

HOW DO INFLUXES OF REFUGEES INFLUENCE THE POTENTIAL FOR VIOLENCE
WITHIN THE HOST COUNTRY?

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The presence of refugees changes the dynamics of the host society. Influxes of refugees have economic, political, and social implications. The purpose of my research is to discover how refugee inflows influence the potential for violence. My research is relevant and may help uncover ways to avoid future conflicts that may arise as a result of refugee inflows. I will perform a comparative case study analysis on three host countries to compare the effects that refugee flows have on the potential for violence within each country. My research revealed that there is not a direct positive relationship between refugee inflows and the potential for violence. However, I found that other factors, including ethnic diversity, economic opportunity, and humanitarian aid, are necessary to consider when evaluating the potential for violence within a country hosting refugees.

INTRODUCTION

An increasingly challenging international issue is the growing number of forcibly displaced people, defined by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) as humans who are forced to flee their homeland as a result of conflict, persecution, generalized violence, and violations of human rights. According to the UNHCR (2019) *Mid-Year Trends 2018* report, the most updated source that the UNHCR provides, there is a total population of 70.4 million forcibly displaced people. This figure includes refugees, asylum-seekers, internally displaced people (IDPs), and stateless people (UNHCR). The World Bank estimates that there are 25,376,316 refugees based on data from the UNHCR and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA). Refugees, according to the Oxford Reference, are “both a cause and consequence of intercommunal conflict.” The term *refugee*, according to the *Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees* (UNHCR, 2010), is defined as a person who:

“owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it” (p. 14).

War and violence are the main reasons why individuals are fleeing their country of nationality (UNHCR). As a state that is currently experiencing a socio-political crisis involving civil war and political turmoil, Syria is the leading source of refugees; nearly one-third of the global refugee population originates from Syria (6.5 million). Other countries from which considerable amounts of refugees originate include: Afghanistan (2.7 million), South Sudan (2.2 million), and Myanmar (1.2 million) (UNHCR, 2019). There are also at least 5.4 million refugees from Palestine under the UNRWA’s mandate (UNHCR).

Attempting to escape their country's conflict and persecution, refugees often flee to neighboring countries (UNHCR). According to the UNHCR (2019), Turkey is the country hosting the greatest number of refugees (3.6 million), followed by Jordan (2.2 million) (UNRWA), Pakistan (1.4 million), Uganda (1.1 million), Germany (1 million), Iran (979,400), and Lebanon (974,600) (UNHCR, 2019). Considerable populations of refugees reside in Bangladesh, Ethiopia, and Sudan, all three of which, along with Uganda, are considered "Least Developed Countries" by the United Nations Committee for Development Policy. A great majority of the world's displaced people are relocated to countries that are also struggling, as developing regions hosted 85% of this unfortunate population (UNHCR).

Evaluating the effects of refugees on a host country is a very complex process because inflows of these migrants influence various factors within a society. Refugees have economic, social, environmental, and political consequences on a host country. Research has shown that the impact of refugees on host countries is multidimensional, having both positive and negative aspects. For that reason, attempting to classify refugees as *good* or *bad* for a host country is not a simple matter. Therefore, I have chosen to take a narrower approach and investigate the implications of refugee inflows on the internal stability of a host country. My research seeks to answer the question: how do influxes of refugees influence violence within the host country? Does an increased presence of refugees contribute to more intrastate conflict, specifically outbreaks of violence? I will perform case studies on three different countries to compare and contrast the effects that refugee flows have on the violence that occurs within each country. I believe that examining how large influxes of refugees play a role in contributing to violence may help uncover the ways to avoid future conflict that may arise as a result of refugee inflows.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this section, I will explain in depth what we already know about the subject of my study. I will examine the literature of scholars who have previously made statements regarding my research question. In this literature review, I will thoroughly investigate what others have discovered concerning the following:

- what refugees are, why refugees flee their country of origin, and where refugees resettle;
- how the presence of refugees changes the dynamics of the host country, economically, politically, and socially;
- and how these impacts may influence the relationship between refugees and violence within the host country.

Refugees

The UNHCR recognizes a refugee as an individual who leaves his or her country of origin due to conflict and are unwilling or unable to return to their homes. Attempting to escape violence and persecution, refugees flee their countries in the hopes of finding a safer environment to inhabit. More than two and a half million refugees settle in refugee camps. Created with the intent to temporarily accommodate refugees and displaced persons, refugee camps provide protection and safety to these desperate people who have fearfully fled their own country. As critically vulnerable populations, refugees struggle to survive. Refugee camps are established to help the UNHCR and other humanitarian organizations administer lifesaving aid such as food, water, and medicine during emergencies. These provisional settlements allow refugees to meet their basic human needs. The majority of refugees, however, reside in urban areas. Refugees that live autonomously in cities

have the opportunity to work, earn money, and begin a new life. Unfortunately, camps do not provide the safest living conditions for refugees, and neither do cities. Wherever a refugee resettles, whether in a camp or in a city, he or she faces new challenges. Refugees often experience inadequate or unsafe living conditions regardless of where they end up. Despite their intentions for escaping conflict, refugees often face conflict at their new home (UNHCR). My research seeks to further investigate the relationship between refugees and violence within host countries.

How Refugees Impact Host Societies

In both refugee camps and cities, the presence of refugees changes the dynamics of the host society. Influxes of refugees have economic, political, and social implications. Some of these consequences are positive, while some are negative. I will investigate the ways in which refugee inflows impact host countries in order to understand how these migration flows may be associated with outbreaks of violent conflict.

Economic Impacts

Economically, the presence of refugees has the potential to contribute to the host country's development. An influx of refugees increases demand for goods, which can benefit local producers and help stimulate the economy. However, this demand can also cause an increase in prices and a decrease in wages, both of which can be harmful to the local population (UNHCR Standing Committee, 1997). As a new population of consumers, refugees compete with the local citizens for resources. Especially in poor and densely populated urban areas, competition for scarce resources like land and water increase the potential for conflict between refugees and citizens (Deikun & Zetter, 2010).

In addition, there is often discontent among the impoverished locals when refugees receive education and medical treatment, services that not all locals may have access to (Gomez & Christensen, 2010). Ek and Karadawi (1991) noted that when Sudan was experiencing a humanitarian crisis from 1984 to 1985, foreign relief agencies “appeared to neglect local populations in similar vulnerable situations” (p. 201) by providing aid more quickly and efficiently to the refugees. As a result, the local Sudanese population developed animosity towards the refugees and the humanitarian agencies (Ek & Karadawi, 1991).

Refugees compete with locals not only for resources and services, but also for jobs. Refugees provide human capital to the host society, as they can offer skills and knowledge that may be useful to the local population. Yet, in many cases, refugees provide cheap labor and, as a result, the wages of local unskilled workers are affected (Maystadt & Verwimp, 2009). In the Kakuma Refugee Camp in Kenya, for example, refugees are often hired by non-governmental organizations and work for less money than the locals (Montclos & Kagwanja, 2000).

Despite the popular belief that refugees significantly hinder the economy of their host communities, Jacobsen (2002) argues that the presence of refugees can “increase the overall welfare of the host community” (p. 580). Host communities benefit from refugee influxes when international refugee assistance is delivered to the area. Although humanitarian aid is predominantly administered to refugees in camps, locals can be indirect recipients, as food and non-food aid are often traded in markets within the host communities. In addition, relief agencies sometimes direct part of their budgets towards compensating the burdens produced by influxes of refugees. Programs are created to help the host community manage refugee inflows by, for example, improving the local infrastructure, preventing environmental degradation, and providing additional medical and educational services to locals (Jacobsen, 2002).

Another way in which host communities benefit from refugee influxes is from the economic contribution that refugees provide. Refugees increase economic productivity and growth because they bring valuable skills and assets into the area. Upon their arrival, refugees cause an increase in the demand for goods and services and participate in trade and consumption, which benefits the host markets and improves the standard of living within the host community (Jacobsen, 2002).

In sum, the economic impact of refugee inflows on local communities has both positive and negative aspects. Although the presence of refugees stimulates trade and creates new jobs, resulting in the host society's economy to experience growth, the presence of refugees can cause the host society to become dependent on the humanitarian aid that influxes of refugees attract (Jacobsen, 2002 and Montclos & Kagwanja, 2002). Additionally, the poorer individuals of a host community struggle with the presence of refugees, as both populations are competing for scarce resources and job opportunities (Montclos & Kagwanja, 2002). As a consequence of influxes of refugees, locals who already struggle to obtain resources or find employment become further marginalized as a result of influxes of refugees; whereas, those who have more money, education, or power are more likely to benefit from refugee inflows (Maystadt & Verwimp, 2009). On a larger scale, refugees place a greater burden on poor countries than on countries that have stronger economies and are more financially able to host large populations of refugees (UNHCR Standing Committee, 1997).

Political and Security Impacts

In addition to economic implications of refugee inflows, there are also political and security issues that arise within a country that hosts refugees. The presence of refugees takes a toll on the authorities of host countries, as a considerable amount of attention is directed towards ensuring

the safety of both the refugees and the entire local community (UNHCR Standing Committee, 1997). Countries that open up their borders to refugees struggle to control and regulate the migration that occurs. Many foreigners claim to be refugees and migrate to host countries with the intent to benefit from the economic opportunities that the host country presents. In addition to these economic migrants, rebel forces attempt to benefit from the open borders of countries accepting refugees. As a result, governments often send military forces to refugee-inhabited areas to reduce the risks that inflows of refugees pose to a nation's security, by regulating border crossings and preventing rebel invasions (Jacobsen, 2002).

Many scholars argue that the relationship between refugee flows and the spread of conflict is a positive one, as the migration of refugees allows conflict to spill over into host countries when refugees flee conflicted neighboring countries (Jacobsen, 2002 and Salehyan & Gleditsch, 2006). Inflows of refugees facilitate the expansion of rebel networks and the spread of weapons, which lead to violence and even increase the likelihood of civil war (Salehyan & Gleditsch, 2006). Refugee inflows coincide with the "direct 'importation' of combatants, arms, and ideologies from neighboring states that facilitate the spread of conflict," therefore refugee inflows "provide the impetus and material for groups to begin an armed challenge, especially if the refugees share many of the same goals as the domestic opposition" (Salehyan & Gleditsch, 2006; pp. 342-343). Rebel groups take advantage of refugee camps, as they are unorganized and lack strong law enforcement. In these camps, crimes often go unpunished. Both combatants and criminals tend to live among refugees within camps and, consequently, host communities experience difficulty differentiating between them (Jacobsen, 2002). Rebels use refugee camps either as a base from which to operate and recruit fighters (Salehyan & Gleditsch, 2006) or as a target of raids due to the resources within them (Jacobsen, 2002).

Bilateral relations are also impacted by the inflows of refugees (Jacobsen, 2002). Atim (2013) argues that inflows of refugees can also incite hostilities between states, stating that “refugees are not simply the unfortunate by-products of war, but may serve as catalysts for conflicts, including conflict between states” (p. 6). Tensions between countries may increase because inflows of refugees present security problems not only for the host country, but also for the sending country and neighboring countries (Salehyan & Gleditsch, 2006).

Ek and Karadawi (1991) explain why refugees are commonly associated with a host nation’s instability. They contend that in a country that is experiencing economic decline or political weakness, the presence of refugees is more likely to be perceived as the cause of the country’s hardships. “Refugees...can provide convenient scapegoats for deep-rooted issues” (The World Bank, 2017; p. 57). For example, in Sudan during 1969 and 1985, refugees were generally unwelcomed by their Sudanese hosts, as they were claimed to be a threat to Sudan’s fragile economy, political stability, and national security. When the government noticed that the local population was becoming increasingly discontent with the condition of Sudanese society, the refugees were used as scapegoats (Ek & Karadawi, 1991). They were “blamed for the scarcity of consumer goods, food shortage, rising prices, increased house rents, pressures on public transport, and strains on other public services, bringing contagious diseases, and as an important element in the rising crime rate, etc.” (Ek & Karadawi, 1991; p. 201). Although refugees have the potential to offer positive contributions to the host country, they also can be linked to a host nation’s insecurity and jeopardize a host nation’s political stability.

Social Impacts

In addition to economic and political effects, refugees also have social implications on the host country. Among citizens of host countries, opinions regarding refugees vary greatly, as some

perceive refugees as constructive additions to their society (Jacobsen, 2002), while others view them as a burden (Ek & Karadawi, 1991). In 2017, the Tent Foundation conducted a survey regarding public perceptions of the refugee crisis and discovered that, although an overwhelming majority of participants (89%) expressed compassion towards refugees, participants were concerned about the impact refugees may have on their country's security, culture, and economy. However, the Tent Foundation's report was not a complete representation of global perceptions because only twelve countries were studied, those of which included: Australia, Italy, Germany, Turkey, Canada, Serbia, Greece, UK, France, Sweden, Hungary, and the USA.

It is not uncommon that tensions arise between refugees and local citizens. Since refugees are foreigners to the countries to which they relocate, the ethnic balance of the country is altered (UNHCR Standing Committee, 1997). Refugee migration changes the demography of an area by increasing the presence of foreigners, which has the potential to "heighten nativist sentiment among local populations" (Salehyan & Gleditsch, 2006; p. 343). Brown (1996) stated that refugee inflows "can aggravate ethnic problems and further complicate the picture by changing the domestic balance of power" (p. 576). Preexisting animosities between ethnic groups may become exacerbated when competition and inequalities between refugees and locals exist (Atim, 2013). Tension is particularly prevalent when humanitarian aid only benefits refugees, who gain access to certain resources, services, and opportunities that the locals do not (UNHCR Standing Committee, 1997).

Böhmelt, Bove, and Gleditsch (2019) contend that peaceful relations are possible if the refugees and host population share similar cultures, or if the state has the economic capacity to host large populations of refugees. Sanjuga Vas Dev (2002), however, holds a different view. She acknowledges the common assumption that a "shared identity, in the form of *cultural, linguistic*

or ethnic affinity” helps “facilitate communication and conflict resolution between refugees and locals.” Yet, she has observed cases in which the locals and refugees share similar characteristics and still experience tension. For example, in Pakistan, Afghani refugees were not widely welcomed. She describes “signs of growing hostility to the prolonged presence of the Afghans despite strong common religious and cultural affiliation between the two groups” (Vas Dev, 2002).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Through my investigation of previous literature on the subject of refugees, I have discovered that inflows of these migrants have complex consequences on the host society. Refugee inflows have been shown to affect the host country economically, politically, and socially. Although it has been shown that refugees impact the host communities in positive ways, the presence of refugees also have negative effects. Currently, however, there is no consensus on whether the adverse effects from inflows of refugees outweigh the positive contributions that refugees can offer to a society. For that reason, opinions regarding refugees vary around the world. Nevertheless, violence has recurrently been reported between refugees and citizens of the host communities.

The literature that I have reviewed has revealed that violence is a possible negative outcome of refugee inflows. Various scholars have noted that when there are perceived or actual negative effects due to influxes of refugees, tensions increase between refugees and citizens of the host country, which in turn increases the likelihood of violence. Ek and Karadawi (1991) noted that when locals blamed the refugees for the ailments of their societies, this scapegoating “manifested itself in incidents such as increased numbers of fights between refugees and nationals. Street fighting between Sudanese and refugees has been particularly common” (p. 201).

I argue that there are various situations in which violence is more likely to occur within host countries. Therefore, the purpose of my research is to discover the conditions within a country that influence the potential for violence within societies hosting refugees. By applying the work of Christensen, Jacobsen, and Böhmelt et. al, I attempt to explain why levels of violence involving refugees are higher in some countries than others. I hope to uncover the circumstances in which refugee inflows increase or decrease the potential for violence so that violence can be mitigated in the future.

Christensen (2018) studies the relationship between refugee presence and violent group grievance, which is defined in his study as “tension and violence existing between social groups and the state’s ability to provide security is undermined allowing the potential for further fear and violence” (p. 18). He theorizes that “when aspects of group identities such as ethnicity, language, or religion are impacted by an increase in immigration, the primary ethnic group may resist the perceived threat(s) posed by refugees” (p. 17). As a result, “citizens of the host country resort to violence in an attempt to protect 1) existing economic/resource benefits and 2) their cultural practices and way of life” (p. 17). However, he notes that “developmental, political, and institutional factors are expected to mitigate the effects of these inflows on conflict” (p. 17).

In her research, Jacobsen (2002) studied the impact of refugee flows on various African states. The purpose of her scholarly work is to demonstrate that, despite being commonly associated with various economic and security problems, the effect influxes of refugees have on a state are not inherently negative. She argues that “the potential benefit for the state and its citizens go beyond the burdens imposed by a mass influx” (p. 577). But Jacobsen further explains that a country cannot assume the task of hosting refugees on its own. “For host states to realise the

potential of refugee resources and continue hosting refugees, they must be assisted by appropriate humanitarian programmes” (p. 577).

Böhmelt et al. (2019) argue that there exist various “conditions and intervening factors that can mitigate or exacerbate the impact of population movements on different types of violence in the host state in diverse and complex ways” (p. 76). They believe that one of these factors is state capacity, which is defined in their study as “the strength and quality of the bureaucratic apparatus” and can be measured by the ability of this apparatus “to maintain, control, and sustain state services” (p. 79). They examine violence in the form of non-state conflicts, which is defined as “the use of armed force between two organized armed groups, neither of which is the government of a state, which results in at least 25 battle-related deaths in a year” (p. 78).

Their results showed that “the quality of state institutions is likely to play a major role in shaping and addressing possible tensions between refugees and locals and preventing instances of non-state violence in the presence of large refugee populations” (Böhmelt et al., 2019; p. 77). Therefore, they conclude that “the presence of refugees results in social and economic challenges that weak states are less prepared to take measures necessary to prevent” (p. 84). However, when governments are stronger and able to provide “support for integration, access to social services, and better infrastructure” (p.78), tensions are less prevalent. Böhmelt et al. made a scientific contribution by explaining that the political structures and capacity of the state government plays a role in a host state’s ability to handle refugee inflows and reduce the likelihood of violence between refugees and locals.

The research conducted by the aforementioned authors inspired me to discover additional factors that can either mitigate or exacerbate tensions between refugees and locals that can result in violent conflict. Rather than studying institutional factors, I want to examine economic and

social influences and humanitarian aid as explanatory variables for occurrences of violence among refugees and locals. Does the ethnic composition of refugees and the locals play a role? Do employment levels play a role? Does humanitarian aid play a role? And, is there a significant relationship between these variables and levels of violence within the host countries?

I crafted my theory by using the arguments proposed by Christensen, Jacobsen, Böhmelt et. al as a guide. My theory suggests that there are situations in which violence among refugees and locals is more probable and those in which violence is less probable. I argue that when there is more inequality and dissimilarity among refugees and citizens of the host country and that when influxes of refugees present a threat (perceived or valid) to the national security or the economic, political, or social stability of a host country, refugees and locals are more likely to engage in violent conflict. However, when relief efforts and plans for integration and settlement are in place, allowing refugees to have the opportunity to assimilate and become contributing members of the host society, tensions between refugees and locals are less likely. My theory suggests that economic and social pressures linked to refugee inflows that are not mitigated by humanitarian aid result in higher levels of violence. Based on my theory, I have developed various testable hypotheses.

Hypothesis 1: Within a country hosting refugees, as ethnic diversity increases, the potential for violence increases.

Hypothesis 2: Within a country hosting refugees, as economic opportunity increases, the potential for violence decreases.

Hypothesis 3: Within a country hosting refugees, as humanitarian aid increases, the potential for violence decreases.

METHODS

I will carry out my research with the Most Similar Systems Design method. My research will be based on a small N case study, as I will examine three host countries. The three countries that will be included in my case studies include: Jordan, Lebanon, and Iran. To determine the relationship between refugee inflows and violence, I will obtain qualitative and quantitative data.

Independent Variable

The independent variable that I will be studying is refugee inflows. I will measure refugee inflows based on the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) data provided by the Migration Data Portal. This site provides the number of refugees entering any country in the world each year. Although many other sources provide estimates for documented and undocumented refugees, I plan on utilizing the UN DESA measures in order to maintain a level of consistency when comparing my cases. In my study, I will consider 0-1 million refugees as a *low* level of refugees; 1-2 million refugees as a *medium* level of refugees; and 2-3 million refugees as a *high* level of refugees.

Dependent Variable

The dependent variable that I will be studying is the potential for violence. I will operationalize the potential for violence as Group Grievance. I will use data from The Fund for Peace's Fragile State Index, which addresses the "vulnerabilities which contribute to the risk of state fragility." In the Fragile State Index, "twelve conflict risk indicators are used to measure the condition of a state" and "the vulnerability of states to collapse" (The Fund for Peace). The twelve indicators are divided into four subgroups: Cohesion; Economic; Political; and Social and Cross-Cutting Indicators. Group Grievance, the indicator that I will focus on in my study, is characterized as one of the three Cohesion Indicators (The Fund for Peace).

As noted in my Literature Review and Theory sections, Christensen has elaborated on the themes of violence and refugees in his scholarly article, *Refugees & Violent Group Grievance*. Christensen (2018) understands group grievance as the “tension and violence existing between social groups and the state’s ability to provide security is undermined allowing the potential for further fear and violence” (p. 18). He elaborates that this type of violence “captures a distinct form of intrastate violence, specifically hate crimes and ethnic group clashes associated with powerlessness and discrimination” (p. 18).

Group Grievance, an indicator for state fragility, increases a country’s susceptibility to instability and potential for violence. A higher score suggests a more fragile state in which grievances will more likely result in violence. When measuring Group Grievance, The Fund for Peace considers communal violence and also notes that “tensions can deteriorate into conflict through a variety of circumstances, such as competition over resources, predatory or fractured leadership, corruption, or unresolved group grievances.” I believe that influxes of refugees cause tensions that can also result in violence.

For each indicator in the Fragile State Index, a country receives a score from 0 to 10. In my case studies, I will organize Group Grievance scores into five levels: 0-2 *low*; >2 and ≤4 *low/medium*; >4 and ≤6 *medium*; >6 and ≤8 *medium/high*; >8 and ≤10 *high*.

Control Variables

The variables that I plan to hold constant when I am studying my cases will be time period, economic strength, political situation, culture, and geographic proximity to the refugees’ country of origin.

I will keep time period constant by evaluating the situations within each country during the same year. In doing so, this will ensure that the countries evaluated had the same opportunities and

experienced the same conflicts that were present at the time. I will study the circumstances within Jordan, Lebanon, and Iran during 2017, as that is the year in which the most current data is available. I will evaluate if there were certain factors that influenced the situations and affected the potential for violence within the host countries during that year.

I will control for economic strength because I believe that the economic situation within a country can influence the probability of internal conflict and violence within that country. I argue that different economic situations present different social environments; therefore, I will choose to analyze countries that are similar economically. Economic strength will be operationalized by Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita in current US dollars, which is measured by The World Bank. In 2017, the GDP per capita of Jordan, Lebanon, and Iran were as follows: \$4,129.8, \$8,808.6, and \$5,593.9, respectively (The World Bank). Due to these similarly low levels of this particular economic indicator, each of these countries can be considered as developing.

I will also control for the political situation within the countries because I believe that politics is another factor that can influence violence and conflict within a country. The political situation within a country provides a unique setting in which activities operate. I will use data from Freedom House to choose nations that are similar politically. According to the Freedom House, freedom and democracy go hand in hand. The Freedom House's *Freedom in the World Report* is "an annual study of political rights and civil liberties" in which each country is scored on a scale of 0 to 100. Countries that receive lower scores are less free and therefore less democratic. I have chosen countries that are not considered *free*. In 2017, Jordan received a score 37/100 and Lebanon received a score of 44/100 and were thereby classified as *partly free*. Iran scored 17/100 and was classified *not free* (Freedom House).

I will control for culture by evaluating host countries that are in the Middle East region. I believe that I should keep culture constant because culture is an important and influential element in daily human life. I will eliminate the possibility that the culture of the host country can be used to explain different levels of violence or conflict. Jordan, Lebanon, and Iran all experience a certain level of Arabic and Islamic influences. In Jordan and Lebanon, Arabic is the official language. Although Persian is the official language of Iran, Arabic is still spoken by some citizens. In addition, the majority of each country's population are Muslim (Central Intelligence Agency).

In regards to geographic proximity to the country of origin for incoming refugees, I will ensure that the countries I choose are directly adjacent to the refugees' countries of origin, as I anticipate there would be more spillover of conflict and violence when a host country is neighboring a country that is experiencing conflict. Salehyan and Gleditsch (2006) argued that "certain regions of the world experience more conflict than others" (p. 335). I want to eliminate the possibility that geographic location is a factor in the amount of conflict and violence within a country. A large quantity of refugees originates from Syria and Afghanistan, as they are countries that have been experiencing conflict. Jordan and Lebanon share borders with Syria, while Iran neighbors Afghanistan. In addition, Jordan is adjacent to Palestine, a region also experiencing disorder and strife.

Contributing Variables

There will be three contributing variables that I will be studying: ethnic diversity, economic opportunity, and humanitarian aid. I believe that these variables of interest will help explain why we may observe different levels of violence within these countries.

I will measure ethnic diversity by analyzing the ethnic makeup of the refugees and the ethnic makeup of the citizens of the host country. Although there is currently no quantitative source

of data that measures the ethnic makeup of refugees within every country, I will use qualitative data that I gathered from my case study research. I will compare the major ethnicity of the host country with the ethnicity of the majority of the incoming refugees. In my study, a more ethnically diverse country will be one in which the refugee population is different from that of the host population. I theorize that the greater the ethnic balance of a host country is altered due to inflows of refugees, the greater potential for violence within that country. Christensen (2018) argued that “refugees that have the same culture as that of the dominant group or a group in the host state may experience less violent group grievance” (p. 22). However, I want to test this statement for myself and determine if ethnicity does, in fact, play a role in the potential for violence within a country hosting refugees.

I will measure economic opportunity by the unemployment rates in each host country. This data is provided by The World Bank and measures the percent of the country’s total labor force that is not employed. I believe that a lower unemployment rate reflects more opportunities to earn a living within a country, because more people have been able to obtain a job and are employed.

I will measure humanitarian aid by the data provided by The World Bank on how much Official Development Assistance (ODA) the country receives. ODA is defined as “government aid that promotes and specifically targets the economic development and welfare of developing countries” and in regards to foreign aid, it has been considered the “gold standard” since 1969 (OECD, 2019; p. 1). The data that I received was provided by The World Bank. The most recent figures were from the year of 2016. Although this is not from 2017, the year in which I am examining for my cases, I believe that the humanitarian aid that was received the previous year certainly still can affect the state’s ability to address the various problems within the country that require humanitarian aid.

CASE STUDIES

In my research, I will study the current realities within the following countries: Jordan, Lebanon, and Iran. Each of these Middle Eastern nations are significantly affected by the conflicts that are taking place around the region. According to the UNHCR, Syria and Afghanistan are the top two countries from which refugees originate. Palestine and Iraq are other areas of origin for many refugees. The political turmoil within these nations has created tumultuous conditions and thus a dangerous environment, forcing millions to flee. The result is a humanitarian crisis that has international consequences (UNHCR). Jordan, Lebanon, and Iran have varying levels of refugee inflows and varying levels of violence. Therefore, I will examine the situations within these three countries in the attempt to explain why these differences in violence exist. My hypotheses illustrate that I expect ethnic balance, economic opportunity, and humanitarian aid to be significant variables that play an important role in the creation or mitigation of violence within the host country.

Jordan

One of the countries that I will study is Jordan. The UN DESA estimated Jordan's total population to be 9.7 million in 2017 (Migration Data Portal). The CIA's *World Factbook* stated that 91% of the total population resides in urban areas, most of which are concentrated in the northwest, especially surrounding the capital of Amman. Lacking resources and depending on foreign imports, Jordan is a developing country and struggles economically. The government struggles to manage its debt and relies heavily on foreign assistance (Central Intelligence Agency). According to The World Bank, Jordan's total unemployment rate as a percent of total labor force in 2017 was 14.922%. After dropping to its lowest level (11.9%) in over two decades in 2014, unemployment rates have been higher since then (The World Bank). The Migration Policy Institute recorded data regarding the ethnic makeup of the country and revealed that Jordan's population is

composed of various ethnic groups. The majority (69.3%) of those living in Jordan self-identified as Jordanian. In addition, 13.3% identified as Syrian, 6.7% as Palestinian, 6.7% as Egyptian, 1.4% as Iraqi, and 2.6% as other (includes Armenian, Circassian) (Migration Policy Institute). Jordan is an ethnically Arabic country (World Atlas).

In 2017, UN DESA recorded that Jordan was hosting 2.9 million refugees (Migration Data Portal). According to UNHCR data, refugees constituted 7.1% of Jordan's total population in 2017 (Migration Data Portal). 80% of the refugees living in Jordan was recorded to be living in an urban area (Central Intelligence Agency).

Jordan hosts the greatest amount of Palestine refugees in the world. The UNRWA documented more than two million Palestine refugees within Jordan (Amnesty International). The ten official Palestine refugee camps that the UNRWA established in Jordan are located in the more populated urban northwestern part of the country (UNRWA). Although the UNRWA provides humanitarian services to these camps, the authorities of the host countries are responsible for managing and policing the camps (UNRWA).

In addition, a considerable number (655,000) of Syrian refugees had fled to Jordan by 2017. However, during the year of 2017, Jordan did not allow any further Syrians seeking asylum to enter the country (Human Rights Watch, 2018). Furthermore, at least 2,330 Syrians were forced to return home by September (Amnesty International).

The UNHCR also delivers aid to the refugees in Jordan. Due to financial limitations, however, this organization was only able to provide emergency medical treatment to those most vulnerable (UNHCR | Global Focus, 2018). In 2017, the UNHCR did not even reach half of its budget goal of \$1.2 billion (Human Rights Watch, 2018). As a result, the needs of many refugees have been unmet. Refugees in Jordan struggle to overcome their condition of impoverishment and

vulnerability due to a lack of food and access to basic services. For example, the UNHCR reported in 2017 that many of the Syrians who were displaced to the Rukban settlement had been living in this provisional camp with few assets for almost two years (UNHCR | Global Focus, 2018). During the first half of 2017, Syrian refugees living in unorganized camps near the Syrian border received limited humanitarian aid. However, by October, it was declared by Jordanian authorities that aid deliveries from Jordanian territory would no longer be permitted. Despite this reduction in humanitarian relief provided to Syrian refugees, the Jordan Compact was created with the intent to offer Syrian refugees the ability to earn an income by providing job opportunities, granting work permits, and improving education (Human Rights Watch, 2018).

Jordan's public infrastructure, which includes education and health, suffered because the country struggled to manage the impact the refugee crisis due to a lack of international financial assistance (Human Rights Watch, 2018). Nevertheless, according to The World Bank, Jordan received \$2,920,750,000 in Official Development Assistance in the year of 2017.

Lebanon

Another country that I will study is Lebanon. In 2017, Lebanon's population was 6,082,360 (The World Bank). According to the CIA's *World Factbook*, 95% of the Lebanese people is Arabic, while 4% is Armenian. In addition, 57.7% of the population is Muslim and 36.2% is Christian (Central Intelligence Agency). Most of the population is concentrated in urban areas, as 88.6% of the total population resides near the Mediterranean, especially in and around Beirut, the capital. Economically, Lebanon's "weak infrastructure, poor service delivery, institutionalized corruption, and bureaucratic over-regulation" have been contributing factors to its slow economic growth and fiscal deficit (Central Intelligence Agency). Unemployment has been slowly, but steadily, increasing since dropping to 6.355% in 2009. In 2017, the unemployment rate rose to

6.641% (The World Bank). However, the refugee crisis has exacerbated the economic situation within Lebanon, a country that is already struggling economically (Charles, 2018).

In 2017, UN DESA recorded a total of 1.6 million refugees inhabiting Lebanon. Refugees composed 16.4% of Lebanon's total population in 2017, according to UNHCR data (Migration Data Portal). Per capita, Lebanon was hosting the most refugees in the world. The UNHCR reported 997,500 Syrian refugees (UNHCR | Global Focus, 2018) and the UNRWA has registered at least 500,000 Palestinian refugees (Forced Migration Forum). The CIA also estimated 5,695 originating from Iraq and 300,000 unregistered refugees from Syria (Central Intelligence Agency). Although refugees are located throughout the relatively small country of Lebanon, most of the twelve UNRWA-established Palestine refugee camps are situated along the Mediterranean coast (UNRWA). However, there have been attempts at reducing the number of refugees entering the country. High refugee inflows for the previous several years caused the Lebanese government to limit the number of refugees seeking asylum; therefore, entry regulations were continued to be implemented in 2017. In addition, various occurrences in which refugees were forcibly deported were documented in 2017 (Human Rights Watch, 2018).

According to the UNHCR's (2018) *2017 Year-End Report - Lebanon*, Lebanese host communities became fatigued by the refugee crisis and many began to demand that refugees return to their countries of origin. Surveys revealed that perceived competition over jobs was the primary source of tensions between host citizens and refugees. However, opportunities for refugees to earn money were scarce and 58% of the refugees in Lebanon lived in extreme poverty (UNHCR | Global Focus, 2018). Of the few Palestinians who were earning income (42%), most were employed informally, working "menial, low-paying jobs" (Charles, 2018). In Lebanon, just as in Jordan, the UNHCR experienced limited funding and could offer financial assistance to only about half of

Syrian refugee families living in extreme poverty and many other refugees suffering medical conditions did not receive care (UNHCR | Global Focus, 2018). Nevertheless, the country of Lebanon received \$1,305,520,000 in Official Development Assistance in 2017, according to The World Bank.

Contributing to the struggle of refugees in Lebanon is the fact that, among most Lebanese citizens, refugees are not widely welcomed. Halim Shebaya (2017), a reporter from *Al Jazeera*, stated that Lebanon is a particularly racist and xenophobic society - a “problem that goes beyond the discrimination of refugees.” For example, incidents of Lebanese police brutality and abuse against Syrians living in the country increased (Tahhan, 2016). It was found in 2017 that five Syrians died while in Lebanon’s military custody, with high probability that they were subject to torture. However, activists who outwardly supported Syrian refugees were met with backlash and branded as traitors. In addition, Palestinians living in refugee camps experience “discrimination, dire living conditions, poverty, lack of economic opportunities and bleak future prospects” due to the fact that the state has imposed policies that isolate the refugee communities from the rest of society (Shebaya, 2017). Palestinian refugees are not considered the same as other foreigners; they are deprived of various rights that other foreigners receive (Charles, 2018). Despite the fact that Syrians and Palestinians share the same Arabic ethnicity with the Lebanese people, tensions exist between these groups in Lebanon. The widespread racist and xenophobic attitude that is present in Lebanese society is worth noting because it affects the refugees that seek asylum in the country, contributing to the discrimination that characterizes their experience.

Iran

The third country that I will examine in my study is Iran. The World Bank recorded that the population of Iran was 81,162,788 in 2017. Persians constitute Iran's largest ethnic group and make up 61% of the Iranian population, followed by the following minorities: Azeris (16%), Kurds (10%), Lurs (6%), Turkmen (2%), Arabs (2%), and Balochs (2%) (World Atlas). In addition, 74.9% of the total population lives in urban area, which are more common in the north and west of the country. The eastern portion of the country has a much lower population density because most of it is desert. Iran is heavily dependent on oil and gas exports. The economy has also been characterized by high levels corruption which can be attributed to the fact that a large number of the country's enterprises and companies are controlled by the government, rather than by private firms (Central Intelligence Agency). According to The World Bank, the unemployment rate was 12.516% in 2017. That same year, Iran received \$140,280,000 in Official Development Assistance (The World Bank).

In 2017, the UN DESA estimated that 978,300 documented refugees were living in Iran. Data from the UNHCR revealed that refugees constituted 1.2% of the Iranian population in 2017 (Migration Data Portal). Iran hosts large numbers of refugees originating from Iraq and Afghanistan and has been a prominent host country for refugees for the past four decades. In 2017, the UNHCR reported almost 30,000 refugees from Iraq and 950,000 from Afghanistan. Arab is the dominant ethnicity in Iraq; Pashtun is the dominant ethnicity in Afghanistan. The Arab and Pashtun refugees who enter Iran differ from the Persians who dominate the ethnic makeup of Iran (World Atlas). The Iranian government also estimated the presence of about two million undocumented Afghan refugees. Most refugees (97%) relocated to urban areas and the remainder lived in 20 settlements that are located throughout the country (UNHCR | Global Focus, 2018).

According to UNHCR Representative in Iran, Sivanka Dhanapala, “The Islamic Republic of Iran generously hosts one of the largest and most protracted refugee situations in the world” (UNHCR, 2016). Unlike in many refugee-hosting countries, refugees in Iran experience higher levels of support and backing by the government. The UNHCR has been collaborating with the Iranian government and other countries around the world in the attempt to create a greater international response to the refugee crisis. The Iranian government has attempted to integrate refugees into society, as resettlement is a highly unlikely reality and most refugees plan on staying in Iran. The government continued to “develop and implement progressive refugee policies, such as the inclusion of refugees into the national health and education systems” (UNHCR | Global Focus, 2018; p. 4). All registered refugees are provided with health insurance under Iran’s Universal Public Health Insurance (UPHI) and all children are given the opportunity, “regardless of documentation status, to attend primary and secondary school.” In addition, “technical and vocational training courses are available to refugees so that they are equipped with the necessary skills to help rebuild their lives” (UNHCR, 2016).

These various services, designed with the intent to benefit refugees, have proved to be efficacious. Refugees in Iran, having formal “access to employment in some 87 different job categories,” do not struggle economically as much as those in Jordan and Lebanon do (UNHCR | Global Focus, 2018; p. 4). Unfortunately, some children refugees were recruited to engage in combat in Syria on behalf of Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC). It is also important to note that, despite Iran’s support for refugees, ethnic minorities still face inequality and discrimination within this Persian-dominated state. The government “restricts cultural as well as political activities among the country’s Azeri, Kurdish, Arab, and Baluch ethnic minorities” (Human Rights Watch, 2018).

CASE STUDY ANALYSIS

In my analysis of refugee-hosting countries in 2017, I will compare the number of refugees within a country, according to the UN DESA, and the level of Group Grievance, as provided by The Fund for Peace. After strictly comparing the independent and dependent variables, I came across the following surprising data:

- Jordan hosted 2.9 million refugees and received a Group Grievance score of 8.0.
- Lebanon hosted 1.6 million refugees and received a Group Grievance score of 8.5.
- Iran hosted 978,300 refugees and received a Group Grievance score of 9.3.

Refugees and the Potential for Violence		
Host Country	Level of Refugees	Level of Group Grievance
Jordan	High	Medium/high
Lebanon	Medium	High
Iran	Low	High

This data revealed that Jordan, the country with the highest number of refugees, had the lowest level of Group Grievance; however, Iran, the country with the lowest number of refugees, had the highest level of Group Grievance. These results were unexpected because I was anticipating a positive relationship between refugee levels and Group Grievance scores. Yet, after intensive research on literature related to this topic, I began to understand that refugee inflows impact various areas of a society and that there may be contributing factors that coincide with refugee inflows and also influence Group Grievance levels. Ultimately, I developed various hypotheses. In the remainder of this section, I will determine if my case studies have validated or invalidated my hypotheses.

Analysis of Hypothesis 1

Hypothesis 1: Within a country hosting refugees, as ethnic diversity increases, the potential for violence increases.

To test my first hypothesis, I will evaluate the ethnic makeup of the host country and the refugee population. I will compare the ethnicity of the majority population in the host country to the ethnicity of the majority of the refugees within the country. If the ethnicities from these two groups coincide, I expect lower levels of Group Grievance and therefore less potential for violence than if the ethnicities were different.

In Jordan, the dominant ethnicity is Arab (World Atlas). I assume that the majority of the refugees in Jordan are Arabs, because Palestinians are ethnically Arabic and more than two million Palestinians reside in this country (Amnesty International).

In Lebanon, 95% of the population is Arabian (Central Intelligence Agency). The UNHCR (2018) recorded almost one million of the refugees in Lebanon are Syrian. I assume that the majority of these refugees are Arabic, because Arabs constitute the largest ethnic group in Syria (World Atlas).

In Iran, Persians make up 61% of the population (World Atlas). 950,000 refugees have fled from Afghanistan to Iran, therefore the majority of refugees in Iran are Afghan (UNHCR | Global Focus, 2018). I assume that the majority of these refugees are Pashtun, because Pashtuns constitute the largest ethnic group in Afghanistan (World Atlas).

I have organized the information I have collected into the following table:

Ethnic Diversity and the Potential for Violence				
Host Country	Ethnicity of Majority of Host Country Population	Ethnicity of the Majority of the Refugee Population	Does the Majority Ethnic Group in the Host Country Population Match the Majority Ethnic Group of the Refugee Population?	Level of Group Grievance
Jordan	Arab	Palestinian - Arab	Yes	Medium/high (8.0)
Lebanon	Arab	Syrian - Arab	Yes	High (8.5)
Iran	Persian	Afghan - Pashtun	No	High (9.3)

My first hypothesis can be validated.

When comparing Jordan and Iran, my data suggested that when the majority ethnic group in the host country population matches the majority ethnic group of the refugee population, the level of Group Grievance is lower. Jordan is characterized by a medium/high level of Group Grievance and the dominant ethnic group in Jordan matched the ethnic group of the majority of the refugees. Iran's dominant ethnic group does not match the ethnicity of the majority of the refugee population and Iran received a higher Group Grievance score.

When comparing Lebanon and Iran, my data similarly agreed with my first hypothesis. The data suggested that when the majority ethnic group in the host country population matches the majority ethnic group of the refugee population, the level of Group Grievance is lower, as Lebanon's dominant ethnic group matches the ethnicity of the majority of the refugee population and received a lower Group Grievance score than Iran.

My data has illustrated that as ethnic diversity within a host country increases, the potential for violence increases.

Analysis of Hypothesis 2

Hypothesis 2: Within a country hosting refugees, as economic opportunity increases, the potential for violence decreases.

To test my second hypothesis, I will compare each country's unemployment rate. I expect a country that has a lower unemployment rate to have a lower level of Group Grievance than a country with a higher unemployment rate.

I have organized the data into the following table:

Economic Opportunity and the Potential for Violence		
Host Country	Unemployment Rate	Level of Group Grievance
Jordan	14.922%	Medium/high (8.0)
Lebanon	6.641%	High (8.5)
Iran	12.516%	High (9.3)

My second hypothesis cannot be validated.

Analysis of my case studies has revealed that, despite having the highest unemployment rate among the three countries, Jordan had the lowest level of Group Grievance. Lebanon and Iran had lower unemployment rates yet higher levels of Group Grievance than Jordan. My hypothesis can only be validated when comparing Lebanon and Iran. Iran had both a higher level of unemployment and level of Group Grievance than Lebanon.

However, based upon the data I collected regarding the unemployment rates and levels of Group Grievance among each of my case studies, it cannot be confirmed that as the economic opportunity within a host country increases, the potential for violence decreases.

Analysis of Hypothesis 3

Hypothesis 3: Within a country hosting refugees, as humanitarian aid increases, the potential for violence decreases.

To test my third hypothesis, I will evaluate the Official Development Assistance (ODA) that each country receives. I expect the country that receives a larger quantity of ODA to have a lower level of Group Grievance than a country that receives lower amounts of ODA.

I have organized the data into the following table:

Humanitarian Aid and the Potential for Violence		
Host Country	Official Development Assistance	Level of Group Grievance
Jordan	\$2,920,750,000	Medium/high (8.0)
Lebanon	\$1,305,520,000	High (8.5)
Iran	\$140,280,000	High (9.3)

My third hypothesis can be validated.

Of the three countries that I studied, Jordan received the largest amount of ODA and had the lowest level of Group Grievance. Lebanon received the second largest amount of ODA and had the second lowest level of Group Grievance. Iran received the least amount of ODA and had the highest level of Group Grievance.

My data has illustrated that as humanitarian aid within a host country increases, the potential for violence decreases.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of my research was to discover how refugee inflows influence violence. I sought to answer the question: how do influxes of refugees influence the potential for violence within the host country? After performing a comparative case study analysis on Jordan, Lebanon, and Iran, I discovered that there is not a direct positive relationship between refugee inflows and the potential for violence. I found that other factors, including ethnic diversity, economic opportunity, and humanitarian aid, are necessary to consider when evaluating the potential for violence within a country hosting refugees. However, my case studies did not fully support all of my hypotheses.

Results

My first hypothesis has been validated by my case studies. The outcomes of my analysis illustrated that host countries whose majority ethnic group matches the majority ethnic group of the refugee population have a lower potential for experiencing violence than those whose majority ethnic group does not match the majority ethnic group of the refugee population. These results suggest that as ethnic diversity within the host country increases, the potential for violence increases.

My second hypothesis cannot be validated. The results of my case studies revealed that although economic opportunity may be a factor that should be considered, it does not have a direct impact on the potential for violence within a country hosting refugees. By analyzing the unemployment rates and levels of Group Grievance within my cases, there was not a distinct pattern within the data suggesting that an increase in economic opportunity can be associated with a decrease in the potential for violence. The data I collected revealed that I cannot claim that there is a negative relationship between economic opportunity and the potential for violence.

My third hypothesis has been validated because amongst my cases, as levels of ODA increased, I observed a decrease in Group Grievance. My data suggests that host countries receiving greater amounts of humanitarian aid may experience lower levels of violence than those that receive lower amounts of humanitarian aid.

Limitations

Throughout my study, I encountered some limitations that have resulted in an imperfect yet intriguing and informative body of research. The main limitation in my research is the lack of data. I learned that violence is a very undocumented variable. Finding reports of violence against refugees was difficult, as there is little documentation for outbreaks of violence, especially between refugees and citizens of the host country. Gaps in data exist due to a lack of reporting of violent occurrences.

The World Bank also recognizes that studying this critical topic is not a perfect process. Available data has some limitations because “methods and definitions for collecting and aggregating data vary widely across countries” (The World Bank, 2017; p. 27), and as a consequence, there are “substantial variations in aggregate numbers” (p. 29). This is why there is no consensus on how many refugees there are in the world. The World Bank (2017) suggests that “enhancing the comprehensiveness, quality, and reliability of available data is a critical part of the development agenda on forced displacement” (p. 27).

In addition, violence can be operationalized in various ways. As a result, I decided to utilize Group Grievance as a way to measure the *potential* for violence. This factor measures a country’s instability and thus its potential to experience violence. The data provided by The Fund for Peace in their *Fragile States Index* was the most accessible, organized, and consistent form of data that I

could find. The measures I used to operationalize my variables are not perfect representations of my variables; however, I tried to choose measures that would most adequately represent them.

Furthermore, it was difficult to discern the relationship between the variables I presented because the refugee crisis is a very multidimensional and complex issue that creates a situation that is unique to each host country. No simple answer or solution exists, which is why the international community struggles to overcome this crisis of refugees. Refugees have economic, political, and social implications within a society. Therefore, confining my research to a few variables does not provide the complete picture of the realities within a host country. This is a complex issue that requires thorough analysis of multiple areas in a society.

Recommendations

My research has revealed that violence involving refugees is a very understudied subject yet a prevalent issue. I propose that further research is conducted regarding violence involving refugees, intercommunal relations involving host country citizens and refugees, the employment levels of refugees, and humanitarian assistance administered in response to refugee crises. For this to be possible, there needs to be greater documentation and reporting of these measures. I also recommend that further collection of data continues in more countries, not only those in the Middle East. It would be valuable to perform case studies on countries in other regions of the world because many countries are experiencing influxes of refugees. My research should inspire further investigation of the effects that influxes of refugees have on a country's levels of violence and what factors reduce or enhance the potential for violence. I hope that my research has inspired a greater desire to uncover ways to avoid future conflicts that may arise as a result of refugee inflows.

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