken up in turn starting with the various antecedents and ending with a discussion of various cognitive, behavioral, and affective responses to threat.

4.1.1. Perceived Intergroup Threat

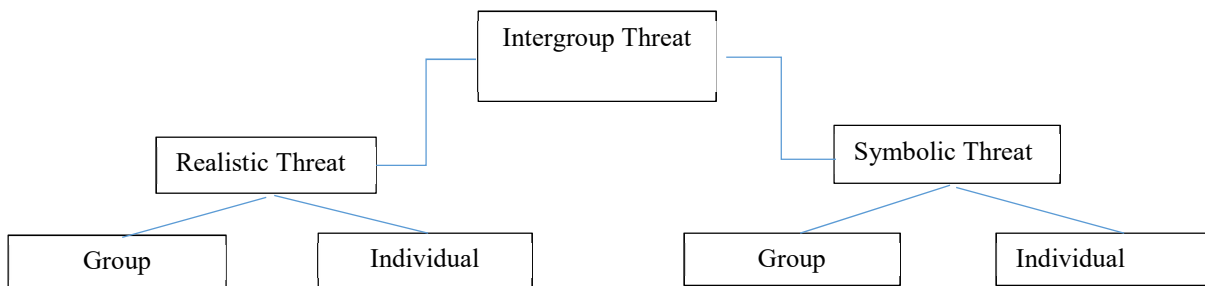


Figure 4. Intergroup Threat Theory (Stephan et al. 2009)

There are two types of intergroup threat: realistic and symbolic.³⁰ Threats posed by out-groups are realistic if in-group members perceive a real or imagined challenge to the well-being and tangible resources of either one or more single in-group members or the group as a unit (Stephan et al. 2008; Stephan and Stephan. 2001; Stephan and Stephan 2000). Examples of

³⁰ The initial model of Intergroup Threat Theory (ITT) included four types of threat: realistic, symbolic, intergroup anxiety, and negative stereotypes. Then, the model was reduced to two types of threat: realistic and symbolic. The revised model eliminated intergroup anxiety because it is a subtype of threat centering on apprehensions about interacting with out-group members (Stephan, Ybarra, and Morrison 2009; Stephan, Renfro, Davis 2008). These apprehensions arise from a number of different sources, including concerns that the out-group will exploit the in-group, concerns that the out-group will perceive the in-group as prejudice, and concerns that the out-group will challenge the in-group’s values (Stephan et al. 2009; Stephan, Renfro, Davis 2008). The revised model eliminated negative stereotypes because it is a cause of threat involving characteristics of the out-group that could have a negative impact on the in-group (Stephan et al., 2009; Stephan et al. 2008). The theorists acknowledge negative stereotypes only as a predictor of realistic and symbolic threats (Stephan et al., 2009; Stephan et al. 2008). As a result of eliminating intergroup anxiety and negative stereotypes, the revised model of ITT includes only realistic and symbolic as threat types.

realistic threats include warfare, terrorism, genocide, ethnic cleansing, disenfranchisement, aggression, discrimination, torture, theft, starvation, exposure to infectious diseases, pollution, competition for territory and natural resources, destruction of property, and lack of access to education, healthcare and other necessities of life (Stephan and Mealy 2012).

Realistic threats can be further divided into group and individual level threats. Realistic group threats include threats directed toward a group's power, resources, and general well-being (Stephan et al. 2009; Stephan et al. 2008). Realistic individual threats include physical or material harms including pain, torture, death, economic loss, deprivation of resources, and threats to health or personal security (Stephan et al. 2009; Stephan et al. 2008). Realistic threats are expected to generate behaviors such as withdrawal, avoidance, aggression, and negotiation (Stephan et al. 2009).

Threats posed by out-groups that challenge in-group's beliefs, values, and intangible resources are symbolic (Stephan and Stephan 2000; Stephan et al. 2008). Compared to realistic threats, symbolic threats are more frequently inferred without evidence or reasoning (Stephan et al. 2009). Therefore, symbolic threats are more readily seen as threats compared to realistic threats (Stephan et al. 2009).

Symbolic threats affect members individually and the group as a whole. Symbolic group threats include threats directed toward a group's beliefs, values, ideologies, moralities, or worldviews. Symbolic group threats arise when the in-group believes that the out-group is challenging, changing, or destroying their value systems. In particular, if the in-group thinks that the out-group possesses a different value system, and that the out-group is trying to impose its values on the in-group, the probability that the in-group views the out-group as a threat increases as does the fear that the in-group might have to change its way of life (Stephan et al. 2009).

The magnitude of difference between in-group and out-group systems of beliefs and values can lead the in-group to presume certain responses and challenges. When the differences in values are insignificant between the groups, the in-group may be concerned about possible misunderstandings or arguments, and when the differences are significant, the in-group may be concerned about possible challenges in communicating or interacting effectively with the out-group, especially if the groups do not share a common language (Stephan et al. 2009). In addition, the in-group would use words such as “unconventional, inappropriate, impolite, improper, uncivilized, offensive, unacceptable, discourteous, illogical, unjustifiable, objectionable, disgusting, disrespectful, dishonorable, immoral, shameful, evil, unethical, illegitimate, outrageous, obscene, disquieting and peculiar” to express disapproval of out-group’s behavior that does not match the in-group’s behavior (Stephan et al. 2009:5).

Symbolic individual threats include loss of face or honor and acts that degrade an individual’s self-identity or self-esteem. For example, rape poses a symbolic threat when it potentially affects a person’s honor or undermines a person’s self-esteem (Stephan et al. 2009). Symbolic threats are likely to generate dehumanization (perception that a person is less than a human being), delegitimization (process of placing a person in a negative social category and excluding that person from acceptability),³¹ and moral exclusion (considerations of fairness and allocation of resources are not applicable to certain individuals)³² of the out-group. Symbolic threats can also generate possible behavioral responses such as genocide, torture, and mutilation, and decrease empathy toward out-group members (Stephan et al. 2009). Moreover, symbolic threats are likely to increase conformity to in-group’s norms and values (Vaes and Wicklund 2002).

³¹ Bar-Tal 1990.

³² Leets 2001.

4.1.2. Antecedents of Perceived Threat

Table 1. Antecedents of Perceived Threat

Antecedent	
Intergroup relations	Relative power History of conflict Group size Cultural value differences
Cultural dimensions	Collectivist cultures Power distance Uncertainty avoidance
Situational factors	Lack of familiarity with the setting Lack of clarity in the social roles Out-group labels Intergroup competition
Individual difference variables	In-group identity Amount and type of contact Out-group knowledge

Source: Stephan et al. 2009

The intensity of threat felt by an in-group varies depending on number of variables, and these variables can be classified as one of four antecedent types. As shown in Table 1, antecedent classifications include intergroup relations, cultural dimensions, situational factors, and individual differences. The following section elaborates on each variable's classification, and the direction and magnitude of its effect on perceptions of threat.

4.1.2.1. Intergroup relations

Aspects of the relation between an in-group and out-group can increase or decrease how threatened an in-group feels. In particular, researchers identify the relative size and power of the in-group relative to an out-group, as well as any history of prior interactions between groups as affecting the in-group's feeling of being threatened. These factors are more likely to elicit perceptions of realistic threat than symbolic threat, and is more likely to be seen as a threat to the group than to the individual. In contrast, if there is a cultural discrepancy between the in-group

and out-group, that is a relational aspect more likely to elicit symbolic threats to the group than to the individual. The following section describes the magnitude and the direction of effect each inter-relational variable has on perception of threat.

When the power between in-group and out-group is not equal, the in-group will feel threatened, but whereas low power groups feel threat more intensely as a consequence of their subordinate position, high power groups respond more directly to a perceived threat as they stand to lose more. For example, low power ethnic groups such as Native Canadians perceive higher levels of threat from high power ethnic groups such as Anglo-Canadians (Corenblum and Stephan 2001). Likewise, low power racial groups such as African Americans perceive higher levels of threat from high power racial groups such as European Americans (Stephen, Boniecki, Ybarra, Bettencourt, Ervin, Jackson, McNatt, and Renfro 2002). According to Riek, Mania, and Gaertner (2006), when the high power group views the low power group as a threat to their resources and group-esteem, high power group's negative attitudes toward low power group increase. Similarly, Johnson, Terry, and Louis (2005) find that white Australians, the high power group, experienced higher levels of threat when they presumed that their superior status position is threatened by the low power group, Asian Australians. In response to the perceived threat, white Australians expressed prejudicial attitudes to protect their status by strongly disfavoring and negatively stereotyping Asian Australians (Johnson et al. 2005).

Groups that have a long history of conflict are prone to perceive out-groups as more threatening after a violent confrontation than before. Prior experiences of warfare, genocide, terrorism, and civil unrest can make people concerned and fear that those conflicts will occur again in current intergroup relations (Stephan et al. 2009). For example, given their many years of conflict, Israelis felt their well-being and lives were in more danger after than before violent

confrontations with Palestinians (Shamir and Sagiv-Schifter 2006). In addition, frequency, duration, intensity, and type of conflict (political religious, and civil) can also affect people's perceptions of threat (Stephan et al. 2009).

Size of the in-group and the out-group relative to each other can affect the groups to feel threatened by each other. On the one hand, if the in-group is larger than the out-group, the out-group is likely to view the in-group as threatening. For example, Stephan et al. (2009) posit that Palestinians (out-group) may feel threatened by the Israelis (in-group) because Palestinians are the numerically smaller group compared to the Israelis. On the other hand, if the out-group is larger than the in-group, the in-group is likely to view the out-group as threatening (Stephan et al. 2009). For example, in American communities, when the secular out-group is larger than the Evangelical Christian in-group, the latter are likely to view the secular group as a threat to their symbolic values and more likely to react to threat by voting for republican candidates (Campbell 2006). Similar findings were noted by Schaller and Abeysinghe (2006). In Sri Lanka, Sinhalese (in-group) are the majority group compared to Tamils (out-group). However, in the South Asian region, Sinhalese are the minority group compared to Tamils. When Sinhalese participants of the study were inclined to think that they are the minority group in the region compared to Tamils, Sinhalese viewed Tamils as increasingly threatening and wicked (Schaller and Abeysinghe 2006). In addition, Corneille, Yzerbyt, Rogier, and Buidin (2001) find that simply assuming that the out-group is larger than the in-group can also lead the in-group to feel threatened.

The greater the difference between in-group and out-group culture, language, and values, the more likely in-groups are to feel their culture is threatened (Garcia and Davidson 2013; Zárate et al. 2004). However, the degree of that threat is a function of the out-group's perceived willingness to assimilate. A refusal or unwillingness to assimilate results in high levels of threat

perception among in-group members, whereas groups that were willing to assimilate were seen as less threatening (Matera, Stefanile, and Brown 2012; Crisp and Hall 2006). Indeed, according to Stephan et al. (2009), the general expectation among host communities is that the out-group will assimilate, and when that expectation is violated, the violators are seen as very threatening. For example, since Israelis believe that immigrants would get accustomed to Israeli values, standards, and norms with time, Israelis view immigrants as less threatening to their cultural values compared to their tangible resources (Bizman and Yinon 2001).

Conversely, research also finds that, when the in-group feels that the out-group is a threat to its belief system, the in-group is more likely to assume that the out-group is unwilling to assimilate. For example, highly religious Western European Christians view Muslim immigrants as a threat to their religious values (Croucher, Galy-Badenas, and Routsalainen 2014; Croucher 2013). Based on that view, highly religious Christian members assume that Muslim immigrants do not want to assimilate to host cultural values (Croucher et al. 2014; Croucher 2013). Such beliefs can lead the host communities to be less receptive toward immigrants and exert high levels of pressure on immigrants to conform to the host culture (Croucher et al. 2014; Croucher 2013). According to self-fulfilling prophecy³³, one's expectations of other people can evoke a new behavior that can lead those people to behave in ways that confirm initial expectations (Baumeister and Bushman 2008). Similarly, less receptivity and high conformity pressure exerted by Western European Christians resulted in lower levels of immigrant assimilation (Croucher et al. 2014; Croucher 2013).

³³ Self-fulfilling prophecy is “a belief about the future that comes true in part because the belief causes it to come true” (Baumeister and Bushman 2008: 430).

4.1.2.2. Cultural dimensions

Cultural dimensions include collectivism, societal patterns of power distribution, and the societal tolerance for uncertainty. Since cultural dimensions refer to values, beliefs, and norms, they are more likely to elicit symbolic threat than realistic threat. The effects of each cultural dimension are discussed in the following section.

Collectivism is a societal level outlook that prioritizes group over individual welfare (Stephan et al. 2009). According to Stephan et al. (2009), members of collectivist cultures identify with their in-groups more strongly than they identify with members of individualist cultures. As a result, members of collectivist cultures are more likely to find out-groups threatening.

Power distance refers to societies' expectations that some individuals will be more powerful than others (Stephan et al. 2009). Societies with steep distributions of power are more likely to perceive threats than societies with low power stratifications. The reason for such difference is because high power stratification societies are characterized by higher rates of conflict and violence (Stephan et al. 2009; Hofstede 1980). As established earlier, when conflicts are frequent and intense, people are more likely to feel threatened.

If a society is tolerant of uncertainty, members will feel comfortable in unstructured situations (Stephan et al. 2009). Such societies are flexible, and more capable of managing the ambiguity that occurs when culturally distinct groups interact. In contrast, members of a society that shun unstructured situations, when encountering unfamiliar groups, are more likely to perceive out-groups as threatening (Stephan et al. 2009). Uncertainty avoidant societies then respond to out-groups by attempting to reduce uncertainty. Some attempts at reducing such uncertainty include implementing strict rules, laws, and behavioral codes (Hofstede 2011).

4.1.2.3. Situational factors

Certain elements of the situation in which intergroup interaction occurs affect the perceptions of threat. These situational factors include lack of familiarity with the setting in which intergroup interaction occurs, lack of clarity in the social roles of the group members, out-group labels in a particular context, and intergroup competition (Stephan et al. 2009). The situations that are more likely to generate perceptions of threat are those in which people are not certain how to behave, lack support from the authority figures, believe that they are smaller and less powerful than the other group, and are competing against a group that can harm them (Stephan et al. 2009). For example, in a factory owned and dominated by the majority in-group, the minority out-group may not know how to behave because of their lack of familiarity with the in-group values and beliefs that govern the activities within the factory. In such a setting, the minority out-group is likely to believe that they are less powerful, less likely to be supported by the authorities, competing with the in-group for advancement, and can be subjected to harassment (Stephan et al. 2009). Following Stephan et al. (2009), believing that the latter conditions are present in a situation can lead the out-group to feel threatened by the in-group.

Out-group labels in a particular context can also influence whether to view the out-group as a threat or not. An in-group can attach labels to the out-group and impose expectations and values to those labels. When the labels are associated with negative implications, the in-group is likely to view the out-group as a threat. For example, if the out-group (Muslim) is linked to a hostile label like terrorists (Muslim terrorists), then the in-group is most likely to view the out-group as a threat to their well-being (Stephan et al. 2009). If the label indicates that the out-group is “deviant” or “foreign” emphasizing its otherness, then the in-group is more likely to view the out-group as a threat to their values (Stephan et al. 2009).

Situational factors primarily have an effect on immediate tangible resources and the outcomes of the individual (Stephan et al. 2009). For example, within a given situation, an individual will be more concerned about losing his job compared to the trade union losing its power (Stephan et al. 2009). In addition, in contrast to previously discussed antecedents, situational factors vary over time and place. It follows then, that the intensity of threat the members experience can change over time and across settings, and the members may experience threat in one place but not in others (Stephan et al. 2009).

4.1.2.4. Individual difference variables

Individual level variables include the degree to which the individual identifies with the in-group, the amount and type of contact between the individual and various members of the out-group, and the individual's knowledge of the out-group. These variables are more likely to elicit perceptions of individual threat than group threat. The following section discusses the magnitude and direction of effect on perceptions of threat for each individual level variable.

To say that a person strongly identifies with their in-group is to say that their group identity is of central importance to how they see themselves. Individuals with strong in-group identities are more likely than those with weak in-group identities to view the out-group as threatening (Riek et al. 2006; Stephan et al. 2002). Having a strong in-group identity is related to both expressions of concern for the well-being of the in-group members and behavioral responses to perceived out-group threats. In particular, these members are more likely to favor and protect in-group members from realistic threats posed by the out-groups (Rohmann et al. 2006; Stephan et al. 2009; Stephan et al. 2008). Furthermore, compared to symbolic threats, the presences of realistic threats better predict prejudice against out-groups for those with strong in-group identities (Bizman and Yinon 2001). Bizman and Yinon (2001) argue that the lower

impact of symbolic threat could be explained if in-group members assume that out-group members will become accustomed to in-group values, standards, and norms.

The frequency and type of contact between an in-group member and the out-group can affect the member's perceptions of intergroup threat. As the frequency of contact increases, the likelihood that an in-group member will perceive the out-group as threatening declines (Voci and Hewstone 2003; Tropp and Pettigrew 2000) under favorable conditions (Rohmann et al., 2006; Stephan et al. 2002). Likewise, the more knowledgeable and familiar an in-group member is regarding the out-group, the lower the likelihood that out-group will be seen as a threat (Stephan et al. 2009; Chasteen 2005; Corenblum and Stephan 2001).

4.1.3. Consequences of Perceived Intergroup Threat

Looking back to Figure 3, the variables discussed above directly affect the intensity and type of threat perceived by in-group members, and in turn perceived threats produce cognitive, affective, and behavioral responses. Importantly, whether or not the threat posed by the out-group has a foundation in observable reality, in-group members respond to the threat in ways that can have negative consequences for both in-group and out-group interaction outcomes (Stephan, and Mealy 2012; Stephen et al. 2009; Stephan et al. 2008). Indeed even when a threat from an out-group leads to non-hostile behavioral responses such as negotiation and compromise, the cognitive and affective responses to threat are likely to be negative (Stephen et al. 2009).

Cognitive responses are thoughts that occur while hearing, viewing, and/or reading a communication (Breckler and Wiggins 1991). Cognitive responses to intergroup threat include ethnocentrism, hatred, dehumanization, and changes in perceptions of out-group stereotypes and attributes (Stephen et al. 2009; Shamir and Sagiv-Schifter 2006; Skita, Bauman, and Mullen 2004; Quist and Resendez 2003). Cognitive responses can also lead to behavioral responses such

as protect and favor the in-group, and oppose policies that favor the out-groups (Renfro, Duran, Stephan, and Clason 2006; Sawires and Peacock 2000).

Perceptions of threat are known to enhance perceptual biases. For example, Pettigrew (1979) found that when feeling threatened, in-group members were more likely to attribute negative out-group behaviors to dispositional factors, and positive out-group behaviors to situational factors. Perceptions of threat can also trigger communicative (Maass, Ceccarelli, and Rudin 1996) and memory biases (Ybarra, Stephan, and Schaberg 2000). Maass et al. (1996) found that perceived threat can motivate in-group members to use abstract language to describe out-group's negative behaviors, and concrete language to describe out-group's positive and in-group's negative behaviors. For example, participants used adjectives to describe out-group's negative behaviors and descriptive action verbs to describe out-group's positive and in-group's negative behaviors. Similarly, Ybarra et al. (2000) found that perceived threat can lead the in-group to remember out-group's negative behaviors which are attributed to their dispositional factors and positive behaviors which are attributed to situational factors. In addition, perceived threat may also amplify cognitive biases such as stereotype disconfirmation bias. Ybarra, Stephan, Schaberg, and Lawrence (2003) found that out-group stereotypes are more difficult to disconfirm compared to in-group stereotypes. For example, white Americans who held higher prejudicial attitudes believed that African American stereotypes are more difficult to disconfirm compared to white American stereotypes (Ybarra et al. 2003). Likewise, non-Hispanic whites who strongly identified with their group believed that Hispanic stereotypes are more difficult to disconfirm compared to non-Hispanic white stereotypes (Ybarra et al. 2003). Moreover, perceptions of threat may also trigger overestimation bias. Gallagher (2003) found that in-group tends to assume that the size of the out-group is bigger than the actual size. For example, white

Americans underestimate the size of their own population and overestimate the size of racial minority populations in the United States (Gallagher 2003).

Affective responses to intergroup threat include fear, anxiety, anger, resentment (Davis and Stephan 2006; Renfro et al. 2006), contempt, disgust (Mackie, Devos, and Smith 2000), vulnerability (McLeod and Hagan 1992), collective guilt (Doosje, Branscombe, Spears, and Manstead 1998), and other emotions such as rage, hatred, humiliation, helplessness, despair, and terror (Stephan et al. 2009). Individuals are more susceptible to fear and vulnerability, while groups are more likely to express anger, resentment, and collective guilt (Stephan et al. 2009; Cottrell and Neuberg 2005). In addition, when a threat is perceived, empathy decreases for the out-group and increases for the in-group (Leach, Spears, Branscombe, and Doosje 2003; Stephan et al. 2009).

Behavioral responses to intergroup threat include withdrawal, submission, discrimination, lying, cheating, stealing, harassment, retaliation, sabotage, protests, strikes, warfare, and other forms of open intergroup conflict (Stephan et al. 2009; Maass, Cadinu, Guarnieri, and Grasselli 2003; Cadinu and Reggiori 2002). Behavioral responses also include stress triggered by intergroup threat. For example, an individual's fear of confirming a stereotype produces stress, and that fear is triggered by intergroup threat (Spencer, Steele, and Quinn 1999). Furthermore, intergroup threat is shown to decrease the permeability and increase the rigidity of group boundaries. For example, threats from the out-group may lead the in-group to define criteria for membership, draw sharper distinctions between the in-group and the out-group, and reject prospective members who do not meet the membership criteria (Stephan et al. 2009).

CHAPTER 5: RESEARCH METHODS

This chapter describes the method applied in this research project. The study used a publicly available online petition to identify host communities' perceptions of refugees and the impacts of refugees on host communities. To increase reliability and accuracy of coding, the data were coded manually and using the qualitative analysis software ATLAS.ti. The analysis followed Braun and Clarke's six-phase guide to thematic analysis. Section 5.1 describes the sample and data analysis process. Section 5.2 discusses the methods and methodology. Section 5.3 discusses the limitations of the data.

5.1 Sample and Data Analysis Process

5.1.1. Sample

The study analyzes responses to a publicly available online petition³⁴ opposing future refugee resettlement in North Dakota that was started in August 2015.³⁵ As of November 27th 2015, 3,257 petitioners had signed the petition. The petitioners included residents from North Dakota as well as residents from other U. S. states including Minnesota, Nebraska, Ohio, Florida, Texas, Utah, Kentucky, Washington, Indiana, and Idaho. Out of the 3,257 petitioners, 1,044 petitioners stated their reasons for opposing refugee resettlement. Among those 1,044 comments, 730 comments were made by North Dakota residents. Since this study focuses on North Dakota residents' attitudes toward refugees, the data set was limited to the 730 comments from North Dakota residents.

³⁴ Publicly available data does not require Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval.

³⁵ The petition is available online at <https://www.change.org/p/cass-county-legislature-stop-lutheran-social-services-in-fargo> under "Stop Refugee Resettlement and Lutheran Social Services in North Dakota" (Change. Org. 2015).

5.1.2. Data Analysis Process

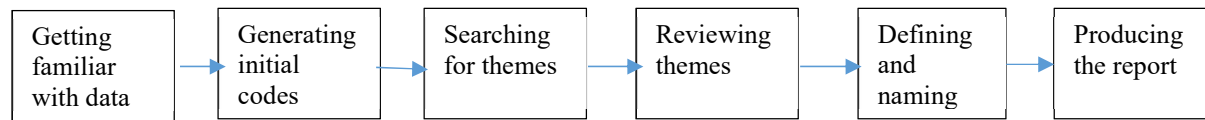


Figure 5. Six Phase Guide to Thematic Analysis (Braun and Clarke 2006)

The analysis followed Braun and Clarke’s (2006) six-phase guide to thematic analysis shown in Figure 5. Petitioners’ place of residence and comments were recorded using Microsoft Excel. I then repeatedly examined petitioner comments, by recording all important hunches, ideas, and interpretations in a Microsoft Word File. During the initial phase of analysis, *in vivo* codes (a word or short phrase generated from participants’ language),³⁶ concept codes (representing a broader meaning beyond the apparent),³⁷ emotion codes (emotions recalled and/or experienced by the participant, or inferred by the researcher about the participant),³⁸ and value codes (reflecting participants’ values, attitudes, and beliefs)³⁹ were developed for sentences, words, and sometimes paragraphs (Saldaña 2016). Next, initial codes were refined, and collapsed to generate an early conceptual framework for host attitudes toward refugees. A code book (see Appendix A1) was developed specifying the code label, a brief definition, a full definition, and guidelines regarding when and when not to use the refined codes (Guest, MacQueen, and Namey 2012). Irrelevant codes were recorded separately under “insignificant codes.”

After developing the code book, codes were reanalyzed and reorganized. In this phase, data were manually color coded, and collated by code into separate Excel pages. To increase reliability and accuracy of coding, the data were reanalyzed using the qualitative analysis

³⁶ Examples of *in vivo* codes: take care of Americans, Americans need help, abuse resources, increase in crime

³⁷ Examples of concept codes: burden on resources, get free things, changing way of life, competition for resources

³⁸ Examples of emotion codes: anger, fear, disappointment, resentment, hate

³⁹ Examples of value codes: loyal, hardworking, disrespectful, lazy, uneducated, lack of English knowledge

software ATLAS.ti. Both manual and computer assisted approaches used the code book created during the initial phase of analysis. Then, the codes were further refined by merging conceptually similar codes, and eliminating infrequent codes and codes that seemed relevant in the initial phase but deemed marginal after reviewing the whole data set. The refined codes were organized into separate categories and subcategories, and then sorted into potential themes. The resultant themes were reviewed and refined. Next, the extracts under each theme were re-read to develop a coherent pattern. Then the themes were further refined as necessary (see Appendix C). The identified themes, categories, and subcategories are discussed in detail in the following chapter.

5.2. Method and Methodology

The data allowed me to take a naturalistic approach. A naturalistic approach is uniquely suited to answering question like the ones posed by this study that examine how people perceive their worlds, and how they interpret their experiences in order to construct their own realities (Rubin and Rubin 2005). Since the data set consisted of comments made by petitioners, it was possible to examine how the residents of North Dakota interpret their experiences in order to construct their own realities.

The data was free from the participant biases that previous research suggests might arise in an interview should the interviewer be perceived as an immigrant by the interviewed. As an international student, any interviews to be conducted by me might be affected by reporting biases. For example, it is not unreasonable to anticipate a social desirability bias in reports should actual attitudes toward immigration be negative. By using a secondary data set, I was able to avoid such potential biases. Moreover, the convenient and cost effective dataset provided untapped insight into voluntarily shared, self-expressed attitudes toward refugees in a predominantly rural area of the United States.

In a more general sense, thematic analysis is a suitable method to answer research questions that explore dimensions of perceptions and meaning, and is a commonly used approach to analyze qualitative data (Silver and Lewins 2014). As stated by Alhojailan (2012), thematic analysis is the “most appropriate for any study that seeks to discover using interpretations” (40). Thus, it follows that for a study interested in identifying host communities’ perceptions of refugees and the perceived impacts of refugee resettlement, thematic analysis is an appropriate method of data analysis.

Of the two studies conducted on attitudes toward refugees in the United States - Bullard (2015), and Murray and Marx (2013) - both take a quantitative approach. Since this study takes a qualitative approach, the findings will address an important gap in existing knowledge.

5.3. Limitations of the Data

Since the study used a secondary data set, there are gaps in the data. By gaps, I am referring to some petitioners’ comments that were incomplete or lacked clarity. Given the limited contact information and my status as an international student, it was unlikely that follow-up interviews would generate greater clarity free of bias. Furthermore, some comments did not directly answer the research questions, and as a result some of the information was superfluous or irrelevant.

Given that the petition was not purposefully tailored to answer this study’s exact research questions, there is an array of information that I did not have access to. For example, there is no way to assess to what extent petitioners distinguish refugees from other types of immigrants, including asylees, and authorized and unauthorized immigrants. This is an unfortunate weakness as prior research has shown that these distinctions when salient do matter. What I also cannot assess is whether petitioners have an accurate conception of refugee status relative to other types

of immigration, and if the attitudes identified apply only to refugees or include immigrant groups as well. Nevertheless, the data does reveal expressed attitudes toward refugees as refugee status is understood by respondents.

According to the literature, demographic factors such as age, gender, skill level, education level, occupation, and income of host community members affect their attitudes toward immigrants. Yet, beyond names and place of residence, petitioners' traits are unknown. Petitioners' names were not used to identify gender as some petitioners only used their last name, and some petitioners had names common to both males and females. The analysis only considered the place of residence to find if there is a significant relationship to the emerging themes.

Two petitions were started by North Dakota residents on August 2015: one opposing refugee resettlement and the other supporting refugee resettlement. Because of the low participation rate, the petition supporting refugee resettlement was not considered in this analysis. Since the analysis only considered the petition opposing refugee resettlement, petitioner responses are predominantly negative. Although some petitioners expressed some positivity regarding refugees and refugee resettlement, such comments were always followed by conjunctions such as "but" or "however" nullifying the previous thoughts. As a result, this study only focused on host community members' negative perceptions of refugees and refugee resettlement.

CHAPTER 6: ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The research goal for this study is twofold: identify host community perceptions regarding refugees and identify host community beliefs regarding the impacts of refugee resettlement on North Dakota communities. This chapter reviews results and provides a theoretical interpretation. Main themes with associated frequencies are displayed in Table 2. Table 3 and Figure 6 display an interpretation of these themes that uses the ITT framework.

6.1. Results and Findings

6.1.1. Main Themes

Table 2. Main Themes: Perceptions and Perceived Consequences

	Themes	Frequency
Petitioners’ perceptions of refugees	Refugees as “other”	227
	Refugees as a potential threat to the security of individuals, the community, and the nation	137
Perceptions of impacts on communities	Privation of American citizens	222
	Refugees exert pressure on public services and taxpayers	212
	Refugees are ruining the American way of life	187

Table 2 displays themes developed during coding. The themes are separated into two categories: petitioners’ perceptions of refugees or petitioners’ perceptions regarding the impacts of refugees on communities. Frequency counts for each theme are provided. Themes on host community perceptions include seeing refugees as “other” and seeing them as a potential threat to the security of individuals, the community, and the nation. The perceived impacts of refugee resettlement include privation of American citizens, belief that refugees exert pressure on public services and American taxpayers, and the belief that refugees are ruining the American way of life. The next section discusses each theme in detail.

6.1.1.1. Petitioners' perceptions of refugees

6.1.1.1.1. Perception 1: Refugees as "other"

Many petitioners viewed refugees as "other" where other refers to non-conformists (n=111), outsiders (n=97), and inferiors (n=19). Petitioners' perceptions of refugees were frequently explicitly or implicitly held in contrast to values embodied in the native-born American identity. For example, petitioners described themselves as "hardworking," "honest," "respectful," "loyal," and "patriotic," while describing refugees as "lazy," "don't work," "disrespectful," "not loyal," and "unpatriotic."

A few petitioners compared refugees with American immigrants who arrived after World War II. In particular, they argued that early immigrants learned English, found jobs, and worked hard to provide for their families. As one resident explained, "[early immigrants] didn't expect any handouts but helped others when in need." The petitioner perceived that "this should be the same standard today rather than giving handouts" to refugees (Fargo resident). According to a few petitioners, the current "standards" are different from what petitioners desire.

About half of the petitioners who perceived refugees as non-conformists expressed a belief that unlike native-born Americans, refugees are unwilling to work hard and do not seek to be self-supporting. For example, many petitioners perceived refugees as "freeloaders" who are "free riding" in the United States without contributing to the economy. Petitioners claimed that refugees "live off" of "handouts," "free stuff," "free programs," and "free services," without finding jobs, working hard, and paying taxes. As stated by one Fargo resident, "we can't keep bringing in more freeloaders. These people who come here live off the system. They refuse to work and are far from productive."

Beyond the perception that refugees are unwilling to work, one other perception among some petitioners is that refugees in the United States expect to receive handouts and think they are entitled to receive benefits. As a Fargo resident stated, “[refugees] come here getting free handouts and expect everything for free.” One Fargo resident succinctly captured the reoccurring idea that refugees think they are entitled to receive benefits, and that the attitude of modern refugees is seen as distinct from past immigrants.

I feel we are creating a nation of helpless victims that feel they are entitled to benefits that we the people work for. Don't get me wrong, I wouldn't be here if it weren't for our great country allowing immigrants on to our land. But, our immigrant ancestors work[ed] hard and help[ed] build our nation. Now, they [refugees] sit in [on] their asses reaping the benefits from our hard work.

Using the words of a McCanna petitioner, “the majority of these immigrants want [the] generosity [of the American residents] and [expect] free programs without paying in return.” In addition to highlighting the perception of refugees as free loaders, it reflects an understanding of refugees as non-conformists who are “abusing resources,” and “taking advantage of the system.”

Another perceived aspect of refugee non-conformity mentioned lack of social skills appropriate to the United States. Some examples of inappropriate social etiquettes and social graces include shouting, screaming, littering, refusal to greet back, and staring at native-born residents. A Fargo resident stated, refugees “lack severely the daily skills, social and proper public etiquette, no common sense, dang near when they drive or even get outta [out of] the cars.” Examples of language used by petitioners to describe the perceived lack of U. S. social etiquette include “disrespectful,” “ungrateful,” “rude,” and “horrible drivers.”.

Refugees were also seen as being outsiders. This conception is represented both by the labels applied to refugees, and the explicit mention of traits that supposedly make refugees culturally distinct from native-born Americans. For example, some petitioners described refugees as a group separate from the local community using terms such as “foreigners,” “unknowns,” and “outsiders” to express their attitude. That refugees were culturally distinct was highlighted through references to language, dress, religion, and eating rituals. For example, some petitioners mentioned that refugees were “clad with rags from head to toe,” that “the majority of these folks [refugees] are Muslim,” “can't speak English,” or had “very bad English,” and that there were differences in cooking and eating habits. A Fargo petitioner shared a related negative experience, “I can't shop and talk to someone in English anymore while they are a US Citizen. Won't handle my pork and causes delays in everyone's shopping experience.”

Lastly, about 17 percent of petitioners who viewed refugees as “other” held a belief that refugees were inferior to native-born Americans. Dimensions along which refugees were seen as lesser include education, skill, social status, and worthiness. Language used by petitioners to describe refugees as inferior include “substandard,” “uneducated,” “unskilled,” “losers,” “trash,” “stupid,” and “garbage.” The following quotes exemplify the view that refugees are inferior.

“These guys are pigs, garbage and filth where they live” (Fargo resident).

“Take the trash out somewhere else. Enough!” (Minot resident).

6.1.1.1.2. Perception 2: Refugees as a potential threat to the security of individuals, the community, and the nation

The belief that refugees pose a threat to individuals, the community, and national security is grounded in the assumptions that refugees are either criminals or increase crime rates, and are either terrorists or potential terrorists. Petitioners viewed refugees as “unlawful” “criminals,”

“illegals,” “lawless,” “thieves,” and “troublemakers” who “cause trouble” in the belief that refugees are disproportionately involved in criminal and illegal activities. These activities included “theft,” “robbery,” “vandalism,” involvement in “fights,” “shootings,” terrorist activities, and drug use or distribution. A Park River resident described some of the criminal and illegal activities he/she believes are carried out by refugees.

Too many problems with the people that are in the valley already! Shootings, fighting ect [etc.]. Peoples [People] at a business in Grand Forks openly trying to get others to join Isis! Some have only been in GF [Grand Forks] only a couple days! Lots of trouble with them, a few weeks ago two girls hit a pole in Fargo one girl was trying to teach the other to drive! Neither one had a license neither one knew how to drive! You can go on all day long [...]

Over 50 percent of petitioners (who viewed refugees as a potential threat to the safety of the individual and community) claimed that not only have crime rates in North Dakota increased with the arrival of refugees, but that the increase is caused by refugees. One Fargo resident states that the, “dramatic increase in violent crime in FM area timeline coincides with concerted effort to settle refuges [refugees] in Fargo.” Certain petitioners saw crime as being “significant,” having “sky rocketed,” “soared,” “doubled,” and “tripled” in response to refugee resettlement.

Not only do many petitioners’ viewed crime rates and criminal activities such as “theft,” “robbery,” “vandalism,” and “involvement in fights” as occurring more frequently, but they view Fargo and Grand Forks as areas that are increasingly unsafe. A Fargo resident shared an observation about how neighborhoods have changed over time because of refugee arrival: “Over the past 10 years, I have watched as Fargo goes from being a great safe place to live, to a city just like every other with crime that just keeps rising.” Some petitioners expressed a fear of

walking at night in their neighborhoods, going to gas stations at night, leaving their possessions unattended, and that they might be subjected to physical violence.

Increasing levels of fear among residents produced a number of expressed behavioral intents. For example, few petitioners mentioned that they had started to lock their vehicles and houses, had purchased guns for protection, or intended to move out of their community to safer areas such as “Horace, Harwood, and Mapletown.” In the words of an Arvilla resident,

I lived in a neighborhood that was overrun by Somalian[s] and we had to move [because] the crime rate was crazy. The police where [were] always there. We found and saw these people throwing drug paraphernalia in our yard. I have a teenage son and couldn't live this way or expose him to this. We where [were] scared to walk in or out at night. We had to move because of these people.

Though some petitioners claimed personal experiences as a justification for their feelings of insecurity or being at risk, others developed beliefs based on information provided by friends and relatives, and reports on mass media. As a Fargo resident mentioned, “The crime rate has also increased, as yet I have not been affected by this but I watch the news.” Few petitioners proposed that the means to “decrease crime” and “improve safety” is to stop bringing refugees into North Dakota.

Fears concerning safety and security seemed rooted in a fundamental distrust of refugees paired with a lack of knowledge regarding refugees’ backgrounds. Certain petitioners expressed a belief that most refugees come from countries with a “history of producing terrorists,” and by extension assumed that most refugees have connections to terrorists or terrorist groups. Though some petitioners revealed a general feeling of fear and distrust oriented toward all refugees, a few select participants expressed fear of Muslims in particular. For example, one Grand Forks

resident expressed the following: “We shouldn't be bringing Muslims to our country! Ever [every] single one of them is or, will be a terrorist. They are either on jihad or support those who are! It's part of their religion.” Likewise, a Mapleton resident expressed a concern about potential terrorist attacks: “I feel as if we should stop refugees from coming into the United States at all, they have their own country they don't need to barge into ours and ruin our lives from possible terrorist attacks.” A West Fargo resident expressed concerns about the safety of the future generations of America. “These people [refugees] could be terrorists living next door to you, are [our] kids won't be safe.”

Although the USRAP has a process to identify refugees' eligibility for resettlement in the United States, nearly half of the petitioners who viewed refugees as a threat to the nation raised questions about the reliability of the current security screening process. According to a Fargo resident, “These people are not screened by OUR standards but by the standards of the country they are trying to leave – by their own chaotic governments that don't want them –and we take their word for it that these are “good” people.” Such comments reflect feelings of dissatisfaction or distrust with standing procedures. Some petitioners requested more information about the security screening process. Certain petitioners also raised concerns about refugees' potential links to terrorists and terrorist groups. Some petitioners suggested to stop bringing refugees to the United States and a few suggested to act “with caution” instead “with heart” in order to protect the country and its citizens, and prevent placing the latter at “high risks of terrorism.”

6.1.1.2. Perceived impacts of refugees on North Dakota communities

6.1.1.2.1. Impact 1: Privation of American citizens

Petitioners saw refugees as depriving American residents of goods and services that they believe to be justly theirs. A significant amount of petitioners expressed feelings of exclusion, deprivation, and loss of priority and entitlement. Their claim is that it is right and just to prioritize the needs of American citizens as long as such need exists, and that assistance rendered to refugees by the government and social service agencies such as LSS should only be allowed in circumstances when need of native-born citizens have already been met.

A large number of petitioners mentioned a number of social groups within the United States that they saw as deserving but lacking assistance due to what they see as the prioritizing of refugees by governmental agencies and non-profit groups. Social groups mentioned include veterans, homeless, senior citizens, underprivileged (low-income) families, single parents, disabled, sick, pregnant women, and the unemployed. A considerable amount of petitioners argued that, though these groups' needs include financial assistance, housing assistance, medical assistance, food, operable vehicles, and jobs, American citizens do not qualify to receive assistance. In their own words, Americans "can't get help" "don't get help/assistance," are "denied help," or do not "get enough help" when they need assistance. A Grand Forks resident expressed feelings of disappointment about the situation:

I'm irritated with the fact that they can receive help with housing in an instant [...]. I am an American who is a month away from having a baby and have to jump through hoops and has [have] ultimately been denied [...]

Many petitioners perceived that "exclusion" of "native-born," "hardworking," "tax paying," "needy" Americans was "not fair: As a West Fargo resident explained, "this has nothing

to do with race or color, it has to do with fairness and [...] that rules aren't the same for everyone.” An Embden resident reasoned why exclusion of native-born was not fair: “We as citizens of this country should be able to get help when needed since we were born here and have worked here as well.”

The belief that refugees are favored over financially struggling native-born Americans is reflected in a number of comments. Statements include, American citizens “are at the bottom of the lists for assistance” or are put on waiting lists in order to help refugees. Additionally, some claim that when Americans are unable to get assistance, or denied assistance, it is because refugees receive the “best of everything” and that the refugees’ experience in receiving assistance is easy and quick even “being from a different country.” As a Leonard resident stated,

I know several of my family members have tried to get help when they have ended up homeless with children and they have been told that they can't help them right now. Oh yet, an immigrant from another country comes over here and they don't tell them that they get everything handed to them!!!! What in the world that is ridiculous.

Whereas in this context social groups such as veterans and native-born homeless are seen as deserving, refugees are seen as underserving. Moreover, many petitioners viewed the provision of public services to refugees as favoring the undeserving at the expense of deserving American citizens. These perceptions seemed to be rooted in the belief that American citizens had to work and pay taxes to create social services, but they do not receive the benefit, and refugees (implicitly) do not work and pay taxes, but do receive benefit. A large number of petitioners expressed resentment over such treatment. Some petitioners desired that they had the same privileges the refugees enjoy.

Some petitioners also expressed feelings of relative deprivation. These petitioners assessed their positions in life and standards of living by comparing themselves with refugees. Some petitioners perceived that refugees “live better” or “are better off” compared to the “hardworking U. S. born citizens.” Several petitioners said that they have not witnessed any refugee who is “homeless, hungry, or without a vehicle to drive?” Some petitioners also made interpersonal comparisons between their own property and the property owned by refugees. According to many petitioners, although refugees depended on social services and other support systems, they owned brand-new expensive vehicles such as BMW, Lexus, and Mercedes, the latest cellular phones, “better furniture,” and “nicer clothes” when compared to the hard working, taxpaying American citizens. Some petitioners expressed feelings of anger, frustration, and social injustice in response to this perceived difference. “I’m sick of seeing Somalians and other such groups of people with cars nicer than I and my family have ever had” (Fargo resident). For some petitioners, the perceived inequity was couched in terms of their ideological aspirations, and a perceived unfair advantage held by refugees. For example, certain petitioners felt deprived because “refugees get the American dream,” and “everything they want within months of being” in the United States as a consequence of the support given by the government and agencies such as LSS (Fargo resident).

The perception that American citizens should be prioritized over refugees did not only stem from personal experience with refugees, but rather was an attitude expressed more generally by third-party perceivers.⁴⁰ Perceivers, in this case host community respondents, favor

⁴⁰ A perceiver is a person who “assesses a given outcome distribution, a procedure, or means to treat individuals” (Hegtvedt 2006:47). However, all perceivers are not recipients of “outcomes, or targets of the procedure or treatment” (Hegtvedt 2006:47). Perceivers who are recipients of outcomes or targets are first-party perceivers and they make assessments that are greatly influenced by self-interested concerns (Hegtvedt 2006). Perceivers who are not recipients of outcomes or targets are third-party perceivers and they make impartial assessments (Hegtvedt 2006).

the in-group. A large number of petitioners used phrases such as “take care of our own people,” “take care of our people here,” and “take care of the people born in this country” repeatedly to emphasize the importance of catering to the needs of native-born Americans prior to helping refugees.

6.1.1.2.2. Impact 2: Refugees exert pressure on public services and American taxpayers

A significant number of petitioners saw refugees as exerting pressure on public services such as “welfare,” “social security,” “health care/ medical,” the “education system,” “public housing,” and “infrastructure.” They claimed that at present, the United States is “broke,” and is “over 18 trillion in debt,” and that it has “enough problems with poverty.” According to many petitioners, the country has a “hard enough time funding [its] own citizens/programs/schools” and “doesn’t have enough resources” such as “housing,” “space in schools,” and general infrastructure such as roads, law enforcement “to help those who are already here”⁴¹ Further, they see it as impossible to “assimilate this huge influx of refugees without significantly affecting [the] community”⁴². In the view of petitioners, there are not enough resources to provide for the needs of the native-born citizens, and bringing in “way too many refugees” is “taxing the resources of [the] communities,” Some petitioners questioned the sensibility of bringing refugees to the United States before “fixing” the existing economic problems and strengthening local economies. As a Fargo resident stated,

I started this petition because I have VOLUNTEERED my time at the Food Bank and have packed thousands of lunches for the weekend when low-income children don't have school lunch. If our county and state isn't [are not] taking care of these

⁴¹ Fargo resident

⁴² West Fargo resident

children and families and are relying on DONATIONS AND VOLUNTEERS to feed them then WHY are we allowing LSS to ship an additional burden on [to] me and my family?

A considerable number of petitioners assumed that refugees live at the expense of tax payers, and are thereby exerting pressure on native-born, taxpaying citizens. Many petitioners saw refugees as a burden in that they “lived off” of public services paid for by hard working American taxpayer. They thought that citizens have to “support” refugees like “children” because “most of [the refugees] do not want to work to support themselves” but “want to be taken care of.” According to many petitioners, since “a lot of [refugees] don’t work” they “live on [American taxpayers’] money.” Some petitioners claimed that refugees never pay “property and school taxes,” and “any [other] taxes,” but refugees qualify to receive “SSI from Social Security” and other “free stuff” such as “free money,” “free education,” and “free medical.” As one Fargo resident shared, “I’m tired of my taxes paying for refugees’ free healthcare, housing, and food.” Another Fargo resident expressed similar thoughts: “Our tax money is taken and given to those who contribute nothing.” Few petitioners feared that they will have to pay more taxes in order to support refugees.

Though perceived impacts of refugee resettlement on public services included a range of factors such as longer waiting times or waiting lists for public housing, increased housing costs, overloaded welfare systems, and overcrowded schools. Some petitioners seemed disproportionately concerned with the negative impacts on schools. Such impacts include overcrowding, lack of teachers, and a reduction of attention paid to American children as refugee children monopolize the teacher. As a Fargo resident explained,

[...] the [incoming refugee] rate is unsustainable and taxing the schools and

services of the community [...] In some schools there is a 20% and growing population of early English learners, and when the schools have to dedicate 30-35% of the teacher resources because of English proficiency standards it leaves the other students at a disadvantage.

Even in the absence of concerns regarding the current deprivation of American citizens, there is a fear of over burdening the system so that future deprivation might occur. According to some petitioners, “too many Americans are already on some form of assistance.” Petitioners claimed that social services and welfare programs are unable to bear the burden of Americans who are already depending on them. Some petitioners feared that “dumping” refugees on “already overloaded systems” and “already overstressed social support systems” will put “more strain,” subsequently “drain[ing] welfare systems.”

Some petitioners blamed the government and LSS for encouraging refugees to depend on public services, and taxpayers. According to several petitioners, the “[government] takes [American citizens’] taxes and supports [refugees] for nothing” as a result “[refugees] refuse to work.” Some petitioners are also “tired of seeing LSS only teaching the immigrants they bring to Fargo how to fill out welfare forms and leave the taxpayers to support their clients for decades.” In petitioners’ view, providing free goods and services discourage refugees from becoming productive economic assets for the community. Certain petitioners further blamed LSS for not taking the responsibility to help refugees be self-sufficient, claiming that this responsibility is transferred to American taxpayers after a few month of refugees’ arrival. As one Fargo resident explained,

LSS brings these people here and then dumps them on society expecting us to pick up the pieces. They, LSS, gives them little to no assistance or training on

how to integrate into the populace properly. LSS relies on the communities programs paid for by tax payers to do the job for them.

6.1.1.2.3. Impact 3: Refugees are ruining the American way of life

Many petitioners reported that the arrival of refugees resulted in negative changes within their neighborhoods. According to some petitioners, North Dakota communities, prior to the arrival of refugees were “peaceful,” “quiet,” “secure,” and “good,” but refugee resettlement has negatively impacted those community traits. A Horace resident explained, “I am sick of the influx of refugees in the FM area because the FM area used to be peaceful and not a bad neighborhood in town.” Another Fargo resident expressed similar notions: “The Face of Fargo has changed in the last 8 1/2 years since my family moved here, and all I see is more violence.” Perceptions of the decreasing quality of place led to some petitioners expressing a desire to “move out of” their current locations.

Some petitioners also experienced an undesired change in the national composition of the population, because of the perceived “influx of refugees.” Petitioners used phrases such as “too many new Americans in too short of time,” “our town being swarmed with foreigners,” and “neighborhood have been flooded by immigrants over the last couple of years” to express the belief that the national composition of the population has changed rapidly and to the detriment of current residents. Few petitioners expressed that they now felt like “the minority” in their neighborhoods.

Many petitioners perceived that “refugees are ruining [their] way of life.” In particular, some petitioners claimed that refugees and refugee resettlement are “ruining” North Dakota, its communities and neighborhoods “little by little” by undermining the local culture and values, and lowering the “standard of living down to a third world country level.” Perceptions seem to

be shaped by what were seen as differences in “daily skills, social and proper public etiquette,” and culture. Petitioners criticized refugees’ lack of knowledge about local rules and laws, involvement in fights, and unfriendly and unethical behavior in public places (loudness, littering, unattended children). A West Fargo resident shared perceived negative impacts of refugees in the neighborhood.

My family works hard and built a new bilevel in west Fargo to get out of the Apartment we were in to get away from the riff raff and have a better life. These pieces of garbage are now moving into all of the houses around us because they move in either five generations of their family or more common [commonly] have three different families living in a three bedroom house with at least fourteen people in a house so that they only have to work on [one] day a week to pay for it. The problem I have with them is not only the ten cars parked all over the lawn and driveways, but these people are extremely rude and stand in groups of three or four in their yard when we are outside and just stare at us! We've tried to go over and say hi to them but they look at us and don't answer back. There's a lot of strange behavior out of them and we now hate our neighborhood and want to leave our home that was supposed to get us away from these trashy substandard people who love to throw their garbage all over their yard so it blows into ours along with all the cigarette butts they throw in our yard.

Many petitioners believed that refugees are unwilling to integrate into American culture and feared that this might lead to negative cultural changes in host communities. In asserting this belief, petitioners used phrases such as “no interest in joining our society or culture,” “no intention of becoming a part,” “don't integrate into society,” “do not even try to assimilate,”

“won't assimilate,” and “not assimilating.” They justify their assertions by referencing refugees’ apparent reluctance to change their traditional dress, eating habits, social conduct, work ethics, and English language skills. The seeming reluctance of refugees to adapt was seen as a threat to the local cultural values. Some petitioners expressed dissatisfaction over recent changes in traditions and practices in order to cater to the needs of the refugees. Examples included: not being able to “say the pledge” in schools, “not being able to bring a bible to school,” “providing school signs in Farsi,”⁴³ and giving driver’s license written test in a refugee’s first language. Others expressed a fear that with the increased number of refugees “holidays and traditions,” and cultural “heritage” will be lost.

According to Sears and Henry (2003), when in-group and out-group ethics are not consistent, dominant in-group expects out-group to conform to the dominant group’s traditional moral values. This trend was reflected in the data. Some petitioners demanded that since refugees are in the United States, they should “change” or “adapt” to the American way of life without expecting any adaptation on the part of the host community. As one Fargo petitioner claimed, “not only that they feel we should change our ways our beliefs and so on...NO they came here therefore they should change their ways and become custom [accustomed] to ours [our] ways.”

Few petitioners described a set of social and ethical standards, seen lacking in, but expected from refugees. These standards were coached in terms of the American identity. That is to say, these standards reflect petitioners’ conceptions of what it is to ‘truly’ be American. Standards included the following: conformity to rules and regulations, adopting American cultural values, working hard to provide for family, learning to speak English, cleanliness, and demonstrating a “rock solid” loyalty to the United States. In the words of one Grand Forks

⁴³ Farsi is a language primarily spoken in Iran and Afghanistan.

resident, “If they [refugees] drop food or anything in apartments pick it up. I see crackers n [and] meat they drop and they do nothing. Either learn to adapt and work your way up or leave is how I see it.” A Manvel resident shared similar ideas, “If they leave their society to come to the US they should leave all the foreign garb [clothing or garbage] in the foreign places and conform to the USA. Shower, eat American food, and ACT LIKE AN AMERICAN.”

Some petitioners expressed hostility toward refugees that they interpreted as being unwilling to integrate into the local culture. Petitioners suggested that if refugees are unwilling to integrate they should “go back” to their own countries. A Manvel resident stated: “YOU [refugees] WANT YOUR WAYS IMPLEMENTED GO BACK TO YOUR HOME THEN YOU CAN HAVE YOUR WAYS.” When some petitioners expressed hostility over refugees’ lack of integration, two petitioners identified the reason for lack thereof and proposed a solution. A West Fargo resident identified lack of “adequate support system in place to successfully assimilate refugees to the community” as an issue to low integration. A Fargo resident proposed that “there needs to be a clear system in place to help immigrants and refugees adjust to the societal/cultural differences.”

6.2. Theoretical Interpretation of Findings

6.2.1. Categorization of Perceptions and Perceived Impacts under Symbolic and

Realistic Threat Types

Table 3. Identified Themes Interpreted Using ITT

	Themes	Frequency/ Percentage
Realistic Threat	Privation of American citizens	222 (39%)
	Refugees exert pressure on public services and taxpayers	212 (37%)
	Refugees as a potential threat to the security of individuals, the community, and the nation	137 (24%)
Realistic Threat Total		571
Symbolic Threat	Refugees as “other”	227 (55%)
	Refugees are ruining the American way of life	187 (45%)
Symbolic Threat Total		414

According to ITT, realistic threats are threats posed by out-group that challenge economic power, well-being, and tangible resources of in-group members individually and as a whole (Stephan and Stephan, 2000; Stephan, Renfro, Davis 2008). Realistic threats include deprivation of resources, competition for resources, lack of access to education, healthcare and other necessities of life, warfare, terrorism, threats to personal security, and theft (Stephan, Renfro, and Davis 2008). By that definition, the petitioners’ beliefs that refugees are depriving Americans of needed services, exerting pressure on existing service and undermining the security of individuals, the community, and the nation indicate that refugees are seen as posing a realistic threat to the welfare of native-born Americans. Among petitioners, realistic threats posed by refugees seemed of greater concern with a total of 571 quotes. Of the 571 quotes, 39 percent focused on the privation of ‘more deserving’ native-born citizens, and 37 percent focused on the pressure placed by refugees on public services. These findings suggest that dissatisfaction

with current living conditions, and having to share public services with refugees could be driving part of the new frustration toward newly arrived refugees.

Symbolic threats challenge the in-group’s beliefs, values, and intangible resources (Stephan and Stephan 2000; Stephan et al. 2008). Examples of symbolic threat include threats to a group’s beliefs, values, ideologies, moralities, or worldviews (Stephan et al. 2009). Symbolic threats also encroach on the individual separate from the group when there is a threatened loss of face or honor or the individual feels their identity or self has been degraded. Of the 414 comments reflecting a belief that refugees pose a symbolic threat, nearly 55 percent referred to refugees as ‘other’ and 45 percent referred to refugees as ruining the American way of life.

6.2.2. Theoretical Interpretation

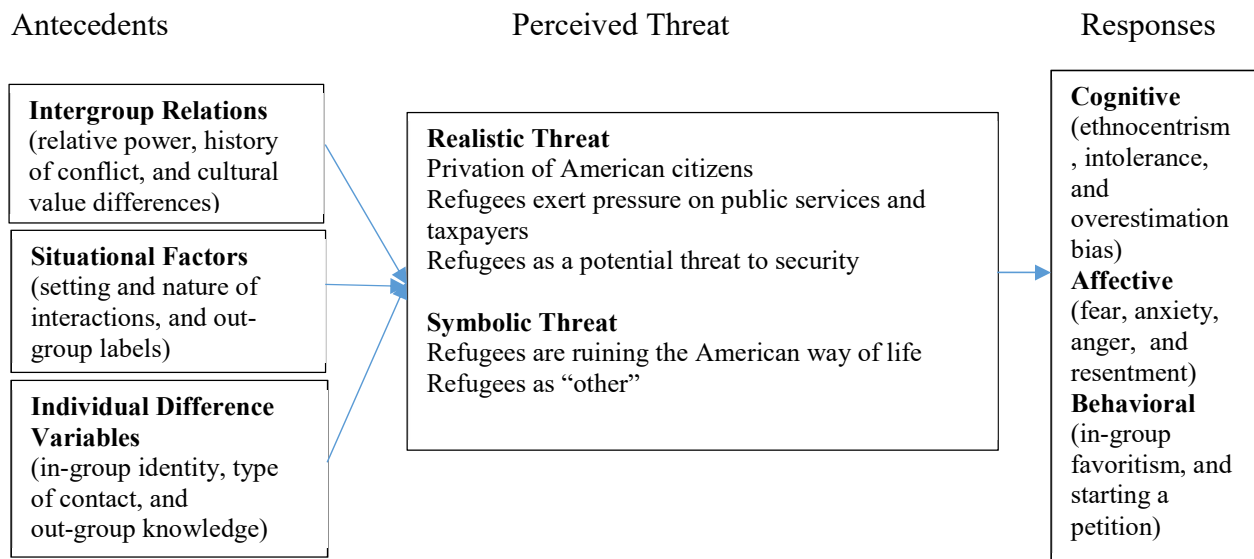


Figure 6. Theoretical Interpretation

6.2.2.1. Antecedents

According to prior research and ITT, antecedents such as relationship between in-groups and out-groups, recognizable traditional traits of cultures, different settings in which intergroup interaction occurs, and individuals' identification with the in-group and the out-group facilitate perceptions of intergroup threat. The findings of this study indicate that antecedents such as intergroup relations, situational factors, and individual difference variables are present in the current context, and the relationship between petitioners and refugees. Figure 6 illustrates the antecedents that may have affected the perceptions of petitioners to view refugees as a realistic and symbolic threat, and express related cognitive, affective, and behavioral responses. First, the antecedents suggested in the findings are discussed.

According to ITT, when there is a difference in power, high power groups, having more tangible resources to lose, are more likely to react strongly to perceptions of intergroup threat than low power groups. North Dakota petitioners, being in a position as voters to influence authority figures who make decisions regarding the allocation of resources including rewards and penalties, are more powerful than refugees. According to ITT, being more powerful, North Dakota residents stand to lose more and will react more strongly to a perceived threat (Stephan et al. 2009). Such a reaction is seen both in the creation and support of a petition seeking to ban further refugee resettlement, and in residents' opposition to policies that benefit immigrants and support for policies that oppose increases in immigration, or that implement tighter immigration restrictions (Cox 2013; Nezer 2013; Mercy Corps 2012; Hainmueller and Hiscox 2007; Schuck 1995). For example, the North Dakota Legislature recently proposed House Bill 1427 which would halt refugee resettlement until "refugee absorptive capacity" is determined (Arick 2017).

The effects of prior conflict on attitudes and beliefs are demonstrated in the United States in the aftermath of the 9/11 attack: Americans expressed prejudicial attitudes toward Muslim immigrants (Woods 2011; Raiya et al. 2008) and favored politicians who supported restrictions on immigrations, placed more emphasis on security, and were willing to punish those who violated American values (Woods 2011). Among North Dakotans, the perceived atmosphere of conflict between the United States and Muslims has heightened the perception that refugees, who seem to be seen as predominantly Muslim by petitioners, pose a threat to the security of native-born Americans.

According to Stephan et al. (2009), groups that have a long history of conflict and prior experiences of warfare, genocide, terrorism, and civil unrest are prone to perceive out-groups as threatening and may fear that conflicts with those groups will occur again. Though refugees and North Dakotans do not have a history of conflict, as previously discussed, petitioners suspected that many refugees come from Middle Eastern countries, are Muslim, and therefore are part of or have ties to terrorist groups. The idea that the United States is in a constant state of conflict with Muslim groups is heightened and reinforced by reports of Muslim initiated bombings and shootings. Petitioners expressed fears that refugees could be a potential threat to their well-being and that conflicts may occur in their current relationships.

The theoretical assertion that cultural value differences affect perceptions of threat also seem consistent with findings. According to a number of scholars, when there are differences in ethnicity, religion, language, and skin color between the groups, the in-group is more likely to develop negative attitudes toward the out-group (Bullard 2015; Turper et al. 2015; Raiya et al. 2008; Devos and Banaji 2005). The in-group feels threatened when its cultural values and characteristics differ from the out-group (Garcia and Davidson 2013; Fennelly 2008; Zárate et al.

2004). To the extent that immigrants do not conform to host community's traditional values and local identity, immigrants are seen as bad (Garcia and Davidson 2013; Fennelly 2008; Sears and Henry 2003). North Dakota is a rural state characterized by homogenous, low-density populations. The majority of residents are of European descent⁴⁴ and are identified with some form of Christian religion. On the other hand, refugees come from an array of diverse cultures and religious backgrounds. Petitioners perceived refugees as a group of people with different cultural values and characteristics, and viewed refugees as deviants who do not conform to the local values and identity. Petitioners also perceived refugees as a threat to their cultural values.

Rural American residents tend to value virtues embodied in American identity (Fennelly 2008; Sears and Henry 2003) such as hard work, obedience, self-sufficiency, punctuality, sexual oppression, thrift (Sears and Henry 2003), honesty, familial connections (Garcia and Davidson 2013), patriotism, and loyalty (Benjamin 2009). When there are differences in values between the groups, the in-group expects the out-group to give-up its values and conform to local values (Fennelly 2008; Crisp, Stone, and Hall 2006). Looking to the data, petitioners described a set of traditional values embodied in local identity and expressed a strong expectation that refugees conform to those values.

Prior studies found that when in-groups feel threatened they are more likely to believe that the out-group is unwilling to assimilate (Croucher et al. 2014; Croucher 2013). According to Croucher et al. (2014), holding such beliefs can lead the in-groups to assume that the out-group is trying to change their way of life, and as a consequence the in-group may be less receptive toward the out-group, and may exert pressure on the out-group to conform to the host culture.

⁴⁴ The population of North Dakota is 721,640. Out of that, 87% are European Americans followed by 5.3% American Indians, and 2.9% African Americans (United States Census Bureau 2016).

Petitioners in a variety of ways expressed the belief that refugees are unwilling to acculturate and feared that refugees were trying to impose their culture on local residents. Consistent with prior studies, petitioners' comments indicated that they were not receptive toward refugees, and petitioners insisted that refugees conform to the local culture or leave.

Theory and prior studies also find that elements of the setting in which intergroup interactions occur can affect the likelihood that members of a host community will feel refugees threaten their well-being, as well as the intensity of the threat perceived. According to ITT, unfamiliar settings create perceptions of threat, and when they do so people are not certain how to behave. Under such conditions, in-group members tend to believe that out-group members can harm them (Stephan et al. 2009). Petitioners expressed fear, vulnerability, and uncertainty, and they linked these feelings to the idea that their neighborhoods and communities were becoming unfamiliar to them. In particular, petitioners argued that peaceful neighborhoods were becoming riddled with crime, that the ethnic distribution seemed to shift in a way to make them a numerical minority, and that cultural practices were inconsistent with their expectations.

The way out-groups are framed in a particular context influences whether an in-group will perceive an out-group as a threat (Stephan et al. 2009). In particular, negative labels increase the likelihood that in-groups will see out-groups as threatening the well-being of the in-group. The effects of framing were seen when petitioners referred to refugees as terrorists and criminals, labels that implicitly suggest that petitioners viewed refugees as a threat to the well-being of host community members. Such labels can have consequences for immigrants. If host communities perceive that immigrants increase crime rates and incidence rates of other social ills, that can lead residents to prefer decreased immigration (Garcia and Davidson

2013) or oppose immigration (Hainmueller and Hiscox 2007). Such a reaction is present in the fact that North Dakotans using these labels started a petition to deter refugee resettlement. Beyond threats to well-being, labels can reflect a perceived threat to in-group values (Stephan et al. 2009). Petitioners labeled refugees as non-conformists and outsiders thereby highlighting the otherness of refugees. Such labels suggest that petitioners also viewed refugees as a threat to their values.

According to Stephan et al. (2009), elements of the setting and framing effects most strongly impact immediate tangible resources, and the individual's outcomes. This is consistent with the findings that petitioners expressed concerns over loss of priority status, loss of privileges, relative deprivation, and its associated resentment. In particular, petitioners felt deprived of tangible resources such as financial, housing, medical, and rental assistance as well as food, vehicles, and jobs because of refugees. Petitioners felt that refugees have a negative impact on limited resources and services that should rightfully cater to the needs of the native-born. Moreover, as individuals, petitioners compared their material possessions and economic statuses with refugees, and expressed feelings of dissatisfaction and anger over refugees' perceived success. It is through the perceived impact on tangible resources that petitioners felt threatened.

Research studies indicate that individuals who strongly identify with their group are more likely to perceive threat even when not personally affected (Riek et al. 2006; Stephan et al. 2002). In such circumstances, individuals favor and protect in-group members from realistic threats posed by the out-groups (Rohmann et al. 2006; Stephan et al. 2009; Stephan et al. 2008). Petitioners who were not direct recipients of outcomes, or targets of procedures, speaking on behalf of the fellow North Dakota residents reflects an attitude where protection of the in-group

is prioritized. Petitioners expressed a belief that the needs of native-born Americans should be prioritized over the needs of refugees.

Prior research also highlighted that the type or nature of contact between an in-group and out-group member contributes to the in-group's feeling of being threatened. Individuals who have had contact with the out-group in a negative setting are more likely to increase perceptions of threat (Rohmann et al., 2006; Stephan et al. 2002). Petitioners shared a number of experiences in their neighborhoods, grocery stores, and on the roads that they deemed negative, and in turn expressed a feeling that refugees posed a threat to their well-being.

The less known about a group, the greater the likelihood that the group will be seen as threatening (Stephan et al. 2009; Chasteen 2005; Corenblum and Stephan 2001), and comments indicate that petitioner's knowledge of refugees is limited at best. Petitioners described refugees as "foreigners," "unknowns," and "outsiders," They asserted that refugees are illegal immigrants, that the majority of refugees are Muslims or come from countries that produce terrorists, that refugees do not become self-sufficient, and that refugees do not contribute to the local economy. None of these assertions are consistent with immigration statistics. As presented in *section 2*, refugees are not illegal, but rather enter the United States only after being subjected to intensive biographic and biometric security checks by USRAP. Further, the majority of refugees in North Dakota are not Muslims, nor do they come from the Middle East and, though refugees receive assistance through the WF program and LSS for eight months, these programs are shown to help refugees become self-sufficient. According to Valley News Live, refugees in North Dakota contribute to the local economy as homeowners and taxpayers, and pay about \$200,000 in taxes (Stanwood 2015).

What petitioners claimed to know seems to be taken from unreliable sources. Some petitioners admitted that their source of information was either popular social media or friends and relatives. Mass media often presents stereotypical and distorted representations of immigrant groups (Banks 2012; McKay, Thomas, and Kneebone 2010; Ungerleider 1991). If petitioners are relying primarily on social media to get informed about refugees, their knowledge about refugees may not be accurate. Therefore, in general, it can be suggested that petitioners' knowledge about refugees is less accurate and limited, and may have influenced petitioners to perceive refugees as a threat to their personal well-being.

6.2.2.2. Cognitive, affective, and behavioral responses to perceived threat

According to ITT, when in-groups perceive that out-groups are in a position to harm them, the in-group experiences intergroup threat. Regardless of the accuracy of the perceived threat, there can be negative consequences. As discussed in the previous section, petitioners perceived refugees as a threat to their resources, general well-being, and value system. As a result, petitioners expressed cognitive, affective, and behavioral responses to perceived intergroup threat.

Petitioners' cognitive responses to perceived threat included ethnocentrism and intolerance. Petitioners demonstrated a world view where they saw themselves and those they saw like themselves as superior to refugees who they saw as 'other.' For example, petitioners described themselves as "hardworking," "honest," "respectful," "loyal," and "patriotic," while describing refugees as "lazy," "don't work," "disrespectful," and "not loyal." Petitioners also expressed views of intolerance toward refugees' non-conformist and deviant behaviors, and expected refugees to integrate into the host culture or leave.

Petitioners demonstrated a particular cognitive bias, the overestimation bias. Several petitioners asserted that the size of the refugee group was bigger than it actually is. They used phrases such as “influx of refugees,” “too many new Americans in too short of time,” “our town is being swarmed with foreigners,” “neighborhood has been flooded by immigrants over the last couple of years” and I “feel I’m the minority everywhere I go.”

Petitioners’ affective responses to perceived threat included fear, anxiety, anger, and resentment. Petitioners expressed negative emotions such as fear and vulnerability. For example, “these people could be terrorists living next door to you, are [our] kids won’t be safe,” “Fargo and Grand Forks areas [are] unsafe and dangerous to live,” and “we [are] scared to walk in or out at night.” Petitioners also expressed emotions such as anger, resentment, and hatred. For example, “I’m sick of our town being swarmed with foreigners,” “It’s not fair to us,” “It disgusts me,” and “I hate these damn things.”

Prior studies also indicate that important effects on behaviors within host communities include voting to oppose policies that favor immigrants, actively opposing immigration, and controlling immigration flows (Bullard 2015; Garcia and Davidson 2013; Hainmueller and Hiscox 2007; Mayda 2004; Verkuyten 2004). Petitioners started a petition to demand that the state legislature grant the residents the right to vote on further refugee resettlement and to express their opposition to refugee resettlement. Additionally, according to ITT and prior research, behavioral responses to threats posed by the out-group also include favoring and protecting the in-group members (Renfro, Duran, Stephan, and Clason 2006; Sawires and Peacock 2000). Petitioners speaking on behalf of the fellow North Dakota residents and requesting to prioritize the needs of the native-born residents suggest that petitioners favor and want to protect the in-group members over refugees.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

Although North Dakota has been resettling refugees since 1997, evidence suggests that North Dakota residents' concerns on resettlement are recent. As a result, little was known about community attitudes toward refugees in North Dakota. This study explored host communities' perceptions of refugees and the perceived impacts of refugees on North Dakota communities. A petition against refugee resettlement was analyzed by applying Braun and Clarke's guide to thematic analysis. The analysis identified the following two attitudes, arranged in order of significance as determined by frequency counts, of host communities toward refugees: refugees as "other," and refugees as a potential threat to the security of individuals, the community, and the nation. The analysis also identified three perceived consequences of refugees on host communities: privation of American citizens, the belief that refugees exert pressure on public services and American taxpayers, and the belief that refugees are ruining the American way of life.

Applying ITT, perceptions were categorized under realistic and symbolic threat. Privation of American citizens, and the beliefs that refugees exert pressure on public services, and refugees as a threat to personal and national security are seen by petitioners as posing a realistic threat, while the otherness of refugees and the belief that refugees are ruining the American way of life pose more of a symbolic threat. Frequency counts indicated that the realistic threat posed by refugees is more significant to petitioners compared to symbolic threat. Stated differently, petitioners seem to consider refugees as a greater threat to their economic power, well-being, and tangible resources than to their values, beliefs, and worldviews.

According to ITT and prior research, perceiving an out-group as a threat to an in-group's ideologies, values, beliefs, economic power, and general well-being influences the in-group to

express negative attitudes toward the out-group. As findings indicate, petitioners seemed to perceive refugees as a threat to their ideologies, values, beliefs, and general well-being. Starting a petition to oppose future refugee resettlement, and favoring fellow North Dakota residents can be seen as responses to perceived threat. Evidence also suggests that at least some respondents fail to distinguish immigrants by type. That is to say, legal or illegal status, mode of entry and other considerations are disregarded and instead, at least for those that signed a petition requesting a ban on the entry of refugees, immigrants are seen as a coherent group that are different from Americans and overwhelmingly negative in both their individuals qualities and their impact on the community (see Appendix D).

Some of the perceived negative impacts identified in this study include 1) refugees exert pressure on public services and taxpayers without contributing to the local economy as employees or taxpayers, 2) refugees exert pressure on school services by overcrowding, placing pressure on teachers, and reducing attention paid to American children, and 3) refugees increase crime rates in North Dakota. These findings are consistent with prior research conducted on impacts of authorized and unauthorized immigrants, and asylum seekers in America and Europe (Cox 2013; Hainmueller and Hiscox 2007; O'Rourke and Sinnott 2006; Naidoo 2005 Burns and Gimpel 2000; Hovey et al. 2000). Consistencies in findings suggest that certain perceived negative impacts are common to multiple immigrant classifications, and local and global communities.

There are two quantitative studies conducted in the United States regarding attitudes toward refugees (Bullard 2015; Murray and Marx 2013). Bullard (2015) examined the effects of refugees' demographic factors, and young adults' political and religious affiliations on young adults' preference levels toward refugees. Murray and Marx (2013) examined attitudes and

preference levels of young adults toward authorized and unauthorized immigrants, and refugees using Integrated Threat Theory (initial model of ITT) as the theoretical model. However, Bullard (2015) and Murray and Marx (2013) did not address concerns such as perceived negative impacts of refugees on local communities, and the justifications for holding negative attitudes toward refugees and refugee resettlement. This study addressed the latter concerns by analyzing a petition opposing refugee resettlement.

In addition, unlike Bullard (2015) and Murray and Marx (2013), the data of this study was limited to responses of residents who oppose refugee resettlement, and findings only identified beliefs toward refugees and refugee resettlement consistent with that opposition. However, given the recent resurgence of anti-refugee sentiment, exploring existing negative beliefs held by host community members regarding refugees provide a more nuanced insight into participants' justifications for expressing negative attitudes toward refugees and opposition to refugee resettlement. Some of the identified reasons included beliefs such as refugees exert pressure on public services and resources, deprive the deserving residents of resources, and increase crime rates in North Dakota. According to ITT, such beliefs affect the in-group to feel threatened by the out-group and consequently express negative cognitive, affective, and behavioral responses. In order to minimize any possible negative attitudes or behaviors toward refugees, which may have direct or indirect negative consequences on current and future refugees, it is important to address any issues presumed to be caused by refugee resettlement programs. For example, petitioners claimed that there are not enough resources, services, and infrastructure to meet the needs of both residents and refugees. Addressing any existing deficiencies in resources may reduce negative attitudes induced by beliefs such as refugees exert pressure on resources and services, and privation of American citizens.

ITT and prior studies indicate that when less is known about a group, the greater the likelihood that the group will be seen as threatening (Stephan et al. 2009; Chasteen 2005; Corenblum and Stephan 2001). Many petitioners' comments suggested that lack of transparency about refugees and refugee related programs influenced their negative attitudes toward refugees. At present, information on refugees' demographics (gender, age, education), their enrollment rates in public programs and public schools, number of crimes committed by/and against refugees, funding allocations for refugees programs, and tax payers' contributions to fund refugee programs is either not collected or not available to the public (Arick 2017) due to ethical reasons, secondary migration, lack of comparable data on other population subsets, and ill-defined refugee status timeframes (The Fargo Human Relations Commission 2017). If challenges exist in collecting, recording, and disseminating information on refugees and refugee programs, methods should be identified to overcome at least some of those challenges. Availability of basic demographic information on refugees, and answering frequently asked questions by residents such as funding allocation for refugee programs, and enrollment rates in public schools may diminish perceptions of threat caused by lack of knowledge about refugees and refugee programs. Availability of information would facilitate informed decision making among North Dakota voters about refugee resettlement.

Prior research indicates that frequent contact with the out-group in a positive setting is likely to decrease in-group members' perceptions of threat (Rohmann et al., 2006; Voci and Hewstone 2003; Stephan et al. 2002; Tropp and Pettigrew 2000). Creating more opportunities to connect local residents and refugees in positive settings, and reaching to residents through innovative ways may reduce perceptions of threat and any negative attitudes toward refugees. In addition, research also finds that popular mass media representations of immigrants can affect

residents to view immigrants negatively and develop anxiety, especially when residents lack knowledge of and contact with immigrants (Banks 2012; McKay et al. 2010; Ungerleider 1991). Considering that a news broadcast prompted residents of North Dakota to start a petition opposing refugee resettlement, and petitioners were likely informed through mass media about refugees, mass media has a social responsibility to be unbiased when reporting on refugees. By reporting positive aspects of refugees and refugee resettlement, and educating residents about diverse cultural practices and values of refugees, instead of reporting predominantly negative aspects, mass media can act as a resource to increase residents' knowledge of refugees and consequently reduce negative perceptions of refugees and resulting anxieties.

Given the scope and explorative nature of this study, the findings raised more questions that need answers. For example, this study identified that host communities believe that refugees increase crime rates, refugees exert pressure on public services and resources, and refugees subtract more from the government and taxpayers than they contribute to the local economy. However, the accuracy of these perceptions are not often widely known. Not knowing the real impacts of refugees on local communities is a hindrance for implementing the appropriate policies and strategies to address any existing issue. Poorly planned strategies and policies can have negative impacts on both refugees and local residents. Researchers, refugee resettlement agencies, and policymakers can use the findings of this study as a starting point to further investigate and gather evidence on presumed perceptions prior to developing plans and reviewing policies.

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APPENDIX A. CODE BOOK

Brief Definition	America is in Trouble
Full Definition	Petitioners think that America is in trouble financially
When to Use	Use this code to capture comments that suggest America is facing economic difficulties
Brief Definition	Americans are
Full Definition	Americans use terms to define themselves positively
When to Use	Use this code to capture terms that define Americans as loyal, hardworking, patriotic, and etc.
Brief Definition	America is not Responsible
Full Definition	Petitioners think that America has no responsibility to take of refugees
When to Use	Use this code to capture comments that suggest America has no responsibility to take of refugees
Brief Definition	Americans Need Help
Full Definition	Petitioners think that Americans need help
When to Use	Use this code to capture comments that suggest Americans need help and different needs (money, shelter, food, vehicles, etc.)
When Not to Use	Do not use this code for comments that suggest to take care of Americans and that Americans are deprived
Brief Definition	Blame LLS/Government
Full Definition	Petitioners blame LSS and government for refugees' dependence on Americans and American taxpayers
When to Use	Use this code to capture comments that suggest LSS and government are not taking care of refugees after their arrival, are expecting Americans to take care of refugees, and are helping refugees to receive public social services
When Not to Use	Do not use this code when petitioners blame LSS and government for other reasons
Brief Definition	Burden on Resources and Services
Full Definition	Petitioners think that refugees exert pressure on resources and services
When to Use	Use this code to capture comments that suggest refugees exert pressure on resources such as public social services, housing, and other resources Capture comments that suggest refugees are a burden on school services separately under "burden on school services"

	Capture comments that suggest there are not enough resources under “lack of resources”
When Not to Use	Do not use this code when petitioners suggest that refugees are a burden on Americans/taxpayers
Brief Definition	Change/Effect on Community
Full Definition	Petitioners’ opinions about how their communities are changing/has changed over time
When to Use	Use this code to capture beliefs about changes to their neighborhoods, communities, state, and country, how communities have been impacted and changed over time by refugees and refugee resettlement
When Not to Use	Do not use this code for opinions about who refugees are, increase in crime rates, and threats to security
Brief Definition	Collective or Individual
Full Definition	We, Us , our, or I, me
When to Use	Use this code to capture comments to see if petitioners are talking on behalf of the in-group or speaking for themselves
When Not to Use	Do not use this code for comments that talk about refugees (they, them)
Brief Definition	Depend on Americans/ Taxpayers
Full Definition	Petitioners think that refugees depend on Americans and taxpayers
When to Use	Use this code to capture comments that suggest refugees are depending on Americans/taxpayers
When Not to Use	Do not use this code for comments that suggest refugees are a burden on resources and services
Brief Definition	Enough refugees
Full Definition	Petitioners think that, at present, there are enough refugees in the US/ND
When to Use	Use this code to capture comments that suggest that there are enough refugees in the US/ND, and comments with the phrase “enough is enough,” if it means there are enough refugees in the US/ND
When Not to Use	Do not use this code for comments that suggest stop bringing refugees
Brief Definition	Early Immigrants
Full Definition	Petitioners talk about early immigrants
When to Use	Use this code to capture comments that talk about early immigrants (1940-1960)

When Not to Use	Do not use this code for any comments that talk about recent refugees
Brief Definition	Increase in Crime Rates
Full Definition	Petitioners' opinions about increase in crime rates
When to Use	Use this code to capture perceptions about increase in crime rates (has, is, will)
When Not to Use	Do not use this code for comments that just suggest refugees are involved in criminal activities
Brief Definition	Influx of Refugees
Full Definition	Petitioners think that too many refugees have come to ND in a short period of time
When to Use	Use this code when petitioners think that too many refugees have come to the area in a short period of time
When Not to Use	Do not use this code to capture comments that suggest enough refugees and stop bringing refugees
Brief Definition	Insignificant/Irrelevant Codes
Full Definition	Codes that are insignificant, and not relevant to the research
When to Use	Some codes are insignificant are not relevant to answer the research questions
Brief Definition	Negative Expressions
Full Definition	Petitioner comments express negative expressions about refugees
When to Use	Use this code to capture comments that suggest refugees should go back/sent back to their countries, and do not want refugees in local communities
When Not to Use	Do not use this code for comments that suggest to stop bringing refugees and enough refugees
Brief Definition	Negative Feelings
Full Definition	Petitioners express negative feelings
When to Use	Petitioners express negative feelings about their current situation in which they feel deprived, and negative feelings toward refugees
When Not to Use	Do not use this code to capture negative attitudes
Brief Definition	Negative Personal Experiences
Full Definition	Petitioners share their negative experiences with refugees
When to Use	Use this code to capture comments that suggest petitioners have had negative personal experiences with refugees
Brief Definition	Privation of Americans

Full Definition	Petitioners think that Americans are not helped because of refugees
When to Use	Use this code to capture comments that suggest Americans are not helped, denied help, cannot get help, and put on waiting lists, when refugees get better assistance easily and quickly, and receive benefits without working and paying taxes
When Not to Use	Do not use this code for comments that suggest to take care of Americans, Americans need help, and Americans live better
Brief Definition	Positivity
Full Definition	Some petitioners' showed positivity toward refugees and refugee resettlement.
When to Use	Use this code to capture petitioner comments that indicate any positivity toward refugees and refugee resettlement, and also see if the positive expression is preceded or followed by a "but," "however" or similar conjunction, or suggestion
Brief Definition	Questions Need Answers
Full Definition	Petitioners ask questions related to refugees and refugee resettlement
When to Use	Use this code when petitioners are asking questions about refugees and refugee resettlement and expect answers from the authorities
When Not to Use	Do not use this code for rhetorical questions
Brief Definition	Refugees are
Full Definition	Petitioners view refugees in different perspectives
When to Use	Use this code to capture comments that describe refugees and highlight differences in religion, culture, values, beliefs, social conduct, attributes, and characteristics Use sub codes- refugees are non-conformists (don't work, refuse to work, poor work habits, lazy, disrespectful, bad drivers, abuse system, terrorists, criminals, illegal, troublemakers, law breakers, thieves, criminals) Refugees are inferior (uneducated, unskilled, losers, garbage) Refugees are outsiders (cultural differences, language, attire, food habits, foreigners, outsiders)
When Not to Use	Do not use this code for comments that suggest refugees are a threat, and refugees are a burden
Brief Definition	Refugees are a Threat to Safety/Security
Full Definition	Petitioners think refugees are a threat to safety and security
When to Use	Use this code to capture comments that suggest refugees are a threat to safety and security of Americans, and the community because of crime and terrorism related reasons

When Not to Use	Do not use this code for comments that suggest refugees increase crime rates
Brief Definition	Refugees and Crime
Full Definition	Other than assuming that refugees increase crime rates, petitioners also think that refugees bring crime to ND and they are involved in criminal activities
When to Use	Use this code to capture beliefs that suggest refugees are involved in crime, refugees bring crime to the communities they live in, and different types of crimes such as theft, vandalism, fights, etc.
When Not to Use	Do not use this code to capture assumptions that suggest refugees increase crime rates
Brief Definition	Refugees do not Adapt
Full Definition	Petitioners think that refugees do not adapt and do not want to adapt
When to Use	Use this code to capture comments that suggest refugees do not adapt, and do not want to adapt
Brief Definition	Refugees do not Work
Full Definition	Petitioners think that refugees do not work or do not want to work
When to Use	Use this code to capture comments that suggest refugees do not work or do not want to work
When Not to Use	Do not use this code for comments that suggest refugees cannot work
Brief Definition	Refugees Live for Free
Full Definition	Petitioners think that refugees live for free without contributing to the community
When to Use	Use this code when petitioners think that refugees live for free without working, paying taxes, or contributing to the community
When Not to Use	Do not use this code when petitioners think that refugees get handouts, and depend on Americans/taxpayers
Brief Definition	Refugees Receive Handouts
Full Definition	Petitioners think that refugees get free things/handouts
When to Use	Use this code to capture comments that suggest refugees get free things including services, resources, material, money, and etc.
Brief Definition	Refugees should Adapt
Full Definition	Petitioners think that refugees should adapt

When to Use	Use this code when petitioners think that refugees should adapt without expecting Americans to change, also capture set of ethical standards expected from refugees
When Not to Use	Do not use this code to capture comments that suggest refugees do not adapt
Brief Definition	Reasons for Feeling Threatened
Full Definition	Uncertainties about refugees make petitioners to feel threatened
When to Use	Use this code to capture when petitioners are uncertain about refugees backgrounds, and security screening processes
When Not to Use	Do not use this code for comments that suggest refugees increase crimes or involved in terrorist groups
Brief Definition	Residents should Decide
Full Definition	Petitioners think that they, as the community, should decide about future refugee resettlement in ND
When to Use	Use this code to capture when petitioners think that they should make the decision and have the right to make a decision about refugee resettlement
Brief Definition	Relative Deprivation
Full Definition	Petitioners think that refugees live better than them
When to Use	Use this code for comments that compare refugees' well-being with Americans' (material wealth), when petitioners think that refugees live better than them and achieve the American dream faster than the native-born citizens
When Not to Use	Do not use this code for comments that suggest Americans are not helped, denied help, cannot get help, and put on waiting lists
Brief Definition	Stop refugees
Full Definition	Petitioners want to stop bringing refugees to the US/ND
When to Use	Use this code to capture comments that suggest to stop bringing refugees to the US/ND
When Not to Use	Do not use this code for comments that suggest enough refugees
Brief Definition	Suggestions
Full Definition	Petitioners' presented suggestions
When to Use	Use this comment to capture comments that provide suggestions to solve perceived issues related to refugees and refugee resettlement.
When Not to Use	Do not use this code for comments that suggest refugees should adapt, enough refugees, stop bringing refugees

Brief Definition	Take care of Americans
Full Definition	Petitioners think that native-born citizens should be taken care of before refugees
When to Use	Use this code to capture comments that suggest to take care of Americans and America Use this code to identify different groups of people that need help such veterans, homeless, needy, poor, hungry, and etc.
When Not to Use	Do not use this code for comments that suggest Americans need help and Americans are deprived
Brief Definition	Unable to Take Care of Americans
Full Definition	Petitioners think that America is struggling to take care of the Americans who are already living in the United States
When to Use	Use this code to capture comments that suggest America is unable to take care of the native-born
When Not to Use	Do not use this code for comments that suggest Americans need help, Americans are not helped, or take care of Americans

Reference: Guest, MacQueen, and Namey 2012

APPENDIX B. LIST OF CODES

Code	Frequency	Code	Frequency
America in trouble	16	Refugees are inferiors	19
America is not responsible	13	Refugees are non-conformists	111
Americans are	28	Refugees are outsiders	97
Americans need help	68	Refugees do not work	22
Blame LSS and government	22	Refugees don't adapt	31
Burden on resources and services	81	Refugees get handouts	31
Burden on school systems	26	Refugees increase crime rates	49
Community change/effects	102	Refugees live for free	38
Depend on Americans/taxpayers	76	Refugees should adapt	19
Enough refugees	51	Relative deprivation	19
Influx of refugees	35	Stop bringing refugees	35
Lack of resources	17	Take care of Americans	228
Negative expression	26	Terrorism related reasons	16
Negative feeling	66	Threat to safety	23
Negative personal experience	24	Threat to security	23
Privation of Americans	95	Unable to take care of Americans	26
Questions need answers	14		

APPENDIX C. THEMES, CATEGORIES, AND SUBCATEGORIES

Theme 1- Refugees as other (227)

Category 1- Non-conformists (111)

Subcategory 1- Words used to describe refugees as non-conformists

Subcategory 2- Refugees are non-conformists

Work ethics

Social conduct

Category 2- Outsiders (97)

Subcategory 1- Words used to describe refugees as outsiders

Subcategory 2- Refugees are outsiders

Not a part of the in-group

Cultural differences

Category 3- Inferiors (19)

Subcategory 1- Words used to describe refugees as inferiors

Subcategory 2- Refugees are inferiors

Education level

Skill level

Social class/worthiness

Theme 2- Privation of American citizens (222)

Category 1- Americans in the United States (108)

Subcategory 1- Americans need help

Who needs help?

What kind of help?

Subcategory 2- Americans are not helped

Category 2- Privation of Americans (95)

Subcategory 1- Americans feel deprived because of refugees

In what ways?

Related emotions

Why should not they be excluded?

Category 3- Relative deprivation (19)

Subcategory - Comparing standards of living

Material possessions

American dream

Theme 3- Refugees exert pressure on public services and American taxpayers (212)

Category 1- Resource availability in the United States (33)

Subcategory 1- America is facing financial difficulties

Subcategory 2- Lack of resources in America

Unable to take care of Americans

Category 1- Refugees exert pressure on public services (81)

Subcategory 1- Refugees depend on public services

Examples of public services

Impacts of pressure placed by refugees on public services

Category 2- Refugees exert pressure on Americans/ taxpayers (76)

Subcategory 1- Refugees depend on Americans/taxpayers

Taxpayers pay for the public services

Refugees do not work, pay taxes, or contribute to the economy

Category 3- LSS and Government discourage refugees to be a productive asset of the community

(22)

Subcategory 1- Blame LSS

LSS help refugees get assistance

LSS expect American taxpayers to take care of refugees

Subcategory 2- Blame government

Government provide assistance to refugees

Theme 4- Refugees are ruining Americans way of life (187)

Category 1- Negative change in neighborhoods (102)

Subcategory 1- Changing valued place-based characteristics

Subcategory 2- Lowering standard of living

Lack of knowledge about local rules and laws

Unethical/deviant social conduct

Category 2- Influx of refugees (35)

Subcategory1- Feeling like “the minority”

Category3- Assimilation (50)

Subcategory 1- Refugees do not adapt

Lack of integration

Already affected traditions

Subcategory 2- Expect to refugees to conform

Expected set of social and ethical standards

Hostility toward refugees who are unwilling to integrate

Theme 5- Refugees as a potential threat to the security of individuals, the community, and the nation (137)

Category 1- Refugees are a threat to safety and security- at individual level (96)

Subcategory 1- Refugees are a threat to the individual and community

Refugees are involved in crimes

Examples of criminal activities

Refugees increase crime rates

Words used to describe increase in crime volume

Impacts of criminal activities

Reaction to criminal activities

Category 2- Refugees are a threat to safety and security- at national level (41)

Subcategory 1- Refugees are terrorists or potential terrorists

Who is a threat?

What are the threats?

Subcategory 2- Reasons for feeling threatened

Uncertainties about refugees' background

Screening process

APPENDIX D: EXAMPLES OF PETITIONERS' QUOTATIONS

Example Quotations on Immigrants

1. These immigrants put a huge strain on our education system because they require special attention taking away from the local's kids opportunity for a proper education. They also bring their drama from their own countries to our once peaceful community. These are only a couple of examples (Fargo resident).
2. There are far too many homeless people that should be taken care of before immigrants are taken in. The president has brought them over...the president can himself take care of them (Bismarck resident).
3. These immigrants are causing a lot of problems in our community! (Fargo resident).
4. ND government needs to say no more, & so does those in WA DC need to put a stop to the influx of immigrants (Fargo resident).

Example Quotations on Refugees

1. Dramatic increase in violent crime in FM area timeline coincides with concerted effort to settle refugees [refugees] in Fargo (Fargo resident).
2. If you really want to help them out, by all means, go over to where they live and take care of them there with your own money! I'm sick of you spending mine. NO MORE REFUGEES!!!!!!!!!! (Fargo resident).
3. More studies need to be done to determine the impact of bringing these refugees in before we bring more (Fargo resident).
4. This should not be happening that [that] the disabled get pushed aside for refugees in Fargo Housing when there is a lack of it already and waiting lists are approaching 3 years (Fargo resident).