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On the Front Lines: Service Providers Respond to the Haitian Refugee Crisis

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On the Front Lines: Service Providers Respond to the Haitian Refugee Crisis



By: Karina Castro

**On the front lines:
Service Providers Respond to the Haitian Refugee Crisis**

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Research Seminar IV
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1.Introduction

Tijuana is a city of migrants, it is a city diverse in its people and also a welcoming place where different cultures interlace. Yet, no one was prepared for the arrival of Haitians to Baja California, it was unexpected and unforeseen. At the moment Tijuana faces the situation of the arrival of approximately 15,000 Haitians to the region, it immediately becomes a humanitarian crisis. As has been seen in the past, the Mexican government failed to respond in any way to the crisis, public officials made statements saying Tijuana was not facing a crisis and that everything was fine. However, the service providers differed in opinion, all 36 shelters whether well established or as an improvised creation to the situation took action upon themselves as civil societies and religious affiliations organized and came to the rescue of Haitians refugees.

The phenomenon such as Haitian refugees arriving in Tijuana and the response by the local organizations are important to analyze in order to understand the role policies play in the work of service providers trying to integrate this population. A key element not to forget in the humanitarian crisis of Haitian Refugees is the immediate help provided such as food and shelter to which organizations emphasize on yet fail to address the long term needs of refugees. In order to bridge the gap between short-term and long-term responses, there has to be a conversation of integration policy and long-term solutions as Haitians become citizens of Mexico, changing completely not only their final destination but their lives. In this paper I will address how Tijuana service-workers feel that policy affects their ability to support the integration of Haitian refugees in their communities. In

analyzing the factors of integration, I will also include a context of the situation in Tijuana when Haitian Refugees were added to the current migration population in the shelters of daily deportees and internally displaced people.

2. Literature Review

Introduction

The question I will be analyzing in this paper is how did service providers respond to the arrival of Haitian refugees at the U.S. Mexico border. Specifically, the analysis will be on how integration efforts by service providers in Tijuana, Mexico are affected by the particular situation created as a result of migration policies in the United States and Mexico. Due to this recent phenomenon, little literature and research is available related to Mexican and United States integration efforts, as well as the effect of recent refugee policies from the United States and Mexico. There is also very few literature on deportees and Haitian refugees in Tijuana and how Tijuana addressed this particular migratory crisis. To understand the impact of this recent phenomenon it is important to first have an overview of Haiti's migration history in terms of politics, resources and natural disasters which have led to waves of massive migration from the island. Most of the literature focuses on the political and economic impact on Haitian migration, but I will broaden this understanding by approaching environmental factors as a key factor in the rise of Haitians leaving the island. As a result of natural disasters and environmental causes, Haitians became both internally displaced and sought asylum in various countries thus becoming refugees.

Another important aspect affecting the current status of Haitians are Mexico's and the United States policies towards Haitian refugees. The U.S. restrictionist policy was further expanded in 2016,

when Secretary of Homeland Security, Jeh Johnson announced Haitians found at sea or at ports of entry were to be deported. This policy impacted the lives of Haitians in Tijuana, who, after this announcement, were no longer eligible for asylum in the United States. At that point, Haitians had to decide whether to stay permanently in Tijuana or try to cross into the United States without knowing the outcome, which most likely could have resulted in deportation to Haiti. Today, approximately 3,200 Haitians now reside in Baja California, the majority of Haitians either living in Tijuana or Mexicali. Today, Haitians permanently living in Tijuana are adjusting to a new life, but some continue to hope the United States policies will change. In order to gain perspective on the human side of this migratory crisis of the Haitian population, it is important for my work to analyze the extent to which the United States policies forced Haitians to permanently stay in Tijuana. Furthermore, at the specific moment when they arrive in Tijuana, how it becomes a humanitarian crisis that forces a response from the Mexican government and non-governmental agencies. The contribution of my research will be an addition to the field of integration studies, particularly on how the work of service providers is affected as a result of migration policies of two different countries when dealing with a specific population, in this instance, the case study of Haitians. By doing an in-depth analysis of how service providers attempted to integrate the Haitian population in the context of Mexican and United States immigration policy, I hope to better understand how different groups (NGOs, religious organizations) and citizens of Tijuana responded through a general organized effort to the lack of integration policy. By examining how the result of policies affect integration in the work of service providers, I will be able to add to the literature on the work of integration, using the case study of Haitian refugees in Tijuana.

Historical Timeline

To give an insight of the history of Haitian refugees to the United States, here is a brief timeline. The first wave of migration was from 1791-1809 the violence and political instability of the French and Haitian Revolutions led to Haitians to leave the island. During the early 1960s an influx of Haitian refugees fled as a response to the mass violence and economic deprivation of the Papa Doc (Francois Duvalier) regime. From 1972-1980 approximately 50,000 Haitians attempted to gain asylum in the United States. During this time after Jean-Claude Duvalier was appointed as successor for life by his father thus continuing what seemed to be an endless dictatorship and repressive government.

At first, the United States granted Haitians parole and allowed them to apply for asylum. However, most applications for asylum were denied. Instead most Haitians were given refugee status instead of permanent resident status. The United States had adopted a policy at the time that Haitians were only coming to the United States in search of economic opportunities, thus they did not qualify for any type of asylum. It could be argued it was an issue of racism and discrimination against Haitians on behalf of the United States government. During the 1972-1980 period, the U.S. began to deport refugees waiting for asylum as well as to take preventative measures to prevent Haitians from arriving in the United States. The U.S. approach was accelerated deportation, detention and interdiction at sea. The U.S. policy of granting parole to Haitians instituted a detention program in its place. During this time, the United States considered Haitians to be economic refugees and not political refugees, and thus forced Haitians to return to their country of origin without access to any sort of legal representation or to be able to apply for asylum at the port of entry. The United States did not recognize Haitian refugees as political refugees since following the cold war there was a fear of the spread of communism and in order to stop this, the United States backed up economically the

repressive leadership of Duvalier. If the U.S. had recognized the dire situation of Haitians under the repressive political order of "Baby Doc" Duvalier, it would perhaps acknowledge the political factors leading Haitians to migrate instead of blaming it on economics and the Haitian population's desire to acquire materialistic wealth which was not the case.

Taking economics into account, a question to be considered is whether poverty should be equated with political persecution. If poverty is the reason people are fleeing their homeland because of a corrupt government that has created inequalities within society, then it should be considered political persecution. Poverty is a primary reason for migration besides from other factors, and it is the most important push factor which caused thousands of Haitians to arrive in Tijuana, Mexico which is why it is important to examine it as a root cause and the end result of this phenomenon.

The Haitian Revolution

Before discussing how Haitians became refugees and their arrival in Tijuana, I will provide a context of Haiti's history beginning with the Haitian Revolution. After the Haitian Revolution, Haiti won independence from the French in 1804, making it the first black republic to gain its independence and the second in the world to gain freedom from European powers after the United States.

Michael-Rolph Trouillot's, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* talks about the history of the Haitian Revolution as, "part of a continuous Western discourse on slavery, race and colonization-broken the iron bonds of the philosophical milieu in which it was born?" (Trouillot, 74). His work is the foundation to understanding the history preceding the root causes of the Haitian revolution and the intersectionality of slave, race and colonization, the current political and economic instability, and also informs how the West has historically responded to Haitians in the past and present. Trouillot express the importance of the narrative of the Haitian Revolution and how although

there can be different in ways in which to tell a story, the Haitian Revolution marks an important event in which Haiti becomes the first Caribbean nation to revolt and actually succeed in the Americas. The history of the revolution also represents the threat felt by the imperialist countries as a slave colony freed itself. The revolution in the work of Trouillot was described as unthinkable: “To sum up, in spite of the philosophical debates, in spite of the rise of abolitionism, the Haitian Revolution was unthinkable in the West not only because it challenged slavery and racism but because of the way it did so” (Trouillot, 87). The revolution was unthinkable because it was also unspoken even amongst the slaves, since it did not come with a intellectual discourse in practice it challenged Western philosophy, colonialism and racism. By silencing the history of Saint Dominique/Haiti it is in essence hiding the fact that the French lost a battle against a black army and how the unthinkable became a reality. The history of the Haitian Revolution, and first free black nation serves to illustrate Haiti’s resilience in fighting against imperialism and Western ideology. The significance is also the victory of the abolishment of slavery and the establishment of a new nation, Haiti which would be no longer ruled by whites but by former slaves or captives.

Haiti’s Political and Economic Policies

In February 1991 the first democratic government in Haiti was elected with its leader Jean-Bertrand Aristide (Charles,192). Nine months after his election there was a bloody military coup

which resulted in the rise of migratory flows. This resulted in internally displaced people going to the United States. Out of those who chose to flee, “some admitted that poverty was clearly a factor for their migration but they also testified against the political situation of fear, repression, violence and insecurity that prevailed under the second Aristide government” (Charles,192). During this time, the U.S. trade embargo imposed to force military rulers to resign made the country sink into a deeper poverty. Economic hardship, political repression, and the struggle to survive led many Haitians to flee the country. This description illustrates the severity of the political unrest during this time, “Haiti’s dream of peace, democracy and economic prosperity was shattered on September 30, 1991, when the Tonton Macoutes ousted Aristide from power, throwing Haiti into a spiral of political violence so brutal as to give rise to the recent refugee crisis” (Lennox,698-699). Haiti at this point in history was shaken by political unrest as it had been led astray from the path to democracy, the hopes they had put in Aristide banished as he led the country into corruption and failure. Haiti during this time was a nation-state based on repression and corruption. During the second term of Aristide in 1998, parliamentary elections were rigged creating an environment of political instability.

Roots and Causes of Haitian Migration: Maud Laethier

Most of the literature reviewed focuses on the history of Haitian migration, which is an impactor factor to establish how and why Haitian Refugees arrived in Tijuana. Before proceeding to this explanation, first context must be given regarding the situation of Haitian Refugees and their journey through Brazil and other Latin American countries before their final arrival in Tijuana.

My analysis is further informed by a key anthropologist and prominent researcher on Haitian migration history, Dr. Maud Lauthier. In *Lot bò dlo. Las migraciones de haitianos: prácticas*,

espacios, debates she explains the historical precedents of Haitian migration in the 20th century, as well as other countries to which they migrated, such as French Guyana, Suriname and Brazil.

Dr. Lauthier provides an explanation on the roots of Haitian migration such as political and economic instability within Haiti, but also environmental factors such as the earthquake of 2010 which resulted in over 300,000 casualties. Her work is key in understanding how Haitians arrived in Tijuana by providing an extensive historical context of Haitian migration and mobility. According to Dr. Lauthier, migration is both invisibilized in Haiti, and as a subject of research. Obviously migration patterns have changed since the 1970s when mostly only the elite migrated. The migratory flows seen now in Tijuana are new and have raised many questions. The new wave of Haitian migratory flows coming from Brazil to Tijuana is an example of how amongst migrants are changing the migratory patterns that used to be solely based on family networks. This is where migration interlaces and African migrants combined with Haitian refugees form friendships and migrate together. Thus, changing the migratory patterns.

She talks about this expression "Lot bò dlo", which Haitians use to refer to foreigners in the exterior or those who have migrated, the literal translation is on the other side of the water because Haiti is an island. It is a fundamental definition used by Haitians to describe migration. This definition is fundamental to how Haitians themselves see migration and offers a symbolism of being an outsider, by leaving the island.

Overall, Laethier's work offers the political, economic, social and environmental causes of migration as well as how generations of Haitians perceive leaving the island as going to the other side. The history of Haitian migratory informs how migratory patterns have changed over time, from those based on familial networks to those based on economic opportunities and new social

networks. Her perspective is crucial in understanding the social, economic and political factors in globalized context which have influenced Haitian migration over time.

Contemporary Refugee

The definition of refugee is important to establish to understand there are other factors not encased which led Haitians to become refugees. Refugee according to Haitians should not be simply defined by the term economic refugee without taking into account the socio-political and economic conditions of the country which caused them to be displaced. Particularly because Haitians are forced migrants who also had to migrate due to natural disasters in their country. This is key in the framing of this work, as the term “economic refugee” will be important when examining U.S. policy towards Haitian refugees.

Carolle Charles defines how different categories of refugees are a result of forced migration, in which migrants do not have free agency and are victims of circumstances. Using the creation of categories helps to explain how Haitians are constituted refugees. The work of Charles exemplifies two historical and political moments in the life of Haitian immigrant communities during the 1980s and 1990s when the response of immigrant communities varies. In seeing Haitians as refugees for the first time and fearing to return under the second term of Aristide’s presidency Haitians become political refugees fearing a totalitarian regime. In the course of these events the relationship between Haiti and the United States in terms of power dynamics between the two countries plays a role in the shaping of immigration policies towards Haitian migrants.

In the case of Haitian migration, it is also important to note the different refugee categories at the global level and how they are constructed politically to create categories of otherness that express systems of exclusions and practices of marginalization (Charles,190). “Refugees are a type of

migrants who are forced to leave their home country primarily for political pressures. They also can be displaced people who are victims of adverse circumstances” (Charles,192). The term later was modified to include any person or group fleeing generalized violence. According to United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), “A refugee is someone who has been forced to flee his or her country because of persecution, war, or violence. A refugee has a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group”. The United States chose to limit the definition of Haitians as economic refugees, and in doing so, excluded Haitians from the definition of a political refugee, therefore leaving Haitians unprotected by U.S. Immigration policies (Russell, par.4). By not meeting the criteria of a well founded fear of persecution due to the following categories: race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group or political opinion Haitians were not eligible for asylum. The United States, in order to justify the political choice decided Haitians did not fit the description of political refugees and decided to label them as economic refugees. By choosing to define Haitians as economic refugees, this meant they were ineligible to meet the criteria or apply for refugee status in the United States, leaving Haitians with no other option but deportation. If Haitians would have been classified as political refugees they would have been able to apply for asylum as political refugees during the period of political instability in the country during the 1980s.

After WWII U.S. immigration policy was defined by the Cold War’s anti-communist sentiment. This led to the creation of the 1980 New Refugee Act. The focus of determining refugee cases was based on the journey of the refugee instead of their origin or political situation. Discrimination against Haitian refugees continued, according to:

“INS statistics shows that of approximately 2000 applications filed by Haitians for political asylum between 1983 and 1989, only thirty-nine were successful. In stark contrast, asylum seekers from the U.S.S.R. boasted an approval rate of 72.6 percent, while Romania’s rate was 70.3 percent, and Iran’s rate was 61.5 percent. The government appeared to have ignored the 1980 Refugee Act’s call for ideological neutrality” (Lennox,711)”.

Throughout the history of Haitians as refugees arriving in the U.S., this this population was historically not been treated fairly in many civil procedures. Today, not a lot has changed and now more than ever, the anti-immigrant, anti-refugee sentiment is felt in United States policy regardless of the humanitarian emergencies the world faces. An examination of Mexican and U.S. government efforts reveals that the Mexican government does not in fact have a refugee integration policy while the U.S. continues to maintain restrictive policies.

Agricultural and Environmental Factors in Haitian Migration

One of the key factors pushing Haitian migration are agricultural and environmental. Norman Myers, as an environmentalist specializing on biodiversity and economic refugees offers a glimpse of the lack of environmental resources to Haitians which has led them not only to migrate but to in fact become environmental refugees. Asides from fleeing political persecution, Haitians also flee environmental degradation in which water, trees, and soil are the basis for an agricultural economy. Without having access to some of the resources to sustain an agricultural economy, Haitians are forced to flee. Thus the environmental conditions of the country provides yet another push factor, together with the historical unequal distribution of wealth and poverty, as the root causes of migration from the island.

Due to the conditions of low grain production in Haiti, “Many Haitians enjoy only 80% of an acceptable calorie intake: they are chronically malnourished, which is jargon for semi-starving. Life expectancy is only 49 years, marginally better than in 1970, and one child in 10 dies before the age of five. Since 1975, average cash income has been declining, until today it is as little as US\$400 a year (UN Development Programme 1999; World Bank 2000)” (Myers,610). Furthermore, due to natural disasters such as Hurricane Katrina and the devastating earthquake of 2010, many Haitians fled the country heading for the United States as well as other neighboring countries such as the Dominican Republic and Brazil. Although there have been other factors that played a role in the history of Haitian migration, such as political oppression and government corruption, in present time, they are generally considered environmental refugees. Poverty is also a contributing ‘push’ factor related to environmental factors which displace people (Myers,610). Poverty isn’t solely based in access to natural resources but also includes economic inequalities and abuses by those in power (Loescher,316). Haiti is a nation which fought for democracy but had to undergo difficult periods of economic isolation and political unrest, a key element of fleeing in fear of political persecution.

Discriminatory U.S. Policy

Malissia Lennox in *Refugees, Racism, and Reparations: A Critique of the United States' Haitian Immigration Policy* addresses the institutional racism against Black refugees within U.S. immigration policy. Under the Bush Sr. administration, the policy of repatriating Haitian refugees is an example of this discrimination. Although Clinton had offered to reexamine this policy and revoking Bush’s executive order to exclude Haitians from the asylum application process by determining if they possessed a genuine fear of persecution this was not the case. The rejection of asylum claims by Haitians continued aside from the change of presidential administration in the U.S.

These exclusionary policies continued with the purpose of trying to keep Haitians in Haiti and were rooted in racial discrimination. American- Haitian relations informs the injustices and treatment towards Haitians. U.S. involvement political and economic dates back to the expropriation of sugar and its reliance on the African slave trade, which also illustrates Haiti's contribution to the United States. The intersectionality of racism within immigration policies demonstrates the historical discrimination of Haitians and how it continues to frame the needs and struggles of this population.

United States policies towards Haitian refugees since the 1960s continues to be described as, "denial of due process, mistreatment, deportation and racial exclusion" (Charles,199). Under the Bush Sr. administration, Haitian refugees were repatriated under a repatriation policy enforced by Bush Senior. When Clinton came into office, despite being a Democrat, the policy of limiting Haitian migration into the United States remained the same (Lennox,688). The United States employed three methods to deny asylum: accelerated deportation, detention and interdiction at sea. During a nine year period interdiction continued, "Between 1981 and 1990, 22,940 Haitians were intercepted at sea; only eleven were deemed qualified to apply for asylum (Lennox, 704). This statistic alone is an example of the severity and treatment of Haitians in the asylum process and the discrimination which they faced.

The Bush Sr. Administration refused entry to Haitians who were fleeing the military government who at the time had overthrown the first democratic elected president, Jean-Bertrand Aristide in 1991. This was the political approach the United States took towards Haitian refugees, unwilling to give them a permanent status within the United States because according to the law, Haitians did not fit the definition of a political refugee. In the eyes of the American government, Haitians were economic refugees, seeking better economic opportunities of employment. Despite the

long history of U.S. foreign involvement in Haiti's political and economic affairs, and being a main factor in the policies that fed the Haitian refugee crisis, the United States continues to enforce a restrictionist immigration policy towards them. For example even in the twentieth century, repatriation continues to be U.S. policy towards Haitians: "From January 2 to October 26, 2002, the national immigration office in Haiti recorded more than 19,778 cases of forced repatriation of Haitians by U.S., Bahamian, Cuban, and Dominican authorities. Their arrival and return would re-ignite the old debate over differing treatment for asylum seekers and refugees from Haiti" (Charles, 192). The discrimination and political climate surrounding Haitian refugees continues even in today's U.S. administration. All these policies create a context for why under Obama's administration the door once again closed and refused entry to Haitian refugees.

Policies of Deterrence : Merida Initiative and Plan Frontera Sur

U.S. and Mexico's policies have gone hand in hand when dealing with immigration as a result of sharing a border. These policies are important because they impacted migration and added to the rise in number of migrants, refugees, and deportees that arrived at the border. Two policies were signed by both the U.S. and Mexico in order to first declare a war on drugs through the Merida Initiative. Secondly, Plan Frontera Sur aimed at regulating migration through the southern border of Mexico coming mainly from Central America. In order to illustrate how these policies have influenced migration it is important to understand their rhetoric and also the U.S. involvement in funding further training and development for Mexican officials. It is also imperative to note how both countries have responded to migration as an issue of national security without addressing the root causes of migration in sending countries.

The Merida Initiative,

is an international agreement among the United States, Mexico, the nations of Central America, Dominican Republic, and Haiti. It is aimed at combating drug trafficking and organized crime and the violence that accompanies these activities. The program began in 2008 and called for the United States to provide funding to help Mexican authorities curb illegal activities that had a detrimental effect on both countries because of their shared border (Ungvarsky).

This initiative was to battle organized crime and to have a more restrictive control on drug trafficking.

In 2007 President George W. Bush and President Felipe Calderon met in Merida to draft an agreement to fight criminal activity. Mexico's southern border plan or Plan Frontera Sur is a binational agreement to control migration from Central America trying to reach the United States.

Luis Arriola Vega's, *Mexico's Not-So-Comprehensive Southern Border Plan* explains how this policy has not been effective in regulating control of migratory flows and has failed to control or address in-transit migration. The implementation of this policy has led to more deportations from Mexico:

In practice the CPSB(Comprehensive Plan for the Southern Border) concentrated on security, most notably interdicting undocumented migrants passing through the area. In contrast to recent historical trends, at the peak of the program—between the second half of 2014 and the first six months of 2015—Mexican authorities apprehended more Central American migrants than in the same period the previous year. In tandem, between October 2014 and April 2015, more Central Americans were detained in Mexico than the total number caught at the U.S. southern border. Consequently, the number of people deported from Mexico went up (Vega).

The Plan for the Southern Border has focused more on the policing of migrants than the original intent of securing the border and managing migration flows in an orderly manner. Both Plan Merida and Plan Frontera Sur are examples of the negative impacts these policies have had on immigrants while failing to control the migratory flows of Central America through Mexico's southern border.

Integration

Integration is an essential part of policy debates when it comes to refugee resettlement. Two key integration scholars are Alastair Ager and Alison Strang who, in , “Understanding Integration: A Conceptual Framework” explain the key components of integration. They identify the key markers of successful integration as employment, housing, education and health. Their work informs my analysis, in that I will see which key markers of integration the service providers think are necessary in order to have a successful integration in the case of the Haitian population within a Mexican context and which ones Haitians had or did not have access to upon arrival in Tijuana.

Another aspect of integration is the role of full citizenship, which has to be taken into account once a person is integrated into the new society. As I continue to develop my work and analyze the results of my interviews, I will utilize key elements of integration relevant to try to address the gap in the policies currently in place. Another author who also talks about integration and citizenship in various works is Stephen Castles who talks about the idea of citizenship being a political community without the claim to a common cultural identity.

There are many layers to citizenship within the nation state and what it truly constitutes to become a citizen and have access to civil, political and social rights and whether these rights are accessible to immigrants. In a worldwide scale it is important to take into account the effects of globalization and how this has led to a larger influx of mobility amongst migrants. According to both Castles and Davidson, “globalization means the rapidly increasing mobility of people across national borders” (Castles, Davidson 8). Globalization has had an impact on people’s mobility and different factors such as civil war, poverty and economic inequality, communication mediums and social networks already in place have helped to speed up the movement of people across borders. An

example to think about is how the Venezuelan economic crisis affected the migratory flows of Haitians who perhaps were in route and had to cross through Venezuela in order to reach Mexico.

If citizenship as defined means the integration of everyone within a community, then migrants should have their rights respected and assimilated upon arrival into the new society. In order to be functional and have access to all the basic necessities. As stated in the work of Castles and Davidson: “The essence of a nation-state is the institution of citizenship: the integration of all inhabitants of a territory into the political community, and their political equality as citizens” (Castles, Davidson 2). Some of the concepts of having access to rights are essential and perhaps minimalist but not when they are not guaranteed by the new society or the migrant does not have access to those rights upon arrival to the country of destination or transit as the case may be.

Although the incorporation of everyone into a community is important, it does not necessarily mean it will be done or addressed by the government. Migration affects every nation-state internationally. Castles and Davidson note, “Two things are new about current migrations. the first is their sheer scale: they affect all regions and most countries of the world simultaneously. The speed at which new ethnic minorities have emerged had confounded policy makers and undermined laws and practices concerned with integration and citizenship”(Castles, Davidson 9). Mexico as most countries does not have an integration policy to incorporate migrants into their political system. Migration also redefines citizenship because it is unexpected just like the unaccompanied children who arrived in a large influx at the U.S. border or the influx of Haitians who arrived in Tijuana, it is unpredictable and ever changing but laws too should have the flexibility to change as the demographics of its citizens changes.

3. Methods

In order to investigate how Mexican and U.S. policy affect the work of service providers seeking to help integrate Haitian refugees in Tijuana, Mexico, I conducted semi-structured interviews to complement a socio-economic and policy analysis. It is important as a researcher to respect the privacy of participants. Although I will provide the name of the organizations of whom I interviewed, the names of the interviewees will remain anonymous in order to protect identities. My positionality as a Latina woman, gave me an easier access to the Tijuana community. Although I did not know anyone there, being a native Spanish speaker made it easier to ask questions, create social networks within different non-profit organizations. Being daughter of immigrants currently residing in the United States, also provided me with the ability to empathize with the migrant plight and their journey of reaching the border.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In choosing a theoretical framework my work will focus on the theory of integration to analyze what is missing in policies and how new populations adapt to a new culture. Policies or laws tend to fall under a gray area where sometimes things are not clearly defined. Immigration policy around the world fails to address integration at all and I think it is something which should be considered as the world continues to transition and become multicultural. Integration is a multi-dimensional process in which different aspects should be considered such as citizenship and the relationship of the individual with the state.

SETTING

There are about 36 non-profit organizations in Tijuana, Mexico that provide services to migrant and refugees. I chose to do my fieldwork and research in Tijuana because it is a large city mainly composed of migrants from all parts of the world. It is also a crucial place where transnational migrants and commuters live making it a very diverse location. Because of Tijuana's history of being a transit city and crossing point for immigrants, it offered a unique case study with the arrival of Haitian refugees in the context of the current political climate between the U.S. in regards to immigration. Most importantly, because Tijuana shares a border with the United States it also holds,

two of the busiest U.S. border gateways, the San Ysidro and Otay Mesa ports of entry, processed over 41.5 million northbound passengers in personal vehicles and 8 million northbound pedestrians in 2000. The crossing station areas, which serve as the main gateways for San Diego-Tijuana passenger traffic, are not only integral parts of the trans-border infrastructure, but also two huge complexes in and of themselves (Bureau of Transportation Statistics).

It is important to consider the demographics of this city in order to understand its migration population. Part of why most of the interviews were conducted in office spaces or various coffee shops throughout the city of Tijuana. In order to gain access to interviewees doing my fieldwork in Tijuana, the first step was to get involved in a local organization as a volunteer at Casa Madre Assunta in order to work closely with the social worker at the shelter and be able to at the end perform semi structured interviews with service providers and slowly build a network of organizations working with migrants and refugees in Tijuana. I volunteered for an organization that is part of a larger network of shelters named *Scalabrinianas Mision con Migrantes y Refugiados*. I volunteered for this organization in Mexico City and the volunteer coordinator suggested them to me. I was interviewed by the social worker and explained to her my research and she was willing to help me and allow me to shadow some of her activities in the process of dealing with paperwork in order

to help migrants on a daily basis. She also invited me to a meeting with all local organizations and the local government on service to migrants. By volunteering it allowed me to interact with migrants in the shelter as well as to have a better insight of how the organization operated since the moment migrants arrived until they left. In deciding solely to interview service providers at various non-profit organizations was to help protect the individual stories of refugees and migrants in transit. The importance of interviewing service providers and only using this approach is beneficial because the service providers are the ones in the front lines doing the work and dealing with different political systems in order to aid refugees and migrants.

Their expertise and perspective is important in learning the procedures and current laws which affect refugees and migrants in Mexico. Most of the service providers interviewed were attorneys and social workers who had been in the migration field for at least a couple of years. Service providers who chose to participate in my research have a range field of expertise within immigration, ranging from social work, director of a non-profit organization, attorneys and advocates for immigrant rights. They provided insight to my research because most of them were working at the shelters when Haitian Refugees received humanitarian aid upon their arrival to Tijuana. Also, one of the social workers where I volunteered had been the social worker for the organization for 25 years and helped Haitians find work and a home after their situation changed and they decided to stay permanently.

PARTICIPANTS

My sampling procedure is based on a convenience sample. The service providers interviewed were accessible and willing to participate in the research. Although I was unaware of how many years they had been working in the field, it was one of the questions during the interview to be able to provide the reader with an insight as to why they are qualified to speak on the subject. Most of the

interviews were arranged by meeting different people and being referred to them by participants themselves. Also, some interviews were arranged in building partnerships with organizations. Once I interviewed a service provider, they typically had a recommendation of someone they knew who they thought it would be beneficial to interview in order to continue to learn about Mexico's policy towards refugees and migrants and how Mexico had dealt and is continuing to tailor its policy in order to help Haitian refugees who are now permanent residents in Tijuana, Mexico. Some organizations have internationally recognized names, such as Salvation Army, but operate very differently in Mexico and are much dependent on donations and a bare minimum of government funding. Two of the organizations were Scalibrianas or of Catholic affiliation. The rest of the organizations were secular. Since service providers have the most experience in dealing with asylum and refugee cases and know the policies and how it affects their work firsthand, I thought this would be the most appropriate population to interview.

PROCEDURE

All interviews were recorded and performed with the participant's consent. All interviews were transcribed and translated from Spanish to English for the purposes of my research.

Semi-Structured Interviews

The semi structured interviews asked specific questions regarding the person's position at the organization, the time they had been working there and why the organization was founded. The interview questions provided me with an overall understanding of the organization and also a more in depth narrative of immigrants and what policies really affected the work of service providers, when it came to integration. Some of the questions were open ended which also gave the opportunity to the

service provider to share anything they thought would be relevant to my research. In some cases, for example, the social workers stated due to changes in United States policy, they were unable to help cases of family reunification, presenting a limitation to her work. Some of the other questions were regarding the refugee and asylum process in Mexico in order to adjust status. I chose to specifically conduct a semi-structured interview process to allow the service providers to feel comfortable answering questions and also to be able to create a general understanding of the type of work and services each organization provides for migrants. I've also included below a sample of my questionnaire in English, please note the questions were asked in Spanish. See Appendix, Figure 6 for sample.

Participant	Occupation
DC-Fundacion Gaia	Attorney
SV-Comité Estratégico de Ayuda Humanitaria	Attorney
ES-Coalicion Pro Defensa del Migrante	Executive Coordinator
SS-Espacio Migrante	Assistant Director
PO-Espacio Migrante	Director
AC- Casa Madre Assunta	Director
MG-Casa Madre Assunta	Social Worker
MV-La Casa del Migrante	Attorney
VCA-Centro Binacional de Derechos Humanos	Director
JC-Colegio de la Frontera Norte (COLEF)	Assistant for Institutional Planning and Development

YV-Madres Soñadoras Internacional/DREAMERS MOMS USA/TIJUANA A.C.	Director/Founder
SV-Comité Estratégico de Ayuda Humanitaria	Attorney, Co-founder of Organization
HC-Angeles Sin Fronteras	Activist, Co-Director
IO-Ejercito de Salvacion Tijuana (Salvation Army)	Operational Coordinator for Men's Shelter

Participant Observations

I also conducted participant observation. While volunteering at Casa Madre Assunta, a women's and children's shelter, I was able to talk about and hear the stories of migrant women in transit through Mexico and how they had been detained or sought assistance from the organization while in the country. Most of the women at the time were internally displaced persons or migrants from Central America. One of the full time staff members was a Haitian employee. Part of this research was to learn about the processes the women faced in trying to adjust status in Mexico and how the government addresses their migratory situation in their country. Another aspect of this method was shadowing the social worker of the organization and attending a conference where all the non-profit organizations met with the mayor of the city of Tijuana in order to discuss the problems in helping out the populations at their shelters. Learning about her role and her duties, gave me a better understanding of the bureaucratic system in Mexico and how decisions made by the local government affect the daily lives of migrants and refugees.

POTENTIAL LIMITATIONS

One of the complications of this research was the amount of time spent conducting interviews. The interviews and research were done over a 3-week period. Perhaps it was not enough time to be

able to conduct more interviews to every single organization in Tijuana, but it was long enough to get a decent sample of interviews, network and meet different service providers. Tijuana is a city in which all these organizations work with each other in supporting the migrant population, so it was easy to network because the service providers who have been doing this kind of work for a long time all know each other.

Another potential limitation is language and the communication between service providers and Haitians given the following facts, the majority spoken language of Mexico is Spanish, and the Haitian official languages are Creole and French. Some of the service providers said if there was at least one person who understood Spanish, they would become the translator for the group, but this did not necessarily mean the person who translated was always there and that at times they simply had to manage without them which was difficult to do. As was evidenced in the interviews, along with language also comes the barrier to access to education and information.

However, this is not an emphasis within my project, but needs to be acknowledged. From several of my interviews I learned some Haitians spoke a little Spanish and served as translators for others. In spite of the above mentioned limitations and perhaps questions that could have been specified the information I have gathered from my interviews what the service providers recommend as improvements in policy both in terms of the Mexican government and the United States, which is why it is still very valuable to the field of migration studies and integration. Service providers have to deal with new waves of immigration in a globalized world in which trends are always changing and each population arriving has a different set of needs. In this instance, service providers demonstrated their versatility and were able to transcend obstacles and limitations within their own government and

community to offer a helping hand to Haitian Refugees.

DATA ANALYSIS

While it is important to get the perspectives of the service providers, the other part of my methodology relies on analyzing Mexico and U.S. policy toward Haitian refugees. In analyzing policy, it offers facts, data and actual statistics on how the response of these two countries affect the direct lives of Haitian refugees. It has placed this particular population in a state of limbo, adapting to a new culture as they wait on the sidelines to see if U.S. policy will change in their favor. However, in the meantime, Haitian refugees have to adapt to their new home, Tijuana, Mexico through a multi-level process of integration that I will address in a separate section.

The data analysis will consist of identifying policy recommendations by the service providers and the data I have gathered regarding both United States and Mexico's policies and identifying the gaps and needs of integration. The other half of the data will be based on in depth research to ensure facts, numbers and various aspects are analyzed in order to address the Haitian refugee crisis in Tijuana and how both Mexico's and the U.S. policy affects their current migratory status.

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

I will be utilizing open coding to analyze the data collected. All interviews will be transcribed and translated as necessary to use within this paper. Some of the preliminary findings in interviewing service providers in Tijuana is the need for an integration policy by the state. Another issue that arises is how, upon the arrival of Haitian refugees, the humanitarian crisis was addressed by private and

nonprofit organizations without the necessary support from the government. According to some service providers this is due to lack of funding by the government to address the needs of refugees.

A gap found within Mexican policy was integration policy. Currently there is no funding refugees or migrants whether internally displaced or coming from Central America into society. Mexico needs to invest in job training, some sort of cultural expositions and ultimately be a resource to those who through a humanitarian visa now have become a permanent citizen in their country.

Another finding within United States policy is how historically, due to racism and xenophobia of the “other”, it has implemented restrictionist policies against immigrants. Historically, it has targeted Haitians and literally shut the door on them as they sought asylum due to natural disasters or fleeing a military government under the Bush Sr. administration.

Below you will find the names of the organizations involved in my research as well as conferences I attended during my stay in Tijuana regarding Haitian migration and a general audience of attention to migrants which most of the non-profit organizations attend.

Organizations that were interviewed in Tijuana

Espacio Migrante
Instituto Madre Assunta
Casa del Migrante
Colegio de la Frontera Norte
Ejercito de Salvacion (Salvation Army)
Angeles Sin Fronteras (Border Angels)
Dreamers Moms
Coalicion Pro Defensa del Migrante
Centro Binacional de Derechos Humanos
Fundacion GAIA
Comité Estratégico de Ayuda Humanitaria Tijuana

Conferences attended

Lot bod lo: Las Migraciones de Haitianos: prácticas, espacios, debates by Maud Laethier and Olga Odgens sponsored by COLEF (Colegio de la Frontera Norte)

Consejo Estatal de Atención a Migrantes

Organizations visited but not interviewed

-Desayunador Padre Chava

Refugee Agencies in Mexico

ACNUR-La Agencia de la ONU para los Refugiados (*UNHCR-United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*)

A program by the United Nations to help protect refugees.

COMAR- Comisión Mexicana de Ayuda a Refugiados

ACNUR and COMAR are the two organizations which help refugees in receiving status whether it is a humanitarian visa or refugee status as well as asylum within Mexico. One of the most important things to not is that one is actually ran by the United Nations and one by the Mexican government.

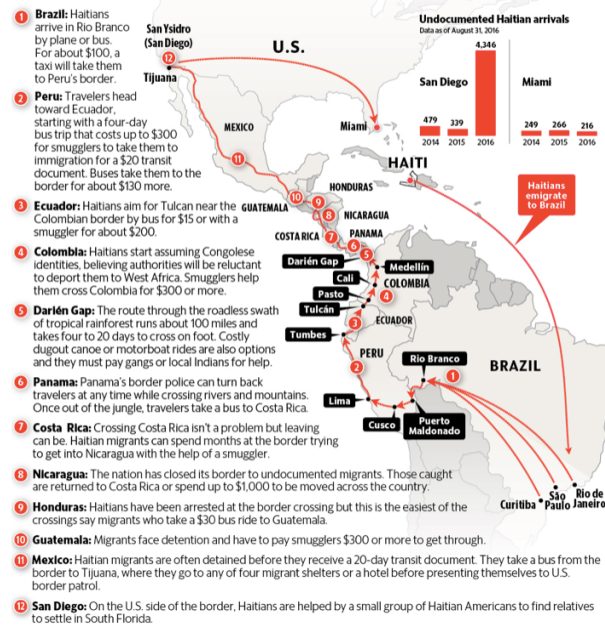
This section is a work in progress, in which I will combine the policy analysis on Mexican law towards refugees as they pertain to the role these agencies play in granting refugee status.

4. Haitians Arrive in Tijuana

Figure 1

Treacherous trek

Haitians have forged a dangerous and clandestine new path to get the United States. They leave Brazil — which opened its doors after the 2010 earthquake — and travel more than 7,100 miles through South and Central America, crossing 11 countries by bus, boat, car and on foot in a perilous trip that can take two to four months. Nearly 5,000 Haitians have taken this route since October 2015. The goal: the U.S.-Mexican border, and from there, South Florida.



Source:

<http://www.miamiherald.com/news/nation-world/world/americas/haiti/article103920086.html>

On January 10, 2010 an earthquake with a magnitude of 7.0 in the epicenter of Port Au Prince affected the Haitian population (Alarcon Acosta). As a result of the earthquake, over 220,000 people died and there was an approximate damage of 8 million dollars. As a result of this natural disaster, some Haitians decided to migrate to Brazil. However, Haitians did not qualify for refugee status in Brazil because this benefit was not valid for displaced people due to natural disasters. In January of 2012, due to the demand for cheap labor, Brazil decides to start a program for humanitarian causes in order to regulate the status of Haitians in Brazil. Due to this program Haitians were able to receive work permits and obtain jobs during the FIFA World Cup in 2014 and the Olympic games in 2016.

After employment in construction ended, Haitians decided to embark on a new journey to the northern border of Mexico in the hopes of applying for asylum in the United States. The journey in itself included going through Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, Panamá, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Honduras, Guatemala and Mexico. Not only is it a lengthy journey but it is also costly and many Haitians were exposed to abuses by local people as well as government officials.

An incentive for Haitians to migrate were the humanitarian programs offered by the United States. After the earthquake in 2010 in Haiti, the U.S. temporarily suspended the deportation of Haitians and offered them temporary protected status, which mainly benefited those who were already in the U.S. and could not return to Haiti due to in this case a natural disaster. According to the Department of Homeland Security, the U.S. only approved 537 applications for asylum for Haitians in 2014, only 2 percent of the total applications (Alarcon Acosta). The Haitian community was not deterred and continued their journey to Mexico. In January of 2016, they began to arrive in Chiapas, Mexico where the Mexican government granted them a humanitarian permit to stay in the country for a maximum of 20 days and later apply for permanent residency.

The arrival of Haitians in Tijuana began in May of 2016 at the San Ysidro border crossing where they awaited the U.S. government to give them an appointment to apply for asylum. During the 2016 fiscal year, more than 5,000 Haitians arrived at this border crossing in comparison with the 339 who had arrived during 2015 (Alarcon Acosta). During this time, asylum applicants also included Mexican citizens from Guerrero and Michoacán as well as applicants from Ethiopia, Kenya, Angola, Honduras, El Salvador and the Congo.

Tijuana is a multicultural city which receives people of different backgrounds whether from other parts of the world or from different states within Mexico, internally displaced people who arrive at the border with the hopes of crossing to the United States. The present destination of Haitian refugees in the past and current destination continues to be the United States. In previous years the Haitian migration route used to lead to Miami, Florida being the closest United States destination within 500 miles of Haiti. In this specific case of Tijuana, the route change since most Haitians were coming from Brazil and traversed Latin America in order to arrive at the United States border. Due to its prime location bordering southern California with multiple ports of entries like San Ysidro, Tijuana has many visitors. For example, “each week, Tijuana receives thousands of people fleeing violence or seeking opportunity, including Mexican deportees, Central American migrants, and refugees from around the globe. Its border with the United States is the most trafficked international crossing in the world” (Eulich, par.3). Tijuana’s location and proximity to the United States makes it a transit point for migrants, or at least the intention is transit and not destination but this changes once the reality of the difficulty of crossing and the risks are clear.

The arrival of Haitians was seen as:

Unprecedented and unexpected' The Haitians arriving here - most of whom traveled overland from Brazil, where they'd fled after Haiti's devastating 2010 earthquake - drew residents' attention for a number of reasons. Perhaps the most pressing was the United States' decision last September to resume deportations for Haitians entering the country without proper documentation, who had previously been allowed to stay in the country for several years under a humanitarian parole policy. The shift essentially left thousands of Haitians stranded in Mexico, where they hadn't planned to put down roots (Eulich, par.12).

This response to the unexpected change in U.S. policy left Haitians in Tijuana stranded and in limbo. It was a harsh reality for those whose dreams were to be cross to the United States, but until policy changes, Haitians have to adapt to their new lives.

4.1 Infrastructure in Tijuana

Tijuana was not in a particularly precarious situation at the start of the Haitian refugee crisis, but as a border city, it was already facing the daily realities of migration. On an average day, at least 120 people are deported from the United States to Tijuana. The city also faces in-transit migration, which includes not only internally displaced people, but international migrants in transit. These issues are already a lot for Tijuana's infrastructure to handle: the situation resulted in overcrowded shelters and other problems, highlighting that the city lacked the proper infrastructure to meet migrants' most basic needs. The Haitian refugee crisis was treated as a humanitarian crisis in Tijuana, and as a result, shelters were able to meet some needs: they provided toothbrushes, blankets and food. Though Tijuana could not respond fully to the migrant crisis, service providers were able to maintain a certain level of support for migrants.

Where Tijuana did fail was in providing long-term solutions. By treating the Haitian refugee crisis as a humanitarian issue, service providers did little to address the root causes of migration. NGOs acted as first-responders of sorts, responding to immediate needs without offering long term solutions for integration of Haitian migrants into the fabric of Tijuana. The situation is complicated by Mexico's own history as a country of origin for migrants: it often cannot offer its own citizens access to education, housing, employment and healthcare, let alone extend those rights and services to Haitians.

5. Deportees & Internally Displaced Populations in Tijuana

In talking about deportees and Haitian Refugees, there are many obstacles faced by both populations which overlap in the services which can be provided or to which they may have access to. The first factor is that Mexico has always been a country of origin, transit and destination. The second factor is what happens when several vulnerable populations of migrants overlap in the city of Tijuana. The intersection of all populations of deportees, internally displaced people and international migrants represented an obstacle for service providers to render full services of integration to Haitian Refugees.

An important piece of Tijuana's history are deportees and internally displaced people. Although this is not the main focus of this analysis, it is important to mention since it provides a context the problems Tijuana was already facing when the Haitian refugees arrived to the city. In addition, this section provides a brief overview of the elements service providers have to deal with in providing assistance to deportees and internally displaced people as well as the problematic within society of these populations.

The deportee population in Tijuana is very stigmatized by the society and is seen as an example of failure. Currently, "in the phenomenon of forced displacement from north to south there is no longer the heroic image of the emigrant, but a deteriorated image that underscores the failure of the journey to reach the American dream"(Albicker, Velasco 100). The citizens of Tijuana view deportees within a certain light and at times rejection of them leads them to homelessness and drug addictions. This rejection is felt as deportees during the study by Albicker and Velasco state:

A constant in the field investigation were the stories of rejection or discontent experienced by the people expelled to Mexico, who report that when some inhabitants of the border cities find out that they have been deported, they refuse them, deny them the possibility of being employees or access to certain services. This appreciation is reinforced in the media and in the speeches of the government authorities, which constantly contribute to associating the deportees with crime and danger.(Albicker, Velasco 100).

The element of why deportees are important in understanding the context of Tijuana is the fact that service providers also have to tend to this population. Although each population is different some of the needs are the same. Tijuana already has the constant daily burden of dealing with deportees and the lack of integration efforts on behalf of the Mexican government. Common ground for both of these migrant populations are access to resources and integrating into a society which fears the other.

Part of stigmatization of deportees also includes criminalization by local citizens and government authorities. Attached to the word deportee, people attach their biases as to why the person may have been deported, creating this unfortunate situation of maintaining deportees on the margins of society. Homelessness and drug addiction are some of the problems that trouble a section in Tijuana called “El Bordo”, where homeless deportees live in very uncertain conditions and turn to drugs in order to survive. This population is unable to reintegrate into a civil society and although the situation of Haitians is different, all these populations have one thing in common they continue to be vulnerable populations and their necessities continue to be failed by public policies on both the Mexican and American side.

Media portrayal tends to be negative of deportees and creates a criminalization towards them.

The authors emphasize this idea:

On the other hand, the media also constructs a narrative with an emphasis of criminalization. The analysis of thirty-seven informative notes, published from March 2013 to July 2014 by the local and national press, reveals the diffusion of a deteriorated image of both the deportees who arrive in the city as, specifically, the inhabitants of El Bordo. Headlines such as "Deportees committed eight murders in

Tijuana" (Chávez, 2013) and "Deportees kidnapped and murdered migrants" (Betanzos, 2014) highlight the relationship between deportation and crimes; Thus, the stigma is built by associating the condition of deportee with criminal practices that warn of the criminal potential of the hundreds of people who arrive every day to the city (Albicker, Velasco 113).

The narrative by the media affects the mentality of its citizens. It is easy to fall for ideas which are constantly emphasized whether it is through television or newspapers. The stigmatization of deportees limits their access to basic needs such as employment and housing. Criminalization portrays deportees in a negative light not giving this particular vulnerable population the opportunity to function fully within society.

5.1.Reintegration of Deportees

One of the findings of interviewing service providers was a need for a reintegration program for deportees on behalf of the Mexican government. This is important in illustrating the concerns and policies service providers had been working on before the arrival of Haitian Refugees. Perhaps the narrative of the deportee is different than that of the refugee, but the needs which must be addressed are similar. Just like there is not an established integration program for refugees, there is not a reintegration program for deportees. Both groups are migrants who are in search of being able to have a life with dignity.

This was one of the most important topics which came up in almost every single interview with the service providers. For the most part they all addressed how Mexico's government does not have a reintegration program to assist migrants in reintegrating into society. One of the important

factors to note is that there is not one sole similarity or characteristic of a story of a deportee. Not everyone has the same story and same situation, there is a diversity of situations. Perhaps there are those deportees who have lived in the United States for many years or there is the person who is caught by immigration agents trying to cross and are deported the same day or after serving a period of detention in the ice boxes or “hieleras” as they are commonly called. It is difficult to address this population in particular because their needs in itself depend on a person to person basis and on one narrative.

One of the major obstacles to reintegration of deportees is the stigma created by civilians. When civilians place their own beliefs onto the migrant, especially if their perspective or definition of a deportee has a negative connotation, it creates a stigma against deportees perhaps that they are criminals and that’s why they were deported or maybe they were part of a gang because they have a tattoo or due to their physical appearance. It is an opinion that produces a negative impact on how deportees are seen by the civil society and how easily people are influenced by a mass mentality. Unfortunately, it is a reality migrants are faced with and have to deal with. In spite of whatever emotional suffering or traumatic experience they have suffered whether in the journey or deportation process and at the end to be faced with a society that simply rejects them. The reality of the deportee is complex and multi-layered, they too struggle to find a place within a society which may not have the infrastructure to help them reintegrate to a society which they are either not familiar with at all or one which they fled because the opportunities or conditions were no longer bearable in the country of origin.

All the work cited in the previous sections is in support of constructing the narrative of Tijuana, city of migrants, of deportees, of refugees, of internally displaced people. Tijuana is a multicultural city in which all these populations crossed paths during the humanitarian crisis of Haitian Refugees. However, it also demonstrates the efforts made by non-profit organizations in addressing a crisis which they were unprepared to handle and managed by community organizing. The first portion of the literature review is to provide a historical, social and political context of Haitian migratory flows and how these factors have in fact affected migratory patterns. It also offers a perspective of U.S. and Mexico's policies in addressing migration and controlling migratory flows through both Mexico's southern border and the U.S. southern border.

In trying to address the efforts of integration of Haitian refugees, I will analyze access to education, health, housing and employment as well as how service providers responded to the migration crisis upon the arrival of Haitians.

6.Civil Society & Community Organizing

It is critical to note, however, that while the city and its infrastructure were unprepared for a flood of Haitian refugees, the community managed to respond to the humanitarian crisis with a collective effort. Haitians, like internally displaced Mexicans and Central Americans fleeing violence in their countries, arrived at the border city of Tijuana with the intention of applying for asylum in the United States. The shelters were not prepared for the influx of clients. , Some of the established shelters, including El Desayunador Padre Chava, La Casa Madre Assunta, La Casa del Migrante, and others assumed responsibilities for services which should have been addressed by the government.

These organizations did not have the resources nor funding to house so many people, and in response, new organizations cropped up, while more traditional community hubs, such as religious institutions, opened doors to Haitian migrants so that they would at least have a floor to sleep on.

During the Haitian refugee humanitarian crisis there was a total of 36 shelters in Tijuana.

Informal service providers weren't only hampered by lack of infrastructure, but by their inability to access resources for their work:

“Well look with the Haitians, the Haitian migration is something that we did not really expect. In fact, they started arriving in May of last year, but in September it was like the city was overflowing... I think you have room for 40 people, but they had 100 people it was too many people and all the shelters were like that, there were people on the street. So I do not know how many shelters were new but there was 36 shelters in Tijuana because many churches or soup kitchens opened their doors and they functioned as shelters, but the thing is that they did not have government resources because they were not organizations” (Espacio Migrante, personal communication, 2017).

Tijuana, as a border city, is used to different migratory flows, including daily deportees from the U.S., as well as internal transit migrants and migration from the Northern Central American Triangle of El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras. But it was unprepared for an unexpected influx of to receive such a large number of Haitians migrants. The non-profit and religious groups improvised; new organizations were formed to provide humanitarian aid. Due to lack of funding from the government and the fact that most new shelters were themselves impromptu, service providers were not able to provide decent standards of living or begin to address issues that went beyond the humanitarian, such as integration.

Despite the community's efforts to address the crisis on limited resources, shelters did not provide ideal living conditions; , some even lacked access to water or electricity. In an interview, one members of Fundacion Gaia explained how shelters approached their role in the crisis:

Religious organizations once again confronted the situation, the shelters that had beds well now the floors became beds, the floors were filled with people sleeping on the floor, minors, babies and what we did as citizens was to provide the basics because we did not have enough infrastructure for something else. So then it became a citizen effort to support and organize as a community--who knows how to speak French, who knows how to speak Creole, who can make a medical diagnosis, we have someone sick with a cough, we have someone sick with the flu, we have a pregnant woman who can come to have a medical check up, this where in a temple they are in such a temple, in this church, this one here, we need blankets then everything was really done like it was an emergency” (DC Fundacion Gaia, personal communication, 2017).

As a collective effort, the citizens of Tijuana, alongside the shelters and religious groups, took responsibility for housing Haitian refugees and providing access to the basic necessities and other modest resources. Where Tijuana responded to the Haitian refugee crisis--albeit unevenly and as a humanitarian crisis--the government of Mexico failed to act, full stop. The government went so far as to openly deny that Haitian migration had reached crisis levels :

“the government made statements that we were not in crisis, that everything was fine but you say no it is not fine because all the shelters are full, full, full, full, full. There was a need for washing machines, to be able to wash the amount of towels, the amount of blankets, the amount of sheets, the amount of clothes, bathrooms were needed for everyone to bathe, so that everyone went to the bathroom, in some places water was needed because there were places that were in a ravine. It can not be that the basic services were not available and they say this church does not have many bathrooms and you say it is because it is a church that place was not built to house 200 - 300 people. It is not the responsibility of the church. The church, in an act of charity, is providing space for them to sleep, but the architect who built it did not build it for those purposes, he built it for the praise of God etc., so then why doesn't the government build a center that really is prepared to have 500 people a month? And then you will have 50 bathrooms, and 50 washing machines and lockers and closets” (DC Fundacion Gaia, personal communication,2017).

And as the crisis worsened, the government only continued to deny the facts. In the absence of government action, structures designed as a community gathering spaces were housing hundreds of migrants every night. Churches became improvised shelters in which the church would soon learn it was not prepared to provide services to so many people. It should have been a call to action to the government to do something in order to address this migratory phenomenon.

6.1.Rhetoric Between Grassroots & Local Government

During my time in Tijuana on July 18, 2017, I attended a meeting of the Consejo Estatal de Atencion al Migrante hosted in the municipal palace. The mayor Juan Manuel Gastelum Buenrostro introduced himself as the mayor of the greatest city of Mexico, Tijuana. During this meeting, public officials talked about the founding of the committee to address the needs of Mexican migrant nationals. The meeting was attended by the representatives of non-profit organizations as well as the U.S. consulate representative of Baja California, William A. Ostick and a lot of news reporters.

The secretary general Francisco Rueda Gomez made a statement that although Haitian migrants had represented a complex issue mainly to the magnitude of the 20,000 Haitians that had arrived to Baja California, that he could proudly confirm most of the Haitian population were able to adjust status and incorporate themselves to the labor sector. He politely thanked all the non-profit organizations present for the work they had done in dealing with the Haitian migration crisis and how

the government relied not only on their good will, but their work, commitment and dedication they all have surrounding the migration subject.

The reality of Haitians as stated by the various service providers during the interviews process not only the fact that during the crisis, “The only thing the committee was dedicated to saying during the Haitian crisis was that there was not a crisis, that everything was under control and that there was no problem” (ZV-Comite Estrategico de Ayuda Humanitaria, personal communication, 2017). The rhetoric of the committee during the humanitarian crisis of the arrival of Haitians in Tijuana was that everything was under control. It is easy to acknowledge and say thank you to the organizations of civil society which include all the service providers who worked for the non-profits long hours in tending to the crisis. Also in the rhetoric of the government, public officials fail to acknowledge that in fact Haitians are not all completely integrated into Mexican society and how there is still a lot of work to be done to incorporate Haitians into schools, labor economy and other sectors to which currently they still do not have access to.

Currently in Baja California, an approximate of 3000 Haitians remain, around 2,220 already obtained humanitarian visas and around 1,200 already have formal jobs in Baja California. However the rest do not have formal jobs and do not have access to their full labor rights. There is still around 800 Haitians who have not adjusted status and are currently initiating the application process. Between 200-400 Haitians have not yet been located nor applied and there are no records of them. (Consejo Estatal de Atencion al Migrante, personal recording of conference, 2017)

In the meeting, their statement was simply to thank the service providers for the work they have done in responding to the Haitian migration crisis and how the government relied on their humanitarian

and giving nature in order to surpass what was going on at the time. They brushed off the situation by saying most Haitians have already adjusted status and are working in the formal economy. However, there is still a couple hundred who they do not have records of and have not adjusted status, so they urged everyone to reach out within the community to do so. It was cynical to brush the subject off as if everything is fine, when clearly it takes more than regularization for a population to adjust to a new life and to be fully incorporated into society especially when dealing with not only Haitian refugees but the daily deportations of Mexicans and other migrants. If the government cannot support their own citizens in the reintegration process and economy of their society, how will they ever be able to incorporate Haitians. Another very upsetting factor was there was one Haitian in the audience who is the representative of a community, but he was not even given the floor to express what are the current needs. It seemed more of a theatrical performance for the news reporters to say how well of a job the government is doing in handling the needs of migrants. Although I am not sure all the representatives of the different civil society organizations who are at the grassroots level doing the work day in and day out felt the same way about the government doing its job in helping them carry out their humanitarian labor.

6.2. Overworked & Overlooked: Burden on Non-Profits

When the Mexican government decided to leave the responsibility of responding to the Haitian Refugee Crisis to non-profit organizations and religious groups, is when Tijuana really felt the crisis. The Mexican government relied on humanitarian aid by the local organizations to provide food, shelter and in this an emergency response to the situation. What the Mexican government failed to do was to realize how thinly stretched resources were and that in fact by doing so almost led the

non-profits to a collapse. An immediate response by all 36 non-profit organizations provided the day to day essentials but service providers did not have the capacity to address the long term impact of the situation. As has been precedent, migratory flows change from year to year in 2014 the United States and Mexico saw the unaccompanied minors crisis from Central America, and unfortunately no one was prepared to address the situation. I make this comparison to illustrate how migratory flows cannot be predicted and how patterns change and the focus of this work particularly emphasizes on the arrival of Haitians in Tijuana, a very specific population like Mexico had ever seen.

Most of the service providers interviewed have full time jobs and worked as volunteers for the non-profit organization. Some of them expressed their altruistic vision of helping migrants and their long term experience of working with vulnerable populations. One of the main problems stems from funding, and like Comité Estratégico de Ayuda Humanitaria remarked:

we can not sustain that help or service. If the organization was financed, I would happily dedicate myself to this and not to my other better job. But I can not and what I was getting at is that there is no office of a civil society organization that renders services, that does management, that links, what we do does not exist or something that I think is very important is to provide accompaniment to cases, to the cases of migrants who have suffered violations of their human rights” (SV-Comité Estratégico de Ayuda Humanitaria, personal communication, 2017).

If the government accepted its responsibility and role within the migration crisis and was able to provide services it would lessen the burden on the non-profit organizations. Service providers hold a lot of responsibility and weight on their shoulders when trying to assist migrants and it is more difficult to have a full time job and do more work on the side. The outcomes from the interviews is that Tijuana responded to the Haitian Refugee crisis as a humanitarian crisis, in which non-profits managed the situation by providing blankets, toothbrushes and basic essentials. Tijuana with its

current infrastructure was not prepared to address the situation, the failure of government to get involved or simply to take action. Also, the city of Tijuana is known as a city to absorb migrants, however it is difficult to integrate a population without the government recognizing their access to citizenship.

Tijuana is a multicultural city which has grown in size as migration brings people from across Latin America, the US and other Mexican states. The city's infrastructure, however, is unprepared to receive such a large number of Haitian refugees who arrived alongside internally displaced people and deportees from the U.S. In this next section, I will address some of the problems that arose as a result of the arrival of around 15,000 Haitians to Tijuana. Using information from semi-structured interviews with nonprofit service providers in Tijuana, I will also discuss some of the major issues faced by the city's nonprofit sector as a result of the Haitian migrant crisis. , Interviewees include staff from: Fundacion Gaia, Casa Madre Assunta, La Casa del Migrante, Colegio de la Frontera Norte, Ejercito de Salvacion, Border Angels, Comité Estratégico de Ayuda Humanitaria, Espacio Migrante, Dreamers Moms and Coalición Pro-Defensa del Migrante.

A pattern emerged from the interviews, as many service providers faced the same hurdles in addressing the themes of Haitian migrants. Commonly discussed themes include: Tijuana's socio-economic, and urban infrastructure, lack of integration policy and U.S. policy towards Haitians. Some unexpected issues mentioned by service providers include Mexico's migrant deterrence policy --evidenced by the Merida Initiative and Plan Frontera Sur--as well as the lack of governmental programs addressing reintegration of internally displaced people and deportees. It is an issue because

this population requires services which are limited in trying to adapt as members of society. Although reintegration of deportees is a separate policy issue, it is also an important in understanding the context of Mexico when Haitians began arriving. The reintegration of deportees also suggests that Mexican non-profit organizations and religious service groups were facing an extra workload as they attempted to respond to the Haitian refugee crisis.

7. United States and Mexico Policies

7.1. National Security Plans

Lack of infrastructure, however, is far from the only hurdle being faced by service providers and Haitian refugees in Mexico. U.S. and Mexican policies have a major impact on migrants' lived experiences. Before addressing why Haitians settled in Tijuana and were given a humanitarian visa in Mexico, we must analyze the relationship these two countries have and the impacts of policies of deterrence and national security on migration. Both Mexico and the United States continue to address as a national security issue. As explained in the literature review, both Plan Merida and Plan Frontera Sur were binational agreements between the U.S. and Mexico to crackdown on migration and drugs entering the US through Mexico's northern border. Although the rhetoric of these policies is framed in national security language on the part of both parties, in reality, it was Mexico apprehending and

deporting large numbers of migrants coming from Central America before they could reach the U.S. - Mexico border.

In interviews with service providers, many pointed out that Mexico--like the US--treats migration as a national security issue, focusing on deterrence. As part of the Merida Initiative, the United States granted millions of dollars to the Mexican government, as both countries declared a war on drugs in order to protect the citizens of Mexico and control drug trafficking across the border. Service providers referred to the Merida Initiative since it was a plan which by being strict on what came in and out of the border, also affected an increase in human rights violations towards migrants by Mexican immigration officials.

Plan Frontera Sur or Mexico's Southern Border Plan aims at decreasing Central American migration into Mexico via its southern border. Mexico has deported many Central Americans and this policy was intended to halt migration at the southern border altogether. One interviewee argued that the policy led Mexico to deport more Central Americans than the United States:

in the summer of 2014, Mexico with resources from the Mérida initiative, invested more than 80 million- 83 million dollars as a result of the humanitarian crisis of more than sixty thousand minors, of those, the great majority of Central Americans who in 2014 were crossing to the United States. Out of those sixty thousand, eleven thousand were Mexicans. So what Mexico did under U.S. pressure, in response to what Obama said was a humanitarian crisis, invested resources from the Mérida initiative to seal the southern border and opened a program called Frontera Sur, a plan with a Mexican name with U.S. support to seal the border to Central Americans. And as you know Mexico last year as never before deported more Central Americans than the Central Americans that were deported by the United States to their country because, because the border was sealed, the border is closed" (VCA-Centro Bicultural de Derechos Humanos, personal communication, 2017).

7.2. Immigration Agencies in Mexico: ACNUR, COMAR & INM

It is impossible to talk about the status of a refugee without discussing the bureaucratic loops refugees must jump through in order to to adjust status. ACNUR (*UNHCR-United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*), is a United Nations program meant to help protect refugees. COMAR is (Mexican Commision of Help for Refugees). INM is the (National Institute of Immigration). In my analysis, I found that while these agencies regulate several immigration processes, they continue to do so in an inefficient manner, with lengthy applications and ineffectual recommendations. For example an attorney and founder of *Comite Estratégico de Ayuda Humanitaria* shares:


COMAR has very little capacity to process, it is a small centralized office. Also, applications have increased I do not know if by 100%, I do not know how many new refugee applications they have received. But they have no capacity to process, what used to take them at best three months to solve now let's say is taking a year. Obviously in that time if you are an asylum seeker or refugee, while they resolve you have to regularize through the humanitarian visa that is established by law because you have to give a migratory quality that allows you to be here, so then how are you going to survive if you can not work (*ZV-Comité Estratégico de Ayuda Humanitaria, 2017*).

COMAR is hindered by the fact that its main office is located in Mexico City, far from the border city of Tijuana. For a migrant to apply, they must go to an INM (National Migration Institute) office, where their call will be transferred. During the application process, the applicant remains in limbo without the means to earn a living as their application is in “pending” status.

When applying to adjust their status, migrants also face low rates of approval. Most Haitians, for example, had to apply for humanitarian visas as they waited for their cases to be approved; had they not done so, they would not have been able to stay legally in Mexico. The process of obtaining

official refugee status would have taken longer, so migrants found a more immediate solution. According to an article in the Forced Migration journal data is given from 2012 to 2016 as follows, “in the last four years, asylum applications in Mexico increased from 1,296 in 2013 to 8,788 in 2016, of which 2,872 were granted refugee status or asylum”(Villasenor, 2017). The number of asylum applications, then, is relatively low compared to the number of applicants. Below in Figure 2 and Figure 3 and 4 are statistics reported by COMAR on the number of applications. During 2017 there was 14,596 applicants, out of these only 1,907 were recognized as refugees by the Mexican government. Figure 3 contains the statistics for the year 2016, in which only 47 Haitians submitted an application to COMAR. Out of 47 applicants, 19 did not complete the application process, 4 withdrew the application, 1 was still in process, and 23 applications were completed. Out of the completed applications, 7 were recognized as refugees and 16 were not recognized or denied. During the period of January to December of 2017 (Figure 4), only 436 Haitians submitted an application to COMAR. Out of the 436 applicants, 22 did not complete the application process, 26 withdrew their application, 373 are in progress, and 15 completed the entire application procedure. Out of the 15 that completed the application process, none were recognized as refugees. The importance of this data is to reflect the statistical possibilities for Haitian refugees to be granted asylum in Mexico.

Figure 2



Estadística 2017

SOLICITANTES	14,596	5,876 MUJERES	8,720 HOMBRES
ABANDONOS	2,233	743 MUJERES	1,490 HOMBRES
DESISTIDOS	167	51 MUJERES	116 HOMBRES
SOLICITANTES QUE CONCLUYERON PROCEDIMIENTO	4,475	1,865 MUJERES	2,610 HOMBRES
RECONOCIDOS	1,907	875 MUJERES	1,032 HOMBRES
PROTECCIÓN COMPLEMENTARIA	918	405 MUJERES	513 HOMBRES
NO RECONOCIDOS	1,650	585 MUJERES	1,065 HOMBRES
EN TRÁMITE	7,719	3,216 MUJERES	4,503 HOMBRES

Source: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1a3H8cgJOaDj2JqtHwiEdeCSOuZEdh9j4XfWc9ZIDihc/edit>

Figure 3

ESTADÍSTICA GENERAL 2016									
PAÍS	SOLICITANTES	ABANDONOS	DESISTIDOS	CANCELACIÓN DE REFUGIO	EN TRÁMITE	SOLICITANTES QUE CONCLUYERON PROCEDIMIENTO	RECONOCIDOS	PC	NO RECONOCIDOS
HONDURAS	4129	1053	157	0	55	2864	1254	348	1262
SALVADOR	3493	860	103	1	40	2489	1412	262	815
GUATEMALA	437	96	12	0	3	326	142	41	143
VENEZUELA	361	11	2	0	6	342	340	2	0
NICARAGUA	70	16	5	0	1	48	6	4	38
HAITI	47	19	4	0	1	23	7	0	16
COLOMBIA	44	6	0	0	3	35	10	3	22

Source: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1a3H8cgJOaDj2JqtHwiEdeCSOuZEdh9j4XfWc9ZIDihc/edit>

Figure 4

ESTADÍSTICA GENERAL ENERO-DICIEMBRE 2017										
	PAÍS	SOLICITANTES	ABANDONOS	DESISTIDOS	CANCELACIÓN DE REFUGIO	EN TRÁMITE	SOLICITANTES QUE CONCLUYERON PROCEDIMIENTO	RECONOCIDOS	PC	NO RECONOCIDOS
1	HONDURAS	4,272	706	68	0	1960	1537	378	392	767
2	VENEZUELA	4,042	49	14	0	3,067	912	907	0	5
3	SALVADOR	3,708	516	29	0	1,654	1,509	525	441	543
4	CUBA	796	510	9	0	124	153	17	6	130
5	GUATEMALA	676	128	4	0	305	239	55	68	116
6	HAITI	436	22	26	0	373	15	0	0	15
7	ESTADOS UNIDOS	106	101	0	0	2	3	0	1	2

Source: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1a3H8cgJOaDj2JqtHwiEdeCSOuZEdh9j4XfWc9ZIDihc/edit>

The role of INM has a different function that US Border patrol: it does not focus on immigrant apprehension, but instead serves more of an administrative purpose in status adjustment. INM also acts as a funnel, referring migrants to the other agencies based on their needs and possibilities to obtain legal status in Mexico. One of the service providers shared their perspective: “INM does not really act like Customs and Border Patrol in persecuting migrants and deporting them. What has changed over time in terms of migration is that before, INM was aware that migrants were simply

in transit through Mexico, now there is a change in that migrants are coming to stay permanently” (ZV-Comite Estratégico de Ayuda Humanitaria, personal communication, 2017). INM is aware Mexico is becoming a final destination for migrants who under different circumstances would be migrants in transit to the rest of North America.

ACNUR as an agency of the United Nations serves the purpose of protecting the rights of refugees. ACNUR is the umbrella agency which channels the cases to be processed to COMAR. ACNUR is there to ensure COMAR follows procedures and in case migrants and refugees have any complaints or issues with COMAR. It is an international agency that promotes the protection of rights of refugees. Usually, the application process takes 45 business days to go through COMAR and gives them 10 business days to notify applicant of its decision. But ACNUR is problematic in its limited definitions of which refugees are eligible to apply for protected status. Typically, migrants fleeing their countries of origin due to fear of persecution based on race, religion, nationality, belonging to a particular social group or holding certain political opinions are all eligible to apply. Economic refugees, however, do not fall under any of these categories. This is important to note in the case of Haitian migration. Haitians immigrate not just for economic opportunity but due to political repression, agricultural degradation and natural disasters, leaving many unable to return to their homes.. As a United Nations organization, ACNUR’s power o within Mexico is limited, and although its purpose is to offer protection to refugees, the extent to which they can begin to address the diverse needs of migrants to Mexico is limited.

7.3.Mexico's Immigration & Refugees, Complementary Protection and Political Asylum Laws

Mexico's most prevalent laws on the subject of migration are an immigration law which was reformed in 2011 and the other is the law on Refugees, Complementary Protection and Political Asylum which was established in 2011 and signed into effect in 2014.

Prior to 2011, Mexico ratified the the UN Refugee Convention of 1951 and its protocol in 2000, but the country had no laws on refugees (Edwards, 2010). Mexico reformed its immigration laws in 2011, adding modifications and moving toward an understanding of immigration from a human rights perspective. The reform, however, left room for improvement both in the bureaucratic processes by which migrants are received, as well as their treatment.

The reformed law, for example, has not been able to improve the local integration of refugees. The lack of implementation of integration policies continues to be a problem, as does the difficulty of locating refugees in large urban areas. In a forced migration publication, two authors state the following:

Despite recent improvements in recognition rates and a commitment made at the UN Summit for Refugees and Migrants in 2016 to introduce seven concrete actions in order to provide 'a dignified and humane treatment of migrants and refugees', there continue to be many challenges to providing protection for refugees in Mexico. There is an immediate need to adopt measures to identify those in need of protection, and to provide timely and effective access to refugee status determination procedures including access to justice and in particular to legal defense. Mexico also needs to develop public policies which will be effective in ensuring local integration and the full guarantee of rights for the refugee population. (Villaseñor, 2017)

Mexico deserves the recognition in creating this new law defining the needs of refugees, which was a response to the United Nations and moved Mexico toward a human rights approach. Since it is fairly new and was adopted in 2014, it is difficult to see its implementation and results at this point. The Mexican Law on Refugees, Complementary Protection and Political Asylum provide standards of protection and procedures. What prevents this law from being successful is how it is carried out administratively. By not being able to provide guarantees such as a fair proceeding for those who are in immigration detention centers the law fails to respect the rights of refugees and guarantee access legal assistance (Villasenor, 2017). This barrier limits the protection offered to the refugee, thus resulting in a violation of his/her human rights, leading to a compounding of an already existing humanitarian crisis and calling Mexico's commitment to refugee rights into question. These are the instances in which the gaps within the law and implementation make a difference. Without full guarantee of rights for refugees, it is difficult for refugees to integrate into a society in which they lack access to basic necessities. Later, I will explain how the lack of access to certain resources has prevented Haitians from fully integrating into Mexican society.

The law has also affected the work of service providers in helping Haitian refugees apply for refugee status. The obstacles faced within the bureaucratic process limit access to the justice system. As an attorney from La Casa del Migrante explains:

Well, the law in Mexico is very simple, we have nothing but the immigration law, its regulations and also the refugee law. Well, I think that most Mexican migration policies can be considered as friendly to a certain extent, but they are hollow. There are many "gaps" thanks to those "gaps" when the migratory status of someone is regularized they continue to have problems to reintegrate into Mexican society. But the refugee law is the most complete because when you apply and if you are granted you have a permanent residence, and you have CURP and everything you need to work and live. Then there are other migratory reliefs like the visitor permit for humanitarian reasons where it does not matter if you have entered illegally into Mexico, if you were a victim of a crime or the law speaks of how your country

has suffered a disaster etc. etc. or you are a refugee claimant you can apply for it and it is free. The problem is that if you give it in two, three weeks and it is an online application which is not very simple because the page is not well done, it does not give you CURP. So although the law says that you have the right to work and this is implicit, it does not give you what you need to be able to work then people end up working in informal jobs which do not pay enough to live, or do not have access to social security, they do not have access to the benefits then it ends the same (MV-Casa del Migrante, personal communication, 2017)

The reality is bureaucratic processes are lengthy and slow, which limits the options of an individual based on their ability to access resources. Although the application is free, and the benefits of being granted a humanitarian visa or asylum are presumed to outweigh any inconvenience, their formalities do not often make integration any easier. Without proper integration policies and services, a legal refugee or migrant may not have access to the benefits they need in order to survive in Mexico, such as access to social security (CURP), or other benefits, keeping their rights informal. In its full range, the law does not protect all migrants and refugees who are in transit or who in the end decide to stay permanently to live in Mexico.

Mexico ultimately understands migration as a national security issue, which is the greatest obstacle in creating public policies that could alleviate the stigma of being a migrant, allowing them to transition from being “undesirables” to contributors to society. Karlos A. Castilla Juarez argues in his work *Mexican Migration Law: Some of its unconstitutionality*,

All this, the positive and the negative, has influenced the creation of laws that seek to regulate migration, and the case of Mexico is not the exception since, on the one hand, it seeks to enhance the presence of human rights, but, on the other hand, migration is still seen as a problem of public order and national security. This generates that, in spite of the advanced and protectionist that some of its norms in the letter and the paper can be, deep down there are great contradictions that, in the end, are resolved from discriminatory decisions and acts that are covered with the speech of the sovereign activity of the State. Inconsistencies and inconsistencies that are not only in the LM (Mexican Migration Law), but from its normative antecedent (LGP-General Population Law) and in other areas of the Mexican legal system, but in this area are aggravated by the low visibility that is usually given to them from the law, by staying isolated from other social disciplines (Castilla Juarez, 2014).

It is contradictory to attempt to put human rights into a law or policy and at the same time take two steps backward when viewing migration through a national security lens. Every side has its positives and negatives, and the contradictions stand out when restrictionist policies continue to be discriminatory and without emphasizing integration as an outcome.

8. Integration

From a human rights perspective, everyone should have access to basic necessities. In analyzing the lack of integration policy in Mexico, there are four areas in which Haitians are still struggling to be fully integrated: access to education, employment, housing and healthcare. The Haitian refugee crisis is no longer considered a crisis: the humanitarian needs of migrants are no longer immediate. This is why viewing migration through a purely humanitarian lense is problematic, as issues that are less clearly humanitarian go unaddressed.

The interviews I conducted in Tijuana in July 2017 indicated that Haitian refugees still did not have access to, for example, the “formal” labor market. But where is the Mexican government in all this? In a public appearance addressing the needs of migrants, the mayor of Tijuana on July 18, 2017, stated Tijuana was the best city of Mexico and that there was no migration problem. It is easy to make such an ill informed statement, while Haitians are working on the streets selling candy, when they are still struggling to access basic services and their needs are not being addressed. Part of integration includes acknowledging Haitians’ new rights as citizens of Mexico. Whether the

infrastructure of Tijuana is prepared or not, it continues to absorb migrants, and the city needs to change the way it receives refugees and instead treat them as members of Mexican society. .

Although there is no perfect integration plan or indicator of successful integration, there are elements that should be present in a successful plan, as mentioned by Castles in the literature review. These include access to employment, housing, education and healthcare. Some of the obstacles faced by Haitians in Tijuana, though, make access to these essential components of integration even more difficult, including the language barrier, access to information, access to services and access to the job market.

8.1. Language & Access to Education

The first and perhaps most obvious obstacle faced by Haitians upon arrival to Tijuana, Mexico was the language barrier. The native languages of Haiti are Haitian Creole and French. Differences in language limits access to information and resources and was one of the most significant barriers for Haitian refugees to overcome. In one instance at Casa Madre Assunta, the director shared that as long as there was one migrant in a group who spoke a little bit of Spanish, they could communicate. But if there was no such person, or if they weren't present, communication became nearly impossible (AC-Casa Madre Assunta, personal communication, 2017). Espacio Migrante, a non-profit organization dedicated to protecting the rights of migrants, has undertaken the important project of creating a booklet in Creole and English that informs Haitians of the current political situation in the United States and what their options were if they chose to remain in Mexico permanently. Unfortunately, due to a delayed printing process, the booklets were not ready until July 2017.

However, the organization managed to host 20 know-your-rights workshops at various shelters, with the help of a Haitian collaborator(POC-Espacio Migrante, personal communication, 2017). The attorney for la Casa del Migrante argued that INM (National Institute of Migration) offices should also have translators. When Haitians go to the offices, even if one person was able to translate, communication was still difficult and migrants are often reprimanded by officials for not understanding (MV-Casa del Migrante, personal communication, 2017). Haitians had difficulties in gaining access to information on the migratory process and learning their rights, making it a challenge for service providers to tend to their needs, from the simplest migratory processes to providing psychological support. An attorney from Comité Estratégico de Ayuda Humanitaria suggested ways the Mexican government could better serve migrants:

I think there should be a center, a place that is a bit like these reception centers in Europe where migrants arrive and receive attention there, for example to learn the language of the place to get to know the culture, the history, this is a series of things which gives you more information that allows you to integrate because it is there. For example the Haitians here integrate as they can and the language barrier is a tremendous thing, for if they do not understand they can not communicate. It is a very difficult situation even in gaining access to proper procedures and also their rights because if they do not know the language how will they know. They cannot ask questions, they do not know anything and that for me language is a key factor. They do not have Spanish classes, an explanation of the currency, our currency is like this and this is worth so much or as little as this, this is the basic cost for groceries, the rents are like this, this area of the city is dangerous, this part of the city is more or less safe, you have to move in this way, how to use public transport, there is nothing. (ZV-Comité Estratégico de Ayuda Humanitaria, personal communication, 2017).

Language played a key factor for Haitians to be able to integrate into the city of Tijuana. Without being able to communicate with the locals, they were limited in the resources they had access to. As illustrated in the example above, in order to navigate a new city, one must understand everything from transportation to currency, which is difficult to figure out on one's own.

Although education is also a fundamental element of integration, it was not a subject addressed by service providers, as the conversation focused more on the immediate response than a long term issues. The study of Haitian refugees’ access to education constitutes another area of study that will grow in importance as migrants become more a part of Mexican life.

8.2. Access to Employment

In order for Haitians to have access to the formal labor market, first they need to have been granted a humanitarian visa and then been issued an identification number. Haitians were not given an identification number called CURP (Clave Única de Registro de Población) in Mexico, the equivalent of a social security number in the United States. The identification number is used as listed below in Figure 5 from the Secretaria de Gobernacion website, for civil registries, health, education, job, social security and for development which includes passport or driver’s license.

Figure 5

6. ¿Para qué sirve la CURP?

La Clave te identificará individualmente en los registros de personas a cargo de las instituciones públicas.

La CURP se irá incorporando paulatinamente a todos los documentos oficiales, como se describe a continuación a manera de ejemplo, a fin de fortalecer las condiciones de seguridad jurídica de la población, mejorar los vínculos entre ésta y las instancias de gobierno, para facilitar la prestación de los bienes y servicios y, simplificar la administración pública al eliminar la diversidad de claves de registros de personas, entre otros.

En materia de:	Tipo de documento
• Registro Civil	• Acta de nacimiento, matrimonio, adopción, etc.
• Salud	• Cartilla de vacunación, expediente médico, identificación, etc
• Educación	• Registro escolar, constancia y certificado de estudios, identificación, etc.
• Prestación de servicios (trabajo)	• Solicitud de empleo, registro individual, expediente, nómina, recibo de pago, identificación, etc.
• Seguridad social	• Cuenta individual de sistema de ahorro para el retiro, expediente, identificación, etc.
• Desarrollo	• Registro individual, identificación, etc. • Así como en el pasaporte, cartilla del servicio militar, licencia para conducir, etc.

Source: <https://consultas.curp.gob.mx/CurpSP/html/informacionecurpPS.html>

Lack of access to jobs is a major obstacle to integration. Without the CURP, Haitians do not have access to the job market and are forced to take informal jobs. Espacio Migrante provided workshops informing refugees of how to continue their asylum application to the US-- even though there was a slight chance of deportation since the US had cancelled humanitarian parole for Haitians as of September 26--a risk some undertook for basic access to employment. In this workshop, the organization explained the options refugees had to stay in Mexico. An example of an obstacle to access to the labor market is as follows:

Yes, what they usually receive is a visitor's card for humanitarian reasons that is valid for one year and allows them to work . We explained in the workshop that they qualified and that is what was being given to them. The problem is that if they cannot access social security and they can only access RFC that is part to pay taxes, but can not access the CURP which is the identification number of registry, but many companies ask for the CURP (Espacio Migrante, personal communication, 2017).

Without the CURP, Haitians cannot work legally. The identification number serves many purposes, and something as simple as daycare cannot be accessed without it.

The attorney for Casa del Migrante related how, although Mexican immigration law has not been modified, the Haitian refugee crisis opened a new chapter: Haitians are granted visas for humanitarian reasons, but without access to a formal job market. According to the attorney,

Haitians did not qualify for refuge and they were given that option, a small chapter not written was opened to be able to grant them refuge and all of them were also offered a visitor permit for humanitarian reasons. This also left us with the same problem that they cannot have a formal job because they do not have the CURP. So, they did not want to apply for the refuge because in order to leave for your country you have to have a special permit etc etc. Because refuge means that you give up everything. Basically, protection because your country cannot protect you so then you get attached to this and if you are running away from it because you

want to go back and because it is a long process, people did not want to take this option. (Espacio migrante, personal communication, 2017).

8.3. Access to Housing

When Haitians began to arrive in Tijuana to await for asylum interviews with the United States, they began to sleep on the streets, in their places in line outside of the Mexican Immigration Agency, at the U.S.-Mexico border in San Ysidro. Mexican officials decided to ask migrants to return on a specific date to avoid this issue. But U.S. officials were only able to interview about 75 people per day, according to CBS news. Since only a few slots were granted on a daily basis, this prolonged the asylum process, which would affect the status of Haitians once U.S. policy changed and Haitians began being deported. Once processed by the United States, Haitians were not allowed to return to Mexico and had to face deportation from the United States. The INM (Instituto Nacional de Migración) decided to ask the shelters for help. Thus began the overflow of Haitians in every shelter that already existed in Tijuana and the creation of new shelters as a response to the Haitian refugee crisis. An affiliate of Casa Madre Assunta, a shelter for women and children recounts the arrival of Haitians:

Well, after some time the INAMI came to invite us for a meeting telling us the story of how there were many foreigners, many Haitians who were at the door to enter the United States. And there they were thus piling up, sleeping in the street, sleeping there on the sidewalk. If you could receive them both days so that they could take a bath, change clothes, then they would take them to the door for them to continue on their way to the United States. This was two months more or less, a month and a half, something like that. After INAMI got tired, it got tired and the Beta Group too. Then it was like this they came and picked up a group, took them and they brought us another group. We hosted between 15 and 20 women. The 15 or 20 would leave and returned another 15 or 20, two days later the same. Immigration got tired, INAMI and also the Beta group. They could leave on their own account, there they piled up again and everyone wanted to go. And then we had meetings to see how it could be done. Someone began, we are going to give a ticket, with the ticket for the early morning, early gave the ticket to cross the following day. And then the next day they piled up a lot and the next

week, every two weeks or every month depending on the number of people that were going to cross and this was until December. Then it was crazy, here in the house we have space for around 44 beds. There was a moment where we had 200 people in the office, in the hall, in the corridor, in the bedroom between the beds there were mats(AC Casa Madre Assunta, personal communication, 2017).

The recollection above illustrates the living situations Haitians endured upon arrival to Mexico to wait for their appointments in the United States. Charities such as Casa Madre Assunta and others housed people up until the time of their appointments, so the migrants did not have to sleep on the street. However, once the situation changed and their stays became permanent, the housing situation became untenable. For some shelters such as Casa Madre Assunta, the maximum allotted stay is seven to fifteen days, and up to a month based on the discretion of administrators. The renting of housing in Tijuana can also represent a financial issue for migrants who cannot afford to pay rent without access to the formal labor market. During the time I was conducting my field research, , a Haitian refugee cook was earning about 700 Mexican pesos a week, roughly 36 U.S. dollars. Their rent was about 375 U.S. *dollars*, the only currently the landlord accepted. I was shocked and asked how this person could afford to pay their rent with such a low salary. The response was that they live with their partner who makes some money, and in addition, they have another roommate in order to be able to make ends meet. For a person who speaks Spanish, it may not be as difficult to try to negotiate a lower rent or figure out from locals how much rent should be, but not for new, non-Spanish speaking migrants. An affiliate of Fundacion Gaia shared:

we are not prepared with translators, we are not prepared with catalogs translated in other languages to perform very basic government procedures, to open a bank account, to buy a telephone in an Oxxo, to rent an apartment, to sign a contract lease to rent an apartment, things that for you and me are very simple because we speak Spanish but for other people it is not and for the public servant or the employee is not ready either, that is where I have somehow claimed that the public server must be prepared because we are Tijuana, a city of migrants (DC Fundacion Gaia, personal communication, 2017) .

8.4. Access to Healthcare

The Mexican government also neglected to provide Haitian refugees with medical services. Under access to healthcare, there is also a psychological or mental health which is overlooked when evaluating the situation of the migrant. The trauma of the journey, of death of friends along the way or depression are just some of the factors which may affect migrants' mental health. Once again, the community organized in order to be able to provide the basic necessities to Haitian refugees. A committee was formed as a response to the Haitian humanitarian crisis, called Comité Estratégico de Ayuda Humanitaria, which during the crisis, managed to self-organize professionals from the local community to provide services to Haitians. As one of the organizers from Espacio Migrante relates: "Then the doctors formed another group and were giving medical brigades that were composed by medical students or interns or volunteer doctors who were going to the shelters and then a group of communication and human rights was created, we were the ones who stayed as base of the committee" (Interviewed by author pg 8).

9. Conclusion

It is easy to try to find someone to blame for the gaps within policy which fails to address the plight of the deportee and internally displaced person as Mexican Immigration Law has done. It can continue to turn a blind eye to these two specific populations, but the non-profit organizations and

religious organizations along the U.S. -Mexico border state otherwise, that in fact they need not only attention, acknowledgement but a support system which will embrace them as Mexicans and recognize the knowledge, experience or skills they can bring into the labor economy in order to be productive and fully functional citizens within this society.

Without a doubt it is an institutional gap within policy in failing to address the needs of these populations, but in spite of whether Tijuana has the infrastructure or not or if there was a Mexican policy in place, the reality is the only people continuing to be there addressing all the problems related to migrants are service providers. They will continue to do the work as best they can and address each humanitarian crisis as a state of emergency and will gather blankets, and pillows and basic necessities, which is truly altruistic and admirable in the people of Tijuana, but it does not provide a long term solution of the influx of internally displaced people, deportees and now Haitian refugees. It is also unfair for service providers and all 36 shelters or non-profit organizations in Tijuana to be solely responsible in addressing the needs of migrants, where is the government in all this and how have they responded?

The Mexican government also lacks the ability to see the capacities and what Haitians can contribute to their society. Migrants have a lot to offer, their culture, language, and skills but this will not be achieved nor the society be enriched when Haitians are forced to live in the shadows and work on the streets selling candy. Mexico could benefit in many ways by incorporating Haitian Refugees in their economy. This is a part of integration and citizenship where Mexico needs improvement and leaving the problems to civil society's will is simply not be enough. Putting a band aid on the immediate problem does not necessarily mean the wound has disappeared, and long term solutions need to put in place by the Mexican government in order to actually address the Haitian Refugee crisis.

In the analysis of several aspects for integration and Mexican immigration and refugee law, it can be seen there are still many gaps in policies which do not address the needs of Haitian refugees in Baja California. There are several factors in obstacles for integration of refugees and reintegration of deportees. Both populations suffer some of the same burdens in accessing what are their human rights. In the Mexican immigration and refugee law, there is difficulty in satisfying the requirements in order to be granted protection and refugee status to remain legally in Mexican territory. In the context of Tijuana, where migration has been part of the culture for so many years, service providers within civil society organizations do the best they can to provide services with the limited resources they have.

Overall, the greatest contribution of this study is how service providers in Tijuana truly responded to the Haitian refugee crisis as a collective organized front composed of its citizens and civil society organizations. If the results demonstrate anything it is how civil society undertook this great responsibility of the arrival of 20,000 Haitians in Baja California as a collaborative effort. This marks a shift in how civil society organized and became a grassroots movement. In a heightened political climate in which we are currently living of racism, xenophobia the people of Tijuana responded in a sensibilized way, in which they see Haitians as their brothers and sisters and their human suffering was enough to catalyze a movement at the grassroots level to extend a helping hand. The first step of understanding this specific phenomenon and humanitarian plight is to be conscientious and have a better grasp of the root causes of forced migration.

Tijuana has had a historical wave of refugees which were composed of elites from Spain, Chile, Argentina among other countries. Tijuana as a city also must be noted is used to migrants being in transit and now with the Haitian refugees there is a shift to not only a new population but to one who settled in Tijuana and has to be integrated into the community. In the past, with the waves of Central American migratory waves the feeling was different because these migrants were temporary and simply in transit in the hopes of reaching the United States.

Since the time of fieldwork, a lot of events have occurred in Tijuana and if I had more time to go back and conduct further research it would be interesting to take a deeper analysis at race and how race has impacted the integration process as well as the capacity and limitations of grassroots organizations to integrate groups to the community. Currently, there have been a lot of cultural events organized by Espacio Migrante as well as other non-profits organizations to learn about Haitian culture and for them to share their culture with the people of Tijuana. It will be interesting how things change over the next 5 to 10 years as Haitians integrate into Mexican society.

Although it is exciting to see how Tijuana adapts Haitian refugees to their culture, the pressure from the civil society needs to continue in order to hold the government accountable and for the government to actually implement an integration effort in regards to this population. Part of the reason the work is left to the non-profits is because although the Mexican Law of Protection of Refugees gauges at having a human rights perspective in which the rights of refugees are respected, this in actual reality does not necessarily is carried out or implemented by the Mexican government.

The Mexican state does not have the resources to implement such a program when on a daily basis they face other socio-economic problems. Mexico as a nation-state is grappling with a new identity in seeing itself as a nation of immigrants, even though it has always been one. In the past Mexico saw itself as a country of transit but as the global migration situation changes this is not the case.

Appendix

Figure 6. Sample of Questionnaire

Questionnaire

1. *What is your position at the organization?*
2. *How many years have you held this position for?*
3. *How long have you been in this field?*
4. *Why was the organization started?*
5. *What is the mission and vision of the organization?*
6. *In your experience, what is the process for a migrant seeking to adjust status in Mexico?*
7. *Has there been any changes in policies due to the increasing number of migrants?*
8. *As a service provider what are some examples of the effects of new immigration policies you have seen?*
9. *Where are most of the migrants coming from?*
10. *What are some of the methods for integrating different cultures?*
11. *How strict are ACNURs or COMARs policies when helping refugees?*
12. *How effective is INM in controlling and administering migration policies?*
13. *As migration tendencies change, in your opinion how could the political system improve to assist migrants?*
14. *Are there any other questions you think I should have asked or anything else you would like to add or ask me?*

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ON THE FRONT LINES: SERVICE PROVIDERS RESPOND TO THE HAITIAN REFUGEE CRISIS

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

MASTER IN MIGRATION STUDIES

by **Karina Castro**

May 10, 2018

UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO

Under the guidance and approval of the committee, and approval by all the members, this thesis project has been accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree.

APPROVED:

Advisor

Date

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