

Norma Wong

# A scoping review of literature on labour market integration of newly arrived refugees in Norway

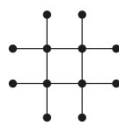
Report from a systematic literature search



**A scoping review of literature on labour market integration  
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**Norma Wong**

VID rapport 2020/5



**VID**

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## Abstract

This systematic scoping review explores and summarizes the body of literature in both English and Norwegian published between 2015 to August 2019 on the topic of labour market integration of refugees in Norway. The review is centred upon the research question **“What research have been done about labour market integration of recently arrived refugees in Norway?”** During the process, a protocol was designed and followed. Over two hundred articles were initially identified through systematic searches on databases using specific keywords strings, then screened by two different reviewers. Based on a set of inclusion criteria to assess their relevance to the research topic, 87 of them are subsequently selected in this scoping review, which comprises a collection of 51 articles from 28 English and Norwegian academic journals, 17 postgraduate theses from 11 Norwegian universities, and 16 other books and reports from municipalities, reputable publishers and research institutions.

This review offers a descriptive analysis of this identified body of literature, including the distribution of articles in Norwegian and English, their topics, research methods, data sources, and types of publication to show the current trend observed in this defined field in the Norwegian context. The report also includes an introduction to the method of systematic literature review and documents the process of conducting this scoping review.

The major findings about the patterns in most recent research on the labour market integration of refugees in Norway are as follows:

- Only one-fifth of the articles are written in English, the rest are in Norwegian
- Most of the included literature are about the introduction programme at the national level or in international comparisons; about one-fifth are studies at municipal level.
- There is strong and sustained interest in studies about the outcomes of measures or the administration of the introduction programme, but only about a quarter of them involves interviews with refugees.
- Other themes that interest researchers include the roles of civil society and personal networks in integration processes, and the experience and outcomes of female refugees and other immigrants.

## Foreword

**Between ambition and reality: labour market integration of recently arrived refugees in Rogaland (MAVI)** started in August 2019, and this literature review is the first assignment under this multi-work package project. Funded by University Fund for Rogaland (Universitetsfondet for Rogaland) together with VID Specialized University, MAVI's key objectives include capacity building of young researchers in the field. MAVI comprises a post-doc and a PhD position, as well as opportunities for Master's level and undergraduate students to participate and to work alongside experienced researchers in the field of migration, education, and religion.

I would like to thank Professor Gunhild Odden, the project leader for encouraging me to spend time in conducting this review. Coming from the field of public administration and civil society study outside of the Nordic context, this has been a valuable process of exploration for me in understanding the policy environment and academic circle in Norway around the topic of refugees and immigrants integration. This exercise has also been a hands-on learning experience about the method of systematic literature review. It was fortunate that while this review was underway, two workshops by leading experts were held in Norway; one by the Joanna-Brigg Institute (JBI) and the other by the Evidence for Policy and Practice Information and Co-ordinating Centre (EPPI) from the University College London. Much of what I learnt about the method was from these two workshops. I would also like to thank Josh Dickstein, the master's student from the EMMIR programme who has worked tirelessly with me during his internship at the Centre for Intercultural Communication in the important initial stages of literature search. As with other projects resulting from "learning-by-doing", I came to realise in hindsight that there are many places which are less than perfect in the process. Nonetheless I hope there is value in reporting the findings in a professional format.

This report documents the first part of the findings of the review, which is primarily a mapping exercise on the body of literature identified to be most relevant to MAVI. The second part of the findings is the summary of the evidence extracted from this body of literature, and it is going to be written into a separate journal article. The original contribution of this report includes the identification of this body of bilingual literature in Norwegian and English, the trends in research interests, and the knowledge gaps. I sincerely hope that this report, despite its many limitations and weaknesses, could be helpful to the rest of the MAVI project and researchers in being acquainted to the field. For the benefit of those who may be interesting to know more about the method, I have included in the appendixes the literature search protocol and my researcher's note that lists out the lessons learnt in the process of conducting this review.

Norma Wong  
June 2020

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# 1 Introduction

The purpose of this review is to lay down the foundation for the project “Between ambition and reality: Aspirations of and actual labour market integration of newly arrived refugees in Rogaland” (Mellom ambisjoner og Virkelighet: Aspirasjoner om og faktisk tilknytning til arbeidsmarkedet blant nylig ankomne flyktninger i Rogaland”), referred to as the “MAVI project”), which is scheduled to take place between Autumn 2019 and 2023. MAVI comprises multiple work-packages which investigate the roles of different factors at the micro, meso, and macro levels in shaping the economic integration experiences of refugees settled in the province of Rogaland in the past five years. The project is led by the Centre for Intercultural Communication at VID Stavanger, and involves researchers from a variety of backgrounds and disciplines including sociology, migration studies, religious studies, intercultural studies and political science. This literature review is used as a part of the knowledge base for the various work-packages under the umbrella of MAVI.

As one of the Scandinavian welfare states, Norway’s integration programme is an interesting case study for refugee integration policies. Following the surge in asylum application in 2015 and 2016 and subsequently in settlements in the country, the Norwegian policy response has received increasing attention both national and internationally. The country’s Introduction Act, launched in 2003, is designed to offer a comprehensive assistance programme for refugees in overcoming language and cultural barriers, and to devise tailored plans on the way to enter the country’s knowledge-based labour market. With high level of transparency in the public sector, as well as comprehensive documentation and register data at both national and municipal levels, the Norwegian experience, being partially distinctive to the policies of other Scandinavian countries, offers valuable knowledge and insights into policy measures to assist refugees establish themselves economically.

Over the past two decades, Norwegian researchers have produced a rich body of studies and reports about a variety of aspects of the Norwegian policies on refugees and their outcomes, at both national and regional levels, through various waves of refugee settlements following world events. However, the wealth of knowledge may not be easily accessible by the



English-speaking academic world because most of them are written in Norwegian. Apart from being a knowledge base for MAVI, it is also the objective of this review to bridge this gap.

## **1.1 Background: labour market integration of refugees in Norway**

Immigrations and refugee settlement have only become a significant policy area for Norway in the 70s. It is not until the late 1960s that Norway started to have net migration. Prior to the Oil Crisis in 1973, most immigrants in Norway came for work, and there were near to none refugees (Pettersen and Østby 2013). Since then, there has been waves of refugee settlement following significant world events that forces people to seek asylum in Europe and the Nordic region from war and prosecutions. Each wave brought a surge of refugee and immigrants from a certain country or region, ranging from Chile, Vietnam in the 70s to Iran, former Yugoslavia and Sri Lanka in the 80s.

Prior to the recent wave of refugees from Syria in 2015 and 2016, the last large wave of asylum seekers was between 2006 and 2012 from Somalia, Eritrea, Iraq and Afghanistan (Valenta 2014). Although the number of cases may have overwhelmed the system at the time, the recent surge of Syrian asylum seekers and settlement of refugees is not a totally new phenomenon in Norway. The policy framework and institution for assisting the integration of refugees have already been established for over a decade.

### **1.1.1 The Scandinavian welfare states and integration policies**

With many political and social similarities amongst the Scandinavian countries, it can be said that the three states, Sweden, Denmark and Norway share some fundamental characteristics in their policies for immigrant integration, which also applies to refugees. First is the principle of universality of protection and comprehensive assistance based on the philosophy of the welfare state (Brochmann and Hagelund 2011). This means that like other citizens, immigrants including refugees enjoy the same protection of social security as citizens have. This is the main principle behind the Scandinavian “extensive state-sponsored

integration programmes of a magnitude which is unique in a European context and elsewhere.” (Valenta and Bunar 2010, p.463)

The second feature is the centrality of labour market integration at the heart of their policies for the integration refugees, and is what scholars refer to as “the pivotal arena for integration” (Brochmann and Hagelund, 2011, p.22). The three Nordic countries’ highly regulated and knowledge-intensive economy coupled with a welfare-state regime, renders employment of immigrants both challenging and essential.

### ***The Norwegian integration policy***

Although rooted from the same broad principles, each of the three countries have their own pathway to developing policies based on their values and political situations. While Sweden and Denmark are said to be going the opposition directions with liberal multiculturalism on the one hand and “restrictionist” on the other, it is generally agreed that Norway stands in the middle:

*“Sweden has been fairly well known for its multiculturalism and relatively liberal stance towards refugees. Denmark, on the contrary, has made itself known at the international scene as representative of a particular draconian version of immigration and integration policies...Norway is probably the least talked about ... Policy wise, it appears to be positioned somewhere between the liberally minded Sweden and the restrictionist Denmark.”*

(Brochmann and Hagelund 2011, p.14)

The Introduction Act in 2003 has given the current Norwegian integration policy its basic framework. The law stipulates that each refugee settling in Norway would be entitled to **two years of assistant** that include financial subsidy, housing, Norwegian language training, social study, opportunity for work training; each would have an **individualized plan** based on needs, qualification, interest, to find a suitable way into the labour market after the two years.

Another important feature of the Norwegian policy is **the high level of autonomy that the municipal government has** in deciding how to implement it. As municipalities vary widely in geography, population, economy, size, resources, there are significant regional differences in

the number of settlements, allocation of resources, solution for accommodation, partnership with other organizations to fulfil the language training and social studies, and collaboration with the local chapter of the work and welfare department (NAV). In 2010, the government issued a target for outcomes in the introduction programme: 80% of participants should be enrolled in higher education or in employment one year after finishing the introduction programme. The result from municipalities varies as the capacity of a municipality to implement the measures, as well as the quality of the case workers handling each refugee's process of integration, vary greatly (Djuve and Kavli 2015).

### **1.1.2 Persisting issues with the Norwegian refugee policy**

The implementation and effectiveness of the Introduction Act has been studied for over a decade, and there are persisting issues that are raised by researchers before the recent wave of intake. These issues are notable as they highlight the possible problematic areas under the current situation as well. The followings are some of the major persistent issues:

First, it is pointed out by multiple researches that **the employment gap between immigrants and native Norwegians persist despite the equalizing policies** (Valenta and Bunar 2010; Bratsberg, Raaum and Røed 2017). This could imply the fact that these policies, which is primarily developed to increase the human capital of refugees (Valenta and Bunar 2010), cannot effectively help refugees overcome some of the structural barriers in entering the job market, as well as in their social mobility. On the other hand, some would argue that the generous welfare subsidies create reliance and have the effect of reducing the incentive for refugees to find employment.

Second, **the increasing emphasis on activation**, which is the use of penalty for non-participation of compulsory component of the introduction programme, are criticized by some prominent researchers in the field such as A.B. Djuve. She particularly questions the effectiveness of such change in policy direction from the principle of social investment (Djuve and Kavli 2015).

Third, there have been concerns about the **participation of women** in the introduction programme. Reports shows that their participation rate is lower, and they also have a lower

rate of transitioning into the job market after the programme (Djuve, Kavli and Haugelund 2011). It is pointed out that the goal for employment or education should not be assumed as automatically applicable to both genders.

## **2 Method: The scoping review**

This chapter presents the step-by-step process in how this systematic review is conducted, with the purpose to illustrate the method of scoping review and its merits. It first lays out the core principles of a systematic literature review in general, then explains why scoping review is selected as the appropriate format for the purpose of this study. The rest of the chapter documents the process from establishing the research question, identifying search strings, narrowing the search results, to the charting and extraction of data from the selected bodies of literature.

### **2.1 Tradition and Systematic literature review**

The need for systematic syntheses of evidence emerged at the heel of the evidence-based practice (EBP) movement in the medical field in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, but the concept has only started to gain traction until the past few decades (Grant et.al, 2009). Many social and political science researchers may be new to this method that has its root in the clinical or experimental research on interventions, as it is different to the traditional literature review in fundamental ways.

Traditional literature review has been a mainstay in social sciences knowledge synthesis. Its objective is to lay out the major theories, schools of thought, arguments or research findings in the field that a researcher is contributing to. However, the lack of a standardized structure, formats and methods has mystified the approach, and many would compare it to an art form. Traditional literature review depends heavily on the researcher's skills and expertise to give the readers a comprehensive overview to a field and information about its latest development. When done well, a literature review can lead the reader through an easy way to grasp the key concepts in a field and to locate the researcher's contribution. However, it could also be heavily influenced by the author's personal bias; when used as a

basis for evidence-based research, the traditional literature review may fall short of transparency and objectivity.

Meanwhile, schools on systematic literature review have emerged over the past few decades. With the **Cochrane Method** and **Campbell Collaboration** as two major pioneers, the most widely recognized methods are primarily based on the clinical tradition in synthesizing the findings on the effect of certain intervention from different experiments. While some experiments can be small in scale, when considered with other experiments with the same set up and objectives, their findings can be synthesized to become a stronger evidence. These classical systematic literature reviews, or often called meta-analysis, hold extremely high standards in the appraisal and selection of studies to include in a review, which can be very costly both in time and resources.

At the same time, outside of the medical field, for example in education, social science or policy research, such degree of rigor mainly designed for quantitative randomized control trials (RCT) may not be always necessary or suitable. There are also more types of researches that exist, and evidence are not confined to the numerical, as well as limitations in time, resources and usage for the reviews. Nonetheless the demand for evidence-base practice in these fields are rising. As such, there are attempts to establish other types of reviews more suitable for other fields and usage. **The Joanna Brigg Institute**, for example, is moving towards this direction and has adapted its model to embrace over a dozen broad categories of reviews, various tools for appraising and extracting qualitative or mixed type of data, and in facilitating the collaboration process that involves more than one researcher. Another notable institution is The Evidence for Policy and Practice Information and Co-ordinating Centre (**EPPI-centre**) based in University College London (UCL). The EPPI-centre has accumulated over two decades of experience with expertise on studies done for policy makers in the area of education, health and social policies. They have developed tools, guidelines and techniques suitable in the context of policy advice, such as being under time pressure, with highly specific topics, and skills in delivering findings for non-academic audience.

## 2.2 Principles for systematic literature review

Despite the different approaches and the plethora of review types developed by these initiatives, there is a set of principles which are widely accepted:

### 1. At the centre of the review is a research question.

One of the most significant difference between a traditional literature review and a systematic one is the strong focus on the goals of the review. Unlike traditional literature review that often broadly discusses multiple topics in a field, the systematic review is conducted with a clear, well-defined question that set the boundary for the evidence to be synthesized.

With the research question in mind, the researchers devise search strings from different search engines. The criteria for including a study into the review is established based on the objective of the review. Ideally, a systematic literature review aims at an exhaustive search for all the existing literature that meets the inclusion criteria. After assembling the literature, data extraction is planned such that the evidence can be summarized or synthesized to offer a meaningful answer to the research question.

### 2. It follows a protocol and is a well-documented process that is unbiased, transparent, and replicable.

Before a systematic literature review is conducted, researchers need to prepare a **stand-alone protocol** to document the review process step by step. **Transparency** is a key principle at the heart of systematic literature review methods, and careful documentation would ensure that possible bias in the process becomes traceable. Theoretically, by following the exact same search strings and databases, other researchers will get the same research result.

In most of the reviews, two or more researchers will be involved to reduce personal bias in the process. This is most commonly done in the stage where the researchers have to decide whether an article match the inclusion criteria or not just by the title and the abstract. With

two or more researchers carrying out this process, they can cross check with each other's decisions and reach agreement through discussion. As such, the protocol is also useful to ensure the team have the same understanding and agree on the approach and process of the review they are working on.

### **3. It uses a systematic method for data extraction.**

The third most significant feature of the systematic literature review is the method of data extraction. In traditional reviews, the researcher alone is relied upon to select, summarize and highlight different pieces of information from various articles to compose a coherent narrative. In contrast, the data extraction process in the systematic literature review is based on a data extraction tool that is designed to produce an unbiased process of evidence synthesis amongst the included literature, and to ultimately answer the research question. In a recent short article that compares the two types of review, Robinson and Lowe (2015) tabulated their difference as follows, and this would be a good summary to the above discussion:



	<b>Traditional review</b>	<b>Systematic review</b>
<b>Focus of review</b>	Introduces context and current thinking, often without a specific question, is general and cover several aspects of a topic	Uses a precise question to underpin a piece of research. A stand-alone piece of research, it should be conducted prior to undertaking further research, particularly in higher degree theses
<b>Methods for data collection</b>	Finds papers through a fairly random process, usually searching only a few databases. Use of grey literature common, but not usually systematic	Search of several specified databases using precise search terms; a similar systematic search of grey literature sometimes included, depending on the question
<b>Methods for data extraction</b>	Papers are read, 'take home' messages used in the review	Data extraction tool used to identify precise pieces of information; two or more researchers undertake data extraction
<b>Number of papers included in review</b>	Anything up to 150 papers or more	Usually less than 50 papers; often fewer than 10
<b>Methods for data analysis</b>	Writer interprets the meaning of the results	Recognised, referenced, methods for data analysis; includes analysis of methods, rigour of conduct of research, strength of evidence and so on.
<b>Methods for data presentation</b>	Prose paper, occasionally supported by diagrams	PRISMA/CONSORT or similar chart/table of included paper
<b>Publication</b>	Not suitable for journal publication	Might be suitable for journal publication
<b>Outcome</b>	Actions/directions informed by evidence of various kinds drawn from included papers	Actions/direction are based on evidence from reviewed papers.

*Table 1 Comparison between traditional and systematic review (Robinson and Lowe, 2015)*

## 2.3 The scoping review

The experience of newly arrived refugees in integrating into the labour market in Norway has become a popular topic for academics in the last decade. New evidence and studies emerge quickly from research in a wide range of areas from social work, public policy, migration studies, to economics, yet they remain fragmented and need effort to be gathered and synthesized. Compared to a full systematic review, the scoping review does not

necessarily include the process of appraising the quality of evidence from each included study.

The scoping review, as a type of systematic review that focus on the landscape or the trends or patterns within a selected body of literature, is adapted for the purpose of this review. Amongst the few experts in the field of systematic literature review, Colquhoun et al. (2014)'s definition of the scoping review best describes the nature of this review:

*"[It is] a form of knowledge synthesis that addresses an exploratory research question aimed at mapping key concepts, types of evidence, and gaps in research related to a defined area or field by systematically searching, selecting and synthesising existing knowledge."*

Similarly, the Joanna Brigg Institution Handbook also describes scoping review as one that is suitable for relatively new emerging topics, such as those related to MAVI, where recent studies and reports bring evidence from different perspectives, when "it is still unclear what other, more specific questions can be posed and valuably addressed" (JBI Handbook). With this methodological backdrop, the remaining of the chapter lays out the steps taken in conducting this scoping review.

## **2.4 The process of conducting this scoping review**

The framework laid out by Arksey and O'Malley (2005) best fits the purpose of this review. Just as other systematic literature review, it starts with articulating a research question, which becomes the basis for the literature search ("identify relevant literature"), as well as criteria for selecting the studies to be included in this study ("study selection"). Once the literature is selected, their basic information is mapped out ("chart data"), before the evidence are finally extracted and synthesized ("collage and summarize").

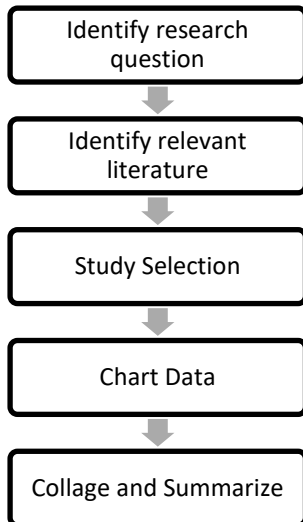


Figure 1. Scoping review framework (Arksey and O'Malley 2005)

### 2.4.1 Research Question and literature inclusion criteria

The purpose of this review is to discover and visualize the pattern of recently published literature on the topic of labour market integration among newly arrived refugees in Norway. It lays the groundwork to produce a summary of the most relevant evidence found in this body of literature.

As mentioned previously, research on the recent cohort of refugees settled in Norway has been conducted with a range of purposes and perspectives. They vary widely in the level of analysis, objectives, methods, data sources. In addition, they are also written in different languages. In order to sufficiently capture the variety of literature in this broad field, this scoping review is based on the following research question:

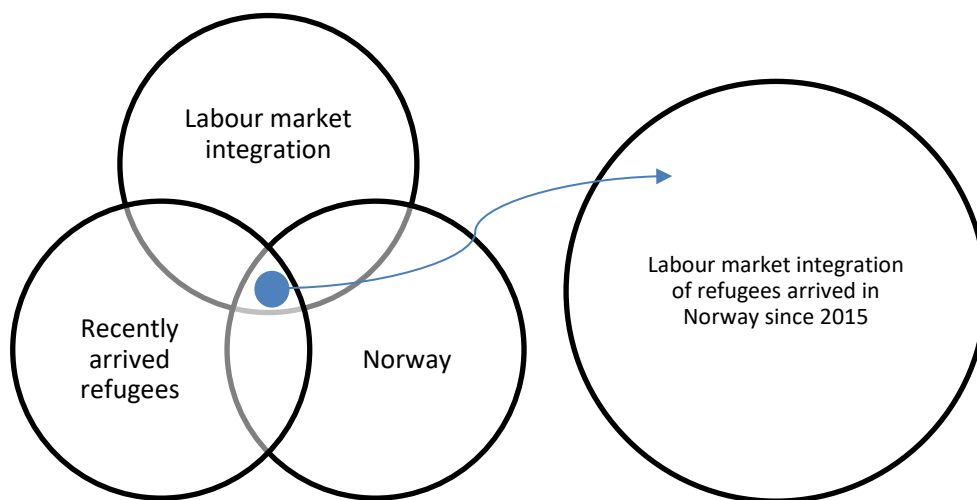
**What studies have been done about newly arrived immigrant's integration experience related to labour market in Norway in the past five years?**

This scoping review answers the research question by mapping out the existing literature which offers evidence about the experience of newly arrived refugees or other immigrants during the labour market integration process in Norway, published in 2015 or after. This

mapping process offers an overview of the literature landscape in both English and Norwegian, including the key concepts, types of evidence, and gaps.

### 2.4.2 Keywords and search strings in two languages

Figure 2 shows the logic behind how the keywords are devised and how the search strings are constructed. In the diagram, each circle represents the family of words equivalent to the key concept in the research questions: “labour market integration”, “recently arrived refugees”, and “Norway” respectively. The objective of this review is to identify the literature that exist in the overlapping area in the middle. As it is also the aim of this review to bridge the gap between the English and Norwegian literature, search strings are formulated in both Norwegian and English as shown in Table 3. The search words in the two languages are not direct translation because word strings yield different results in the two languages. This could be because certain word pairs or combination are more frequently used than others in each of the two languages, and they are not often the exact translation.



*Figure 2 Diagram showing the literature selection logic for the two levels of review in this report*

The literature search for this scoping review is conducted electronically. First, synonyms of the keywords are explored and listed out as search words (See Appendix II). Asterisks are used to indicate the inclusion of different endings of the same search word. Search strings are tested with different combinations of search words using Boolean search operators. The search strings are applied on ORIA, the most commonly used search engine amongst research and higher education institutions in Norway. ORIA searches for both English and

Norwegian articles in academic journals, post-graduate theses, and officially published reports. In addition, other international databases including Academic Search Elite, World Wide Science, and SocINDEX are also used for the search.

Norwegian search words	English Search Words	Databases
Norge eller Skandinavia; Flykt* eller migrant* eller innvand* eller minoritet; Utdanning; Arbeidsledighet eller arbeids* eller arbeidsmarkedet; Integrasjon; Språk; Frustrasjon eller Hindring eller utfordring; Virkelighet; Ambisjon eller drøm eller aspirasjon eller motivasjon eller mål; Kvinne eller jente	Norway or Norwegian or Sweden or Denmark or scandi*; Refugees or asylum seekers; Poverty or low-income or low socioeconomic or disadvantaged; Labour market or labor market or workforce; Obstacles or barriers or challenges or difficulties or issues or problems; Integration; Employment or jobs or training or career; Motivation; Unemployment or unemployed or jobless; Women or woman	ORIA Academic Search Elite World Wide Science SocINDEX

Table 2 List of databases and keyword search strings in both Norwegian and English used in this review.

The first stage of search yields over 200 articles using various search strings. The team, consisting of two researchers, have gone through the process of scanning through the abstracts with a set of inclusion criteria shown in Table 3 below. While the objective is to be inclusive of all relevant evidence produced in scientific studies, it is also the purpose of a scoping review to systematically select only those articles which help in answering the research question.

For transparency, reasons for exclusions are documented in the process of selection. Articles are most commonly excluded based on the context (“not about Norway, but Sweden or Denmark”), subject and evidence (“about second generation immigrant only”, “not evidence about labour market integration”, “only about unaccompanied minors”, “about asylum seekers, not refugees or other immigrants”), and publication type (“opinion piece, not evidence-based research”). Subsequently, the number of literature that are selected for this review narrowed down to 87, amongst which 51 are article from 28 English and Norwegian

academic journals, 17 are postgraduate theses, and the rest are books and reports published by municipalities or reputable research institutes in Norway.

<b>Inclusion criteria:</b>	
<b>Subject</b>	refugees and other migrants
<b>Date</b>	published in or after 2015
<b>Evidence</b>	Evidence directly about experience of economic/ labour market integration
<b>Context</b>	Norway
<b>Type of publication</b>	Articles from academic journals, postgraduate theses, official reports, books
<b>Literature included</b>	87

Table 3 The inclusion criteria

### 2.4.3 Mapping

After selecting and gathering the literature into one database, the review enters the stage of mapping to produce an overview of the knowledge base in the topic. For each included literature, the following information is extracted and recorded. In some journal articles and post graduate theses, such information can be extracted entirely from scanning the abstract. However, when the information is not present in the abstract, the researcher finds it from the main body of the literature. The information extracted are as follows:

- **Title, Author, Year of publication**
- **Language:** Norwegian or English
- **Published by:** name of academic journal, university, research institute, municipality, publisher
- **Types of publication:** Journal article, book chapter, post graduate thesis, official report
- **Level of analysis:** international, national, or municipal or lower
- **Main topics:** the topic(s) that the study’s expressed objective to investigate
- **Research methods:** interviews / focus groups, observation, desk search
- **Data sources:** interviews with refugees, interviews with employees of organizations who work for the Introduction programme, register data, official documents and publications
- **Time period of original data:** before or after 2015. The year is marked as significant because those after 2015 would give evidence about the newly arrived group of refugees, which is the focus on the MAVI project.

### 3 Descriptive summary: Mapping Patterns, Trends, and Gaps in the literature

This chapter lays out the descriptive summary of the selected literature. The statistics reveal the patterns in the current body of literature pertaining to the distribution of languages (English and Norwegian), year and type of publications, level of analysis, and the topics investigated. Together, they are indicative of where academic interests have been in the past few years and aspects that may need more attention in future researches.

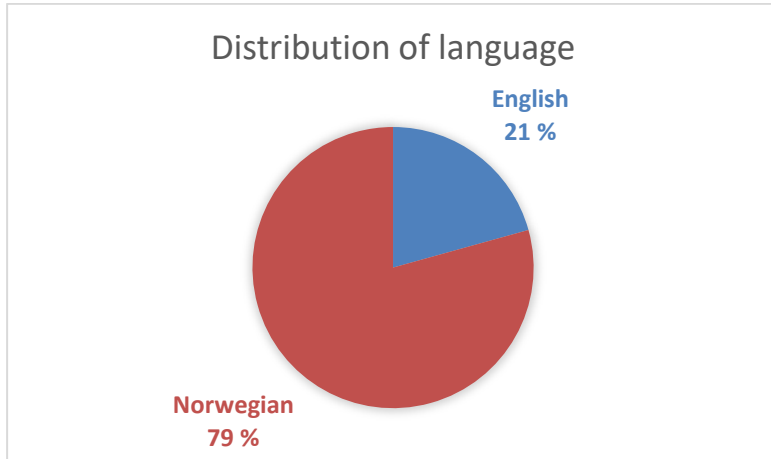
It should be noted that the literature search in 2019 is only up to August, the time when this review started, and therefore does not represent the number of the entire year.

#### 3.1 Proportion of English and Norwegian studies

Amongst the studies included in this review, only about one-fifth of the literature are written in English. This simple statistic shows that researchers who mainly search through English databases, whether they are looking particularly for the Norwegian studies or examples for international comparison, would not be able to access the majority body of literature in the Norwegian context.

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019*	total
English	5	4	1	6	2	18
Norwegian	15	18	15	14	7	69

\*up till 2019 August

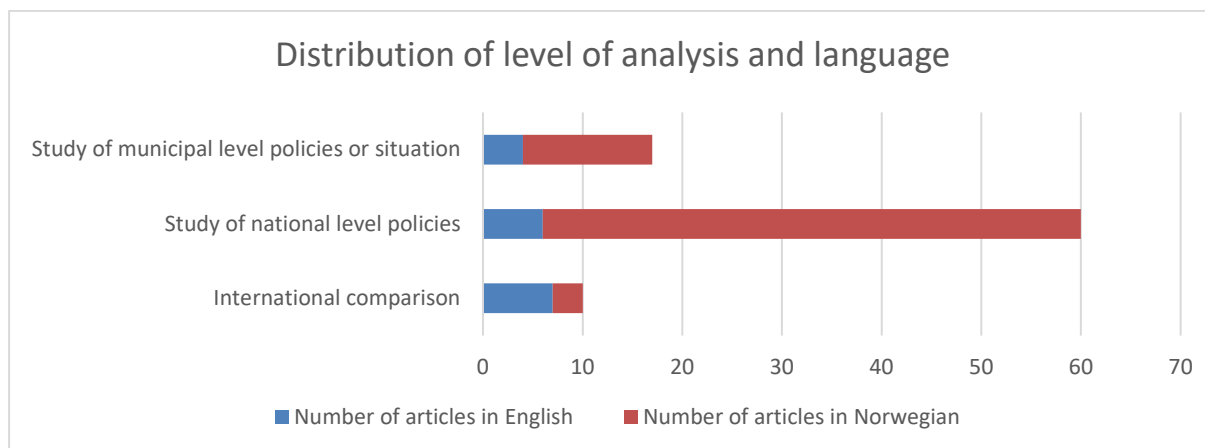


### 3.2 International comparison, national polices and local studies

A vast majority of the studies are interested in studying policies at the national level (60 out of 87, or 69%), while there are slightly more English articles in international comparisons. Comparatively, less than 20% of the research are at the municipality level. Given the large variations amongst Norwegian municipalities in geography, economics, demographics, number of settlements and local adaptations of the national measures, this shows there may be need for more study at the municipal level especially for the international academic circles.

	Number of articles in English	Number of articles in Norwegian	Total number of articles
International comparison	7	3	10
Study of national level policies	6	54	60
Study of municipal level policies or situation	4	13	17





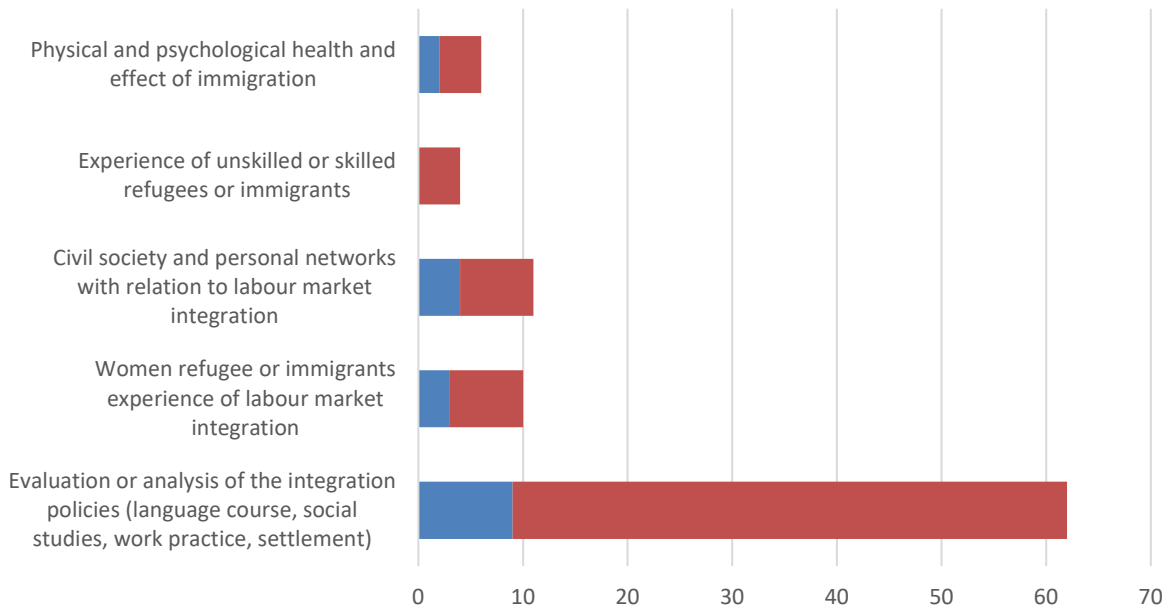
### 3.3 Distribution of topics

65% of the literature are evaluations of various measures in the integration programme (62 out of 87). This include evaluation of the overall implementation or administration of the programme nationally and locally, or focused on specific parts of the programme such as language learning and practice, work practice, and settlement. This is by a large extent the biggest category in terms of topics and shows that researchers are most interested in studying the Norwegian integration policies and measures in the past five years. This reflects the strong emphasis in general on the state's role in assisting refugees' integration into the labour market.

There is observable Interest amongst researchers in civil society and personal networks (12%) and female migrants' experience of integration (11%). In addition, there are some research efforts in the areas of physical health and psychological conditions of refugees and immigrants (7%), as well as the experience of skilled and unskilled workers (5%).

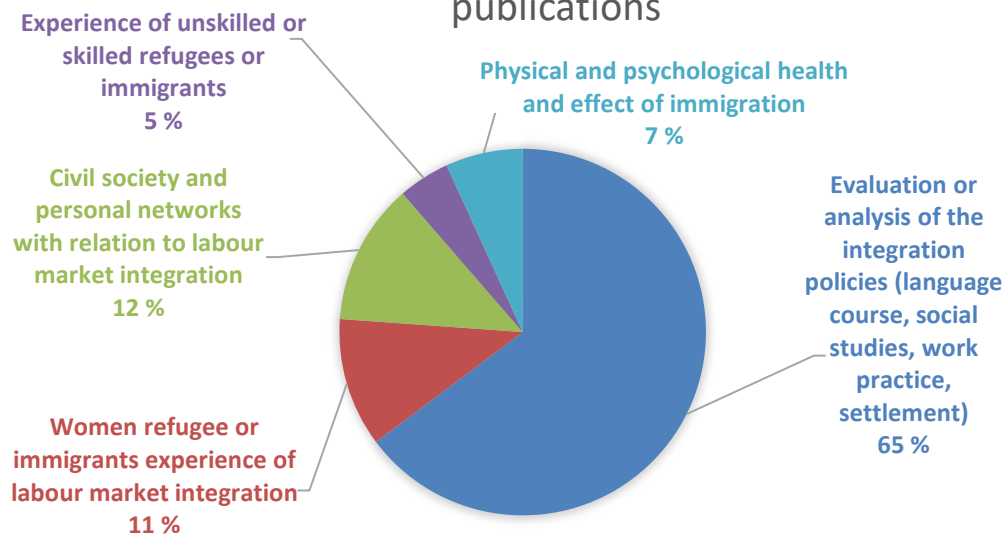
The pattern of interest is similar across both English and Norwegian literature, except that there seems to be an absence of English literature specifically from the perspective of skilled or unskilled refugees or immigrants over the past few years.

### Distribution of main topics and languages



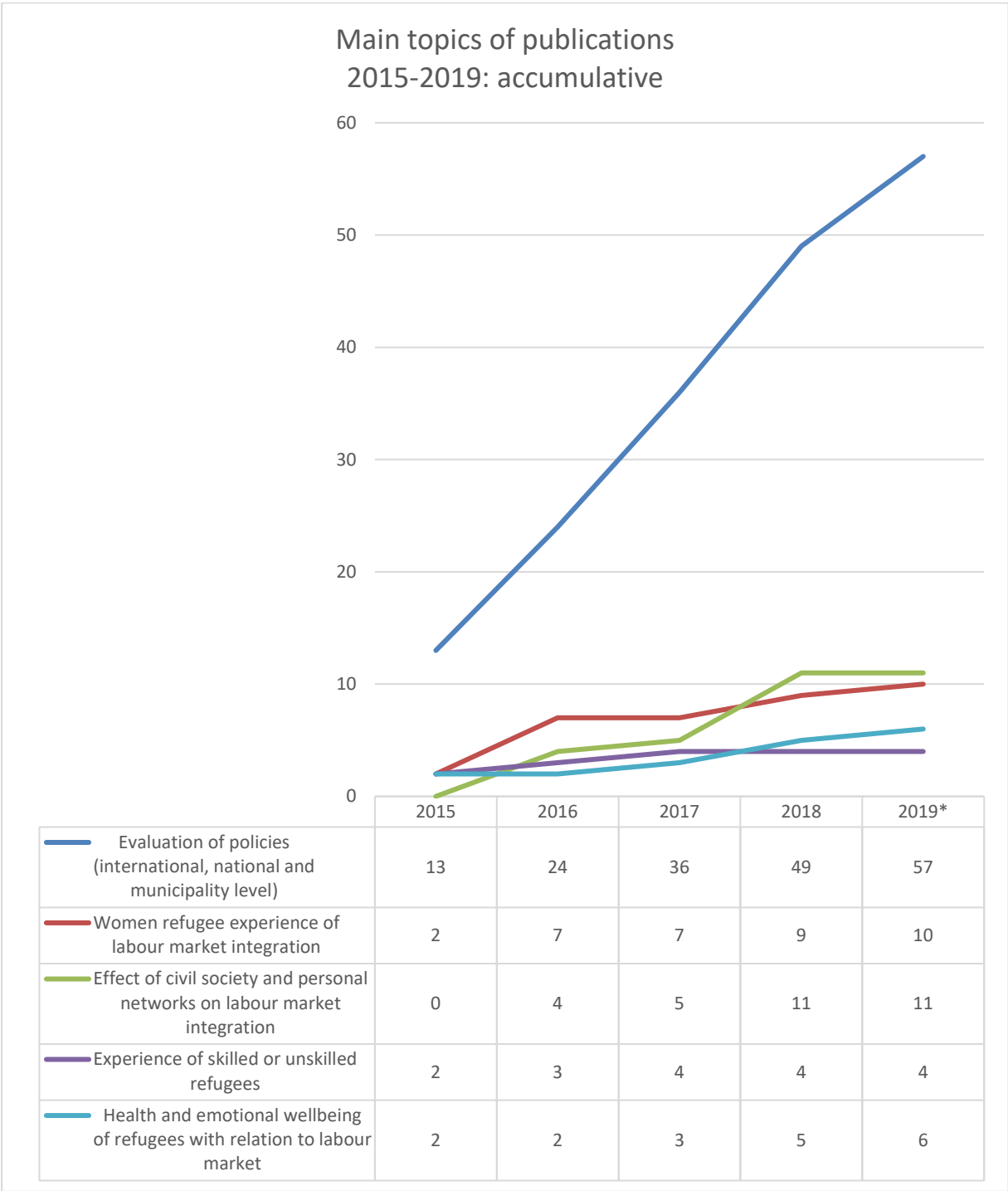
	Evaluation or analysis of the integration policies (language course, social studies, work practice, settlement)	Women refugee or immigrants experience of labour market integration	Civil society and personal networks with relation to labour market integration	Experience of unskilled or skilled refugees or immigrants	Physical and psychological health and effect of immigration
■ Number of articles in English	9	3	4	0	2
■ Number of articles in Norwegian	53	7	7	4	4

### Distribution of main topics amongst included publications



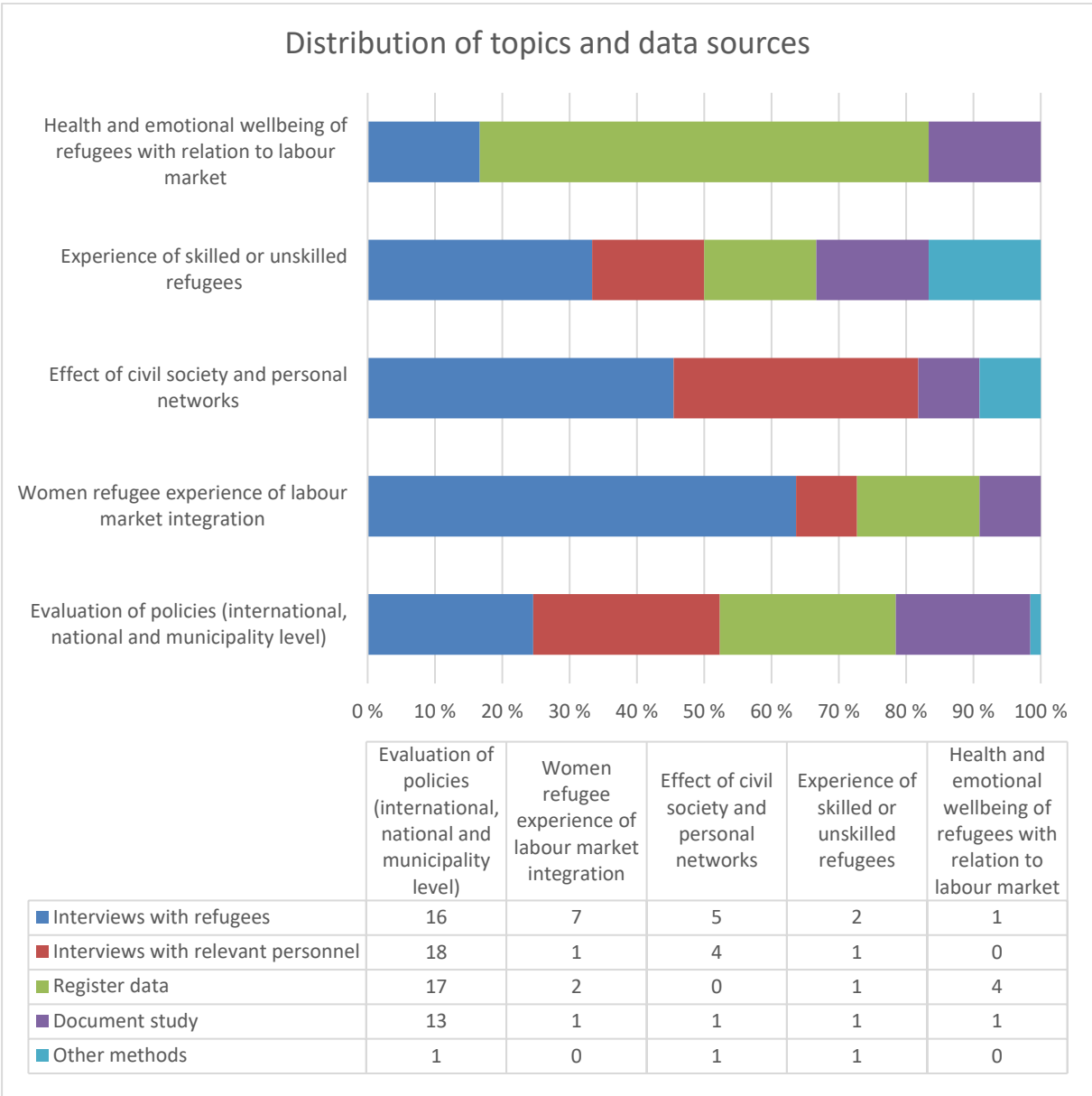
### 3.4 Trends of topics in the past five years

As shown by the gradient of the accumulative statistic, the research interest in policies have been steady in the past five years, whereas the other topics have increased but to a lesser extent. In particular, there is significant increase in research about civil society and personal network with relation to labour market integration from 2017 – 2018.



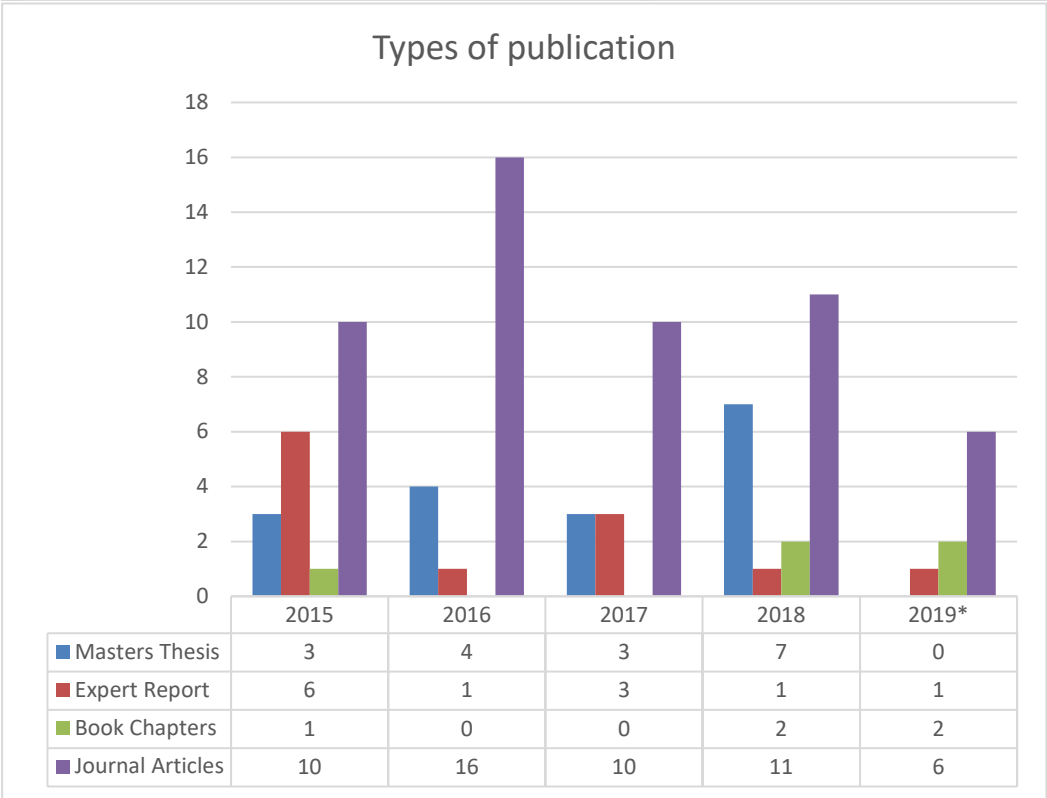
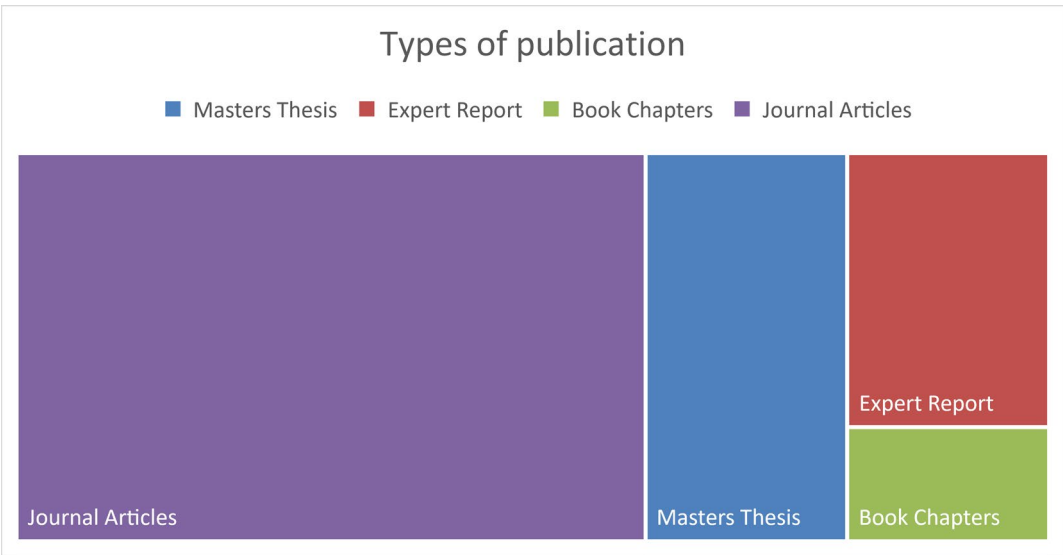
### 3.5 Distribution of information sources and topics

The following graph shows the distribution of different types of data collection amongst the selected body of literature on different topics. While overall these seems to be a balance amongst different sources of data, some interesting patterns can be observed. For the largest group of literature, which study the measures and policies of the Introduction Programme, only about 25% of those involves interviews with the immigrants themselves. In contrast, studies which concerns female immigrants’ experience and civil society have a much higher proportion which involves interviews with the immigrants. In addition, the statistics shows that none of the studies which concern civil society uses register data.



### 3.6 Types of publication

While the dominant type of literature included is articles from academic journals, there is growing number of post-graduate (master’s) thesis in the body of literature especially since 2018, which shows a growing attention of the topic amongst young academics in the Norwegian context. In the selected literature there is also 12 reports published by research institutes and municipalities in Norway, and five books related to the topic.



### 3.7 Time period of data collection

The time period when original data is collected is significant for this scoping review because those with data after 2015 are likely about the target group of the MAVI project, which is the newly arrived refugees in Norway.

Looking more in detail about the distribution of the types of publication, a high proportion of the research which include data after 2015 are master’s thesis. Most of them collect original data in the form of in-depth interviews and observation, instead of quantitative research that involves register or survey data.



## 4 Discussion and conclusion

### Conclusion

This scoping review has the objective to produce a summary of the latest research efforts on the topic of labour market integration of recently arrived refugees in Norway. As an exploratory exercise, it sets out to answer the questions: what studies have been conducted on the topic?

The use of scoping review as a research method has allowed the research team to draw a boundary to the body of literature most relevant to the question that is broad yet focused. The exercise of careful planning, screening, charting and summarizing the existing studies has produced an overview of the literature landscape. The exhaustive search through five databases and in both Norwegian and English languages has maximized the number of relevant literature to be included in the map, but at the same remain focused on the topic. With that, the resulting statistics serve to quantify features of this body of literature, and have shown patterns which would otherwise been missed in a traditional literature review.

It is a significant finding that almost four-fifth of recent research on the topic may not be accessible to the global English-speaking audience, as they are written in Norwegian. It is also notable to find that while regional variation is a key feature in the Norwegian policy environment, only one-quarter of the literature studies the policies at the municipal level. The statistics also shows the pattern that over the past five years, more researchers are interested in the gender aspect of the integration process, as well as the role of civil society. In addition, the statistics also reveal that only about a quarter of the literature about the introduction programme have interviewed refugees themselves about their experience, which expose a potential gap in the literature.

Secondly, this report also introduces the concept of systematic literature review as opposed to the traditional review. It documents the process of conducting this scoping review with the aim of demonstrating in practice the steps in such a review for other researchers who may be new to the method. However, there are a few limitations of this review that is worthy of reflection.

## **Limitations**

The first limitation is the time period that this review has focused on. The period that is included in this review is less than five years. This short period limits how much the review can show with regard to the trend and patterns of research interest. In addition, the cut-off date of 2019 August is an arbitrary date corresponding to the time schedule of this project. Since the year is not yet finished, this review cannot claim to have incorporated all the literature produced from 2015 – 2019.

The second limitation is the large portion of master's theses included in the review. While these comparatively new postgraduate researches add to the richness and timeliness (data collection and production of theses in the same year) to the selected body of literature, they may be comparatively weak in rigor and their evidence. In other reviews, non-published, non-peer reviewed materials such as postgraduate theses are excluded for this reason.

Third, while there is a clear legal distinction between refugees and other immigrants in Norway, this distinction has not been further pursued in this review. On the one hand, sample of literature will become extremely limited if only restricted to refugee experience. Moreover, once refugees are finished with the introduction course, they face similar obstacles with immigrants with similar social economic backgrounds in the labour market integration process. Families of refugees who come to Norway are also considered immigrants, and their experience into the labour market are also part of the interest of this review as well as MAVI. However, in the academic field of migration, sometimes it is important that these two are separated. This may become a limitation of this review when used as a reference for research which needs such distinction.



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# Appendix I. Lists of journals and institutions

## List of journals

*Acta Obstetricia et Gynecologica Scandinavica*  
*Agora*  
*European Journal of Population*  
*International Journal of Community Music*  
*International Journal of Middle East Studies*  
*International Migration*  
*Journal of Ethnic & Migration Studies*  
*Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies*  
*Journal of Refugee Studies*  
*Journal of Social Policy*  
*Nord universitet*  
*Nordic Council of Ministers*  
*Nordic Journal of Nursing Research*  
*Norsk antropologisk tidsskrift*

*Norsk medietidsskrift*  
*Norsk sosiologisk tidsskrift*  
*Norsk statsvitenskapelig tidsskrift*  
*Norwegian Journal of Geography*  
*Nytt Norsk Tidsskrift*  
*Plan*  
*Sosiologisk tidsskrift*  
*Statistical Journal of the IAOS*  
*Søkelys på arbeidslivet*  
*Tidsskrift for boligforskning*  
*Tidsskrift for samfunnsforskning*  
*Tidsskriftet Norges Barnevern*  
*Transfer: European Review of Labour and Research*  
*Urban Studies*

## List of institutions which published the Master's theses

Høgskolen I Buskerud og Vestfold  
Høgskolen I Sørøst-Norge  
NLA Høgskolen, Bergen  
Nord Universitet  
Norges Handelshøyskole, Bergen  
NTNU  
University of Agder  
University of Bergen  
University of Oslo  
University of Stavanger  
VID Specialized University

## List of Institutions which published the reports

Direktoratet for Økonomistyring  
FAFO  
IMDi: Integrerings- og mangfoldsdirektoratet  
Nordic Council of Ministers  
Norsk Institutt for by og regionforskning  
Norsk institutt for by- og regionforskning  
NTNU Samfunnsforskning  
RVTS Midt  
SSB  
VOX - Nasjonalt Fagorgan For  
Kompetansepolitikk  
Østlandsforskning



# Appendix II. Literature search protocol

## Protocol of Systematic Literature Review

Between Ambition and Reality: Labour Market Situation amongst newly arrived refugees in Rogaland (MAVI)

### Background

#### Rationale

- To start the project MAVI (2019-2023), the research team has decided to conduct a systematic literature review to lay down a solid foundation for the 2,5 year project going ahead.
- The entire project will include several work packages involving various parties relevant the refugee experience, with specific focus on employment related aspiration(s) and reality(ies).
- Although this topic has received increasing attention in recent years, the existing body of studies are disorganized and fragmented. There is rich empirical data in the literature, as well as theoretical discussion, but lacking in an unbiased overview where gaps in our knowledge or meaningful direction(s) of research are indicated on the subject.
- Locate MAVI within the field and ensure it brings in new knowledge not only relevant for local policy making and evaluation, but also to the research community internationally
- A capacity building exercise to learn about the systematic literature review method.

### Research Question

The main question is as follows:

#### **What research have been done so far about labour market integration of recently arrived refugees in Norway?**

The objective is to produce a literature review report that will comprehensively summarize all published paper about the integration of newly arrived refugees in Norway in the past five years, and to point out gaps where further research is needed.

Our hypothesis:

While a lot of research has been done to describe, analyse and evaluate the effectiveness of the wide range of policy instruments both nationally and regionally to help refugees enter the local job market, relatively few studies have paid close attention to the personal experiences, circumstances and networks of refugees outside of the designed integration / introduction programme.

These factors, including gender, family status, ethnical, culture, social network and the civil society in their lives in Norway, will to various degrees affect the aspiration, expectation and the reality of labour market outcomes for refugees, in addition to the top-down integration programmes.

### Secondary Questions

The assignment seeks to address the following secondary research questions:

- What is the distribution in language within the body of literature?
- What are the trends in research interests within this topic?
- What are the research methods applied?
- What are the gaps in the literature?

## Search strategy

### Keywords

In the process of searching for keywords, the researchers listed out the word family in both English and Norwegian for each keywords in the title of the MAVI project. This is the list of relevant words as a result of the process. These words are then tested in various combination to formulate search strings to look for articles electronically.

Relevant words	Keyword Norwegian	Keyword English	Relevant words
Arbeid/Ansatt Utdanning Integrering Jobb Jobb søk Arbeidsledighet Trening Språkkurs Språklæring Sosialt liv Trivsel Arbeidskraft	Arbeidsmarkedet	Labour market	Employment Education Integration Work Job Job search Unemployment Training Language courses Language learning Social life Well being Labour Force Workforce

Arbeid Hindringer utfall/konklusjon? Oppfyllelse Integrering Resultat Diskriminasjon Evaluering Muligheter Økonomi Hindringer Fattigdom Frustrasjoner Traume Valg Utfordring Vansker	Virkelighet	Reality	Employment Obstacles Outcome Fulfillment Integration Result Dsicrimination Evaluation Opportunities Finance Poverty Hindrancer Frustrations Trauma Choices Challenge
Aspirasjon Forventninger Motivasjon Intensjon Utdanning Karriere Mål Drive Drøm Trivsel Arbeidsplass	ambisjoner	Ambition	Aspiration Expectations Motivation Intension Education Career Goal Drive Dream Well being
Asylsøkere Asyl Migranter Krise Kvinner Minoritet Forflyttet Islam Familie Innvandrere	Flyktninger	Refugees	Asylum seekers Asylum Migrants Crisis Women Minority Displaced Islam Family Immigrant

## Search strings

These are the selected search strings in Norwegian and English that yields the best results. All searches are limited to those published between January 2015 and August 2019, and searches are made with keywords combined using the Boolean operators. Apart from articles from scientific journals, we also include post-graduate theses as well as published reports by research institutes and Norwegian municipalities or public authorities.

**Search in ORIA with Norwegian keywords:**

Search strings:	Results
ORIA: Alle felt inneholder <b>språk*</b> OG Alle felt inneholder <b>flykt*</b> OG Alle felt inneholder <b>integring</b> OG Alle felt inneholder <b>norge</b>	<b>38</b>
ORIA: Alle felt inneholder <b>migrant*</b> OG Alle felt inneholder <b>norge</b> OG Alle felt inneholder <b>integring</b> OG Alle felt inneholder <b>arbeid*</b>	<b>29</b>
ORIA: Alle felt inneholder <b>innvand*</b> OG Alle felt inneholder <b>norge</b> OG Alle felt inneholder <b>ambisjon*</b> OG Alle felt inneholder <b>integring</b>	<b>27</b>
ORIA: Alle felt inneholder <b>minoritet</b> OG Alle felt inneholder <b>norge</b> OG Alle felt inneholder <b>innvand*</b> OG Alle felt inneholder <b>integring</b>	<b>31</b>
ORIA: Alle felt inneholder <b>minoritet</b> OG Alle felt inneholder <b>norge</b> OG Alle felt inneholder <b>innvand*</b> OG Alle felt inneholder <b>integring</b>	<b>31</b>

**Search in Academic Search Elite through EBSCO with English keywords:**

EBSCO: ( employment or jobs or work ) AND ( refugees or asylum seekers ) AND ( norway or scandi* )	<b>50</b>
EBSCO: ( poverty or low-income or low socioeconomic or disadvantaged ) AND ( refugees or asylum seekers ) AND ( norway or norwegian or scandi* )	<b>17</b>
EBSCO: ( obstacles or barriers or challenges or difficulties or issues or problems ) AND ( employment or jobs or work or training or career ) AND ( refugees or asylum seekers ) AND ( norway or norwegian or scandi* )	<b>20</b>

## Inclusion criteria

All selected articles need to fulfil the full set of criteria listed below.

Inclusion criteria:	
Subject	refugees and other migrants
Date	published in or after 2015
Evidence	Evidence directly about experience of economic/ labour market integration
Context	Norway
Type of publication	Articles from academic journals, postgraduate theses, official reports, books
_____	
Literature included	87

## Evidence Extraction

In the process of managing the information from the selected articles for mapping, tags are developed to categorise them. Here is the full list of the tags and their explanation:

<b>Theme</b>	<b>GW</b>	Gender related, specific focus on women
<b>Theme</b>	<b>GM</b>	Gender related, specific focus on men
<b>Theme</b>	<b>P</b>	Policy oriented, focus on the details in measures (tiltak) or integration policies
<b>Theme</b>	<b>E</b>	Effectiveness: study of policy effectiveness; evaluation of policies
<b>Theme</b>	<b>T</b>	Theoretical
<b>Theme</b>	<b>B</b>	Barn / Children related
<b>Theme</b>	<b>LM</b>	Labour market outcome
<b>Theme</b>	<b>WS</b>	Welfare state / system
<b>Theme</b>	<b>SWED</b>	Study on Sweden
<b>Theme</b>	<b>M</b>	Mobility
<b>Theme</b>	<b>ETH</b>	Ethnic identity
<b>Theme: potential obstacles</b>	<b>Q</b>	Qualification approval
	<b>D</b>	Discrimination
	<b>F</b>	Family circumstance
	<b>H</b>	Health or wellbeing related issues
	<b>Sk</b>	Skilled / unskilled labour
	<b>TTT</b>	«Ting Tar Tid» (Waiting time)
	<b>EMO</b>	Emotion related issues
<b>Theme: Enabling factors</b>	<b>CS</b>	Civil Society (organized groups outside of government or business)
	<b>N</b>	Personal network
<b>Method</b>	<b>L</b>	Longitudinal study
	<b>Quant</b>	Quantitative study
	<b>Case</b>	Case study
	<b>POV</b>	Migrants' point of view (as opposed to policy oriented)
	<b>INT</b>	International comparison

Apart from the tagging, the following information are also recorded for each of the selected articles:

- **Title, Author, Year of publication**
- **Language:** Norwegian or English
- **Published by:** name of academic journal, university, research institute, municipality, publisher
- **Types of publication:** Journal article, book chapter, post graduate thesis, official report
- **Level of analysis:** international, national, or municipal or lower
- **Main topics:** the topic(s) that the study's expressed objective to investigate
- **Research methods:** interviews / focus groups, observation, desk search
- **Data sources:** interviews with refugees, interviews with employees of organizations who work for the Introduction programme, register data, official documents and publications
- **Time period of original data:** before or after 2015. The year is marked as significant because those after 2015 would give evidence about the newly arrived group of refugees, which is the focus on the MAVI project

# Appendix III. Researcher's Note on Systematic Literature Review

December 2019 | Norma Wong

This note is based on the experience from a first attempt at doing a systematic literature review in August to December 2019 for the MAVI project, on the topic of "Labour Market Integration of Newly Arrived Refugees in Norway". A systematic literature search was conducted by Norma Wong and Josh Dickstein (intern) on relevant literature in both English and Norwegian from 2015 to August 2019. See report for detail.

The following is a documentation of the issues encountered and lessons learnt in the process.

## Setting the research objective

- Setting the objective of the review is the most important preparation work. The objective should be as specific as possible with clear definition and **the knowledge it is seeking to synthesize**. It should lay out:
  - **Population**
  - **Intervention**
  - **Outcome**
  - **Context**
- Under the **main objective** there can be **sub-questions** to be answered. Based on these sub-questions the include body of literature can be further divided into groups to be synthesized
- "what do we know so far about \_\_\_\_\_?" is suitable as a question for scoping review that does not require in-depth appraisal of the quality of research, but would allow for including a wider selection. It is suitable to emerging topics with a smaller body of literature but more scattered topics.

## Search strings and databases

- When doing a bilingual search, think about whether all the **search words** should be equivalent, or whether certain words are yields better search for one language than the other
- The **choice of database** should be explained, not only convenience. While Oria is the best database for Norwegian literature, it is not so clear for English literature.
- Decide if the search words should be in all text, or only in **title**.
- If there is division of labour at this point, make sure everyone involved are using the same strategy and standard in documentation. The best policy is to record every step.
- **Preliminary screening** is okay. Some search result is obviously not relevant. However, establish a policy and document how this is supposed to be done.
- Some search engines offer **suggestions for search words**, some do not.

## Selecting relevant literature

- The selection process requires consistency. Inclusion and exclusion criteria **need to be understood clearly by all researchers**, and definition of terms should be consistent throughout the whole process. The criteria should be set according to the research question: what do we need to find out to answer the question? What is the purpose of this question?
- Important literature that did not come up during search need to be included into the research, but they can be warning sign that the search string may need to be modified for search that could better answer the research question
- **Do a 10-article pilot** to test out if all researchers' understanding of the criteria is consistent.
- **Check on endnote if the information are exported correctly – often thesis are recognized as books.**
- **Try to locate the abstract if it is not automatically shown in Endnote – do not only guess from the title unless it is obviously irrelevant**
- Inclusion/exclusion criteria: Cut-off date: publication date can be misleading as to the evidence it is presenting. A paper can be published years after the original data is collected. In some cases, the data collection date may be a better way to define the inclusion / exclusion criteria, albeit the higher time cost in finding them out. This may cause extra issue with literature that does textual analysis of official or legal documents. These documents may be written in a date that is outside the established 'data collection date', but may still apply to the period you specify. Whatever your decision it needs to be clearly stated.
- Inclusion/ exclusion: decide what type of publication you should include. Journal article includes also editor notes, book reviews, some are more commentary and/or opinions by the author but not so much a research. Do you include them? Also do you include masters thesis? Why and why not?

## Mapping

- When extracting data, already have some ideas about what are the main themes
- **Coding or categorizing** the literature requires consistency in understanding of what these codes or categories means. Sometimes when the literature does not totally fit in certain code or category it is
- **If researchers are sharing the work to code, make sure all researchers understand the codes the same way. A pilot is a good way to test out.**
- Sometimes some hair-splitting differences in categorization may turn out to be not significant, but it cost you hours of paralysis. Sometimes it is the other way around. **If in doubt, always refer back to the research question. What is the best way to answer this question?** Sometimes it is like trying to sort out the world of colours into only seven categories – is turquoise blue or green? Is peach pink or orange? Why and how does this matter?
- A lot of time can be spent on going back and forth to reconcile differences in definition of categories and codes.
- The **filter function** in excel is useful but also tricky. Check all the filters are set correctly when computing the statistics on various combinations. Or else it will lead to wrong statistics



## Evidence Synthesis

- When the objective is not clear, there is always **the temptation to add in more 'findings'**, and this will cause problem later on if this is not clearly communicated, or recorded, or remembered. For example, this can mean going back to the categorization stage for additional tags and will cost a lot of time to go back and make all the necessary tags.
- Difference between social science/ policy study review and medical research review: In social science or policy research, issues are more complex and multifaceted, such that researchers in the same field often **use a wide range of definition of terms and frameworks** to study the same issue. Evidence cannot be easily synthesized, but instead more like a summary of what has been done before and perspectives that has been explored. Contexts are also not replicable, making it harder to compare results meaningfully between researches. In medical research, experiments may follow the same frameworks and procedures, making it easier to synthesize their findings.
- NVivo is a good tool to use
- In the process of data extraction, there is the dilemma of how much or how detailed should you be. This may fluctuate over time and between researchers.
- The findings of one thesis or articles or report may not be saying much, but if dozens of them say the same thing, or contribute a small piece of evidence on the same issue, together they amount to stronger evidence.

## Mental preparation and Time use

- **Emotionally it can be a draining and lonely process.** A mistake can have big ramifications and may mean a lot of time spent to go back and correct all the problems it causes. It is a process where you would expect it to be perfect but turns out to be just about not fraudulent. Do not dwell on perfection, but just prioritize what is necessary to serve the purpose: **to deliver a good enough answer to the research question on time is better than not giving a complete answer.**
- Expectation control: at the end because of all the limitations, the report may not be able to claim a lot with confidence. However, for whatever small claims it can make, **the review if done properly and diligently is a transparent and honest piece of work** that could help create the foundation for future research.
- **Grey areas issues** come up all the time and they are mentally taxing to deal with and it is easy to get lost on the way. This is where inconsistency happen and it will mess up the database. Be prepared to deal with them and when in doubt document all the actions.
- **Keep it a team work.** From my experience doing this alone is emotionally draining partly because of the loneliness. Layout a timetable for the team, have clear job division, and keep each other accountable for deadlines and in documentation. Meet regularly to report on progress and celebrate small milestones.

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