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“[DON’T] GIVE ME YOUR TIRED, YOUR POOR...”
A STUDY ON THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION’S UNPRECEDENTED REFORMS TO THE U.S. REFUGEE ADMISSIONS PROGRAM AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS

By
Savannah Sue Day

A thesis submitted to the faculty of The University of Mississippi in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College

Oxford

May 2020

Approved by:

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_____
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_____
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Without the intentionality, guidance, and support from a great number of personal mentors, this thesis would definitely not have been possible.

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The biggest thank you goes out to my family and friends for loving me through years of me asking many impossible questions, creating many stressful situations, and inconveniently requesting many Diet Cokes. You each are my rock, and I don't know what I would do without your support. Thank you for keeping me sane. Especially regarding the current circumstances (the pandemic), I definitely don't want to know what my life would look like without y'all in it.

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ABSTRACT

"[Don't] Give Me Your Tired, Your Poor..." A Study on the Trump Administration's Unprecedented Reforms to the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program and Their Implications
(Written by Savannah Day under the direction of Zenebe Beyene)

From 2017 to 2020, the Trump administration cut United States refugee admissions tenfold. These reforms come unprecedented to the 40-year-old resettlement program (USRAP). By critically reviewing literature on this topic as well as conducting eight original interviews with five national nonprofits contracted by the Department of State to do refugee resettlement casework, this study sought to identify the implications of the Trump administration's reforms to the program. Once implications were identified, I used the applied frameworks of program model as well as Michael Worth's sociological and political science theories of American nonprofit-government relations to better inform and guide the study. Worth's theories illustrate that nonprofits complement American traditions such as freedom, representation, and diversity, making them play an important role in democracy. This study found that refugee resettlement services affirm that theory. Compiling the significance of the reforms' implications against the test of a robust theoretical framework led to an understanding that the Trump administration's cuts to the USRAP indeed reduces the nonprofits' ability to fulfill their role in government. These reforms will forever weigh heavy in the history of the program.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

USRAP - United States Refugee Admissions Program

FY - fiscal year

PD - Presidential Determination (annual admission ceiling set by president)

VOLAG - volunteer agency

R&P - Reception and Placement (the funding from federal government that goes straight to the nonprofits managing resettlement cases)

GRACE - Guaranteed Refugee Admission Ceiling Enhancement Act

RCA - Refugee Cash Assistance

USCIS - United States Citizenship & Immigration Services

DHS - Department of Homeland Security

ORR - Office of Refugee Resettlement

PREFACE

Two years ago, in June of 2018, I sparked an inquiry into this complicated topic. A friend of mine was completing a summer internship at a resettlement office in our hometown of Fayetteville, Arkansas in which she greeted newly arrived families at the airport and transported those refugee clients from one appointment to another. My interest in this area continued to grow the more I learned about her work and the resettlement process. Little did I know this curiosity would soon develop into an integral part of one of the most relevant policy discussions during President Donald Trump's time in office. In under one term of office, the Trump administration has flipped this 40-year-old public-private program completely on its head.

After completing a refugee resettlement internship of my own in the spring of 2019 at World Relief Memphis, I gained more insight regarding both the difficulties of integrating into a new community as well as the significant value these populations add to our homefront. It was then that I decided to combine my new passion with my academic background in journalism and public policy analysis. This project has been very special to me because while conducting the research that this paper presents, I learned to ask deeper questions of the systems around me. I also learned to acknowledge and appreciate other cultures and was reminded to keep working toward what you believe in no matter how bleak the tunnel ahead may seem.

This paper is made possible because of the scholars around the world who are committed to seeking truth and solving humanitarian crises through critical study. It is also made possible because of both the frustrating moments of cross-cultural misunderstanding and the warm meals my clients so gratefully shared with me last spring. The fact that they welcomed a complete stranger into their experience of the first few months in America has forever shaped me.

INTRODUCTION

United States foreign policy can differ from one presidential administration to another, but historically, the nation is quite involved internationally. It prides itself as one of the top champions for human and civil rights globally. These rights include the right to migrate. However, with the election of President Donald Trump in 2016 and his "America First" campaign, reverting back to U.S. President Woodrow Wilson isolationist days, U.S. foreign policy has since looked a bit different. Trump's presidency "reinvigorated long-standing beliefs of nativism, xenophobia, anti-intellectualism, racism, and isolationism," (Rodriguez & Urban, 2019). This affects how the rest of the world sees the U.S., and of course affects the lives of the 13.6 percent of the U.S. population who is foreign-born (Blizzard & Batalova, 2019). The U.S. has more foreign-born residents than any other country in the world (Connor & Budiman, 2019). Perhaps this is possible because the foundation of this country was historically built on the colonists' right to flee England in search of a better, safer place to live. The nation was founded by immigrants themselves, and it has continued to serve its well-known redemption story, the prosperous and inclusive "American Dream." Some say, more so than any other area of law, "our immigration policies quite literally define who we are as a people [...], the formulation of immigration policy requires value judgements about the optimal size of our population, the composition of our society, and our general economic

direction," (Legomsky, 1995). Thus, immigration policy is somewhat the fabric and foundation of America's society and history.

Regardless of this long-standing tradition and policy, the Trump administration has introduced new policies that would seriously affect its refugee resettlement programs. This study sought to examine the Trump administration's reforms to the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program and their implications.

SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY AND RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

This research is significant to the larger scale of broadly analyzing immigration policy from multiple frameworks, analyzing Donald Trump's policy decision making as president in general, but most importantly, pinpointing these reforms' historic impact on the refugee resettlement program. This public-private partnership between the nonprofits and the federal government has become integral over the past 40 years to several contexts, including conversations surrounding United States humanitarian aid and foreign policy efforts, as well as evangelical engagement with migrants. Understanding the impact these reforms have made to the program can help professionals in the future better evaluate changes to the resettlement program as well as helping the nonprofit sector anticipate governmental shifts to other various public-private partnerships.

This research was limited by its proximity, availability, and time constraints. It may have been a more robust study if it included representation from every state that conducts resettlement, all nine VOLAGs instead of just five of them, and a greater depth of data in general. It also would be an ideal study if the researcher was able to effectively discuss the topic matter with policymakers themselves in order to more holistically understand the goals of the reforms.

There were significantly more aspects of refugee resettlement that I could have explored further, such as: effectiveness of integration services; the disparities between different demographics; causes of displacement; the constitutionality of resettlement

federalism; further on the distinction between economic migrants, asylum seekers, and refugees; topical media framing of crises; religious and moral implications of these policies; national security implications of these policies; etc.

Another aspect that would have significantly changed the study, maybe not necessarily for the better or for worse, would be to interview actual refugees themselves, both already arrived and those still waiting abroad. Although this would be sensitive and difficult research to conduct, it would bring an interesting angle to the discussion. As refugees cannot vote in United States elections though until they become citizens (they are eligible after five years of permanent resident status), it may not be the most relevant perspective to bring into the discussion. Once refugees become citizens and are able to vote, their perspectives on policy would be much more relevant. In the United States, populus perspectives on policy are relevant because the nation is a democratic republic that elects its leaders, in hope that the populus perspective is represented appropriately in Congress, in respect to lawmaking.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The majority of literature reviewed for this project was peer-reviewed and came from various academic journal and law reviews. Other pieces are primary sources from the government or news articles. Searching within the University of Mississippi Libraries' One Search feature, as well as within the JSTOR, LexisUni, and Statista databases with keywords such as "refugee," "immigrant," "refugee policy," "refugee resettlement," "asylum," "Trump," "USRAP," "executive order," "integration," I was able to find hundreds of studies on refugee populations around the nation, but none quite like mine, evaluating the U.S. program and policy shifts themselves. The purpose this section serves is to provide a foundational and contextual understanding of the program this thesis is evaluating.

Because of the unique makeup of and draw to the United States, there is a great deal of scholarship analyzing general immigration statistics within the U.S., but it's necessary to note that the federal government processes different types of immigrants in distinct ways. It is important to differentiate the types of migrants and their various intake processes because overgeneralizing immigration policies leads to ineffective decision making and poor critical analysis. With concern to recent activity of asylum seekers at the U.S.-Mexico border, matters of immigration policy must be considered specifically and with context. Asylum seekers are not the only migrants to seek protection in the United States. Refugees, as defined by the United Nations, also come to the U.S. to live

safely away from their conflicted home countries. There are currently over 25 million people considered refugees around the world, and nearly 50 million more that are considered displaced persons but not explicitly 'refugees,' (United Nations, 2019). Across the world, less than one percent of these refugees get resettled (United Nations, n.d.). There are three durable solutions to issues of human displacement that fall under formal resettlement of these refugees, including voluntary repatriation or return to the home country, settlement in a country of first asylum, and resettlement to a third country (Stein, 1983). These are considered solutions because they lead to proper self-sufficiency of the individual. Refugee camps are considered temporary relief, not a permanent solution to displacement. Refugee resettlement is difficult because the three major resettlement destinations-- the United States, Australia, and Canada-- are far geographically from the countries that produce the most refugees, which are Syria, South Sudan, and Afghanistan (United Nations, 2019).

The United States's definition of refugee is based upon the United Nations 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocols relating to the Status of Refugees, and it states, a "refugee" is a person who is unable or unwilling to return to his or her home country because of a "well-founded fear of persecution" due to race, membership in a particular social group, political opinion, religion, or national origin," (American Immigration Council, 2020).

Refugee resettlement work in the United States of America is done through the United States Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP). This program first began under President Jimmy Carter's U.S. Refugee Act of 1980. The Act was designed to be "the

legislative cornerstone of a humane, comprehensive, flexible, coherent, and as far as possible, efficient refugee policy that took into consideration both foreign and domestic concerns," (Zucker, 1983). The USRAP is a public-private partnership with nine national nonprofits or volunteer agencies, termed "VOLAGs," including World Relief, the International Rescue Committee, Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services, Church World Service, the Ethiopian Community Development Council, Espiscopal Migration Ministries, and United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 2019).

Over its 40 years of program history, the USRAP has resettled over three million refugees (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, n.d.). Refugee resettlement is known for being an especially complicated process, and can take years to complete, but is rooted in the refugees' necessity to flee persecution or violence (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, n.d.a). The program aims to provide safety in the United States to those seeking refuge. At a human level, this safety is akin to integration services ranging from monthly cash benefits (refugee cash assistance, RCA), employment services, and English language classes (Utržan et al., 2018). The Department of State funds the majority of these services, but most, if not all, are temporary funds. For example, the Department of State pays for the refugees' flight to the United States, but it is through a no-interest loan that must start being paid off by the refugee six months post-arrival (U.S. Department of State, n.d.a). The goal is for a refugee to become self sufficient within 90 days, and the VOLAG case worker's job is to ensure they are making progress on that

path, with English proficiency, employment, and stable housing and healthcare (Tota, 2018). Sometimes, case management is able to be extended, but this funding may come from other sources besides reception and placement (R&P) funding from the Department of State. All federal funding for refugee cases is limited and temporary.

Funding for asylum seekers, on the other hand, is budgeted through U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) which processes their cases legally, whereas funding for refugees funnels through the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) within the Department of State (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, n.d.b).

Historically, the U.S. has resettled an average of 65,000 refugees per year, and 2017 was the first year in program history that the U.S. no longer led internationally in total number of refugees resettled (Connor & Krogstad, 2018). There were several symbolic actions regarding immigration in the U.S. that President Donald Trump quickly put into motion after being elected. Just days after President Trump came into office in January 2017, he signed Executive Order 13769 called, "Protecting the Nation From Foreign Terrorist Entry Into the United States," now colloquially known as the "travel ban" or "Muslim ban" that suspended the entire U.S. refugee admissions program for 120 days and indefinitely suspended the entry of Syrian, Iranian, Iraqi, Libyan, Somalian, Sudanese, and Yemeni refugees (American Immigration Council, 2020). These are all Muslim-majority countries, which is no coincidence. The Trump administration then slashed the fiscal year refugee admissions ceiling, which had been determined the previous September under the Obama administration from 110,000 refugees down to

50,000. The Trump administration's travel ban was extended twice more that year under Executive Order 13780 in March and a proclamation in September (Chishti et al., 2018). The ban was challenged in courts across the judicial system that year, but was continually upheld as law.

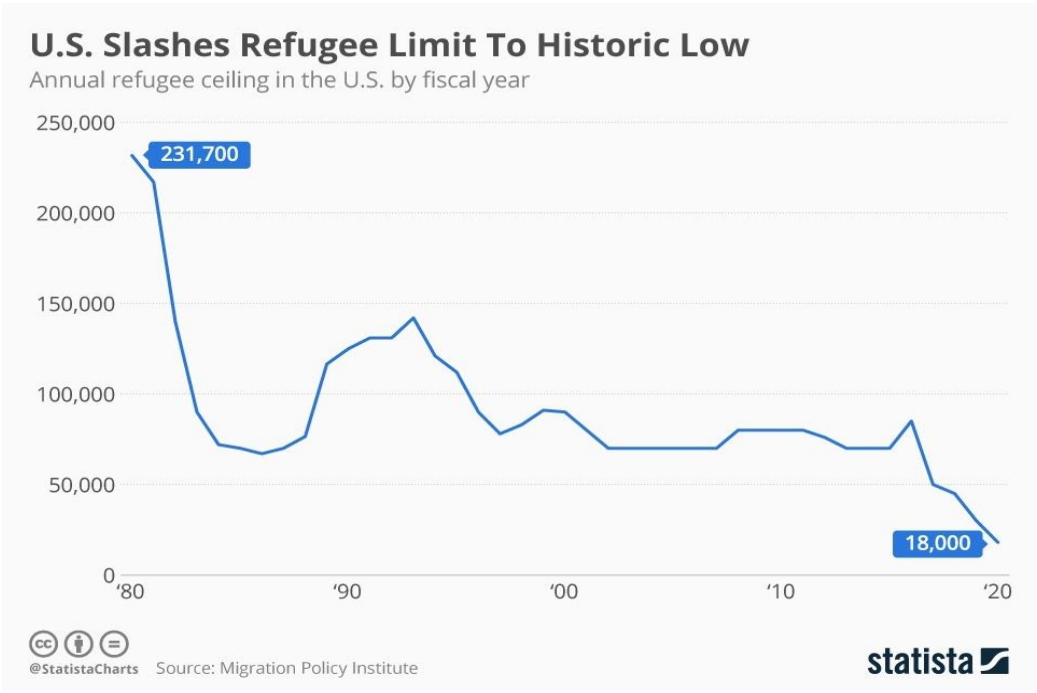
The Trump administration continued to bar any influx of migrants in 2018 with multiple restrictive measures, such as increased utilization of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) raids around the nation, an institutional refocus on denaturalization, ordering family separation at the U.S.-Mexico border, and the considered abolishment of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) (Chishti et al., 2018). Additionally, the Trump administration changed the mission statement of the USCIS to no longer include the phrase "a nation of immigrants," with the new statement focusing more on "protecting Americans" with a "lawful system" (Gonzales, 2018). The administration then formally set the 2018 and 2019 refugee admissions ceilings to 45,000 and 30,000 respectively, the lowest it has ever been in program history (U.S. Department of State et al., 2018).

On September 26, 2019, the White House and State Department announced a policy change for the coming fiscal year, which is now current and began on October 1, 2019 (White House, 2019). The refugee ceiling declined to a historic low of 18,000 refugee admissions.

See displays below, sourced by Department of State (Figure 1) and Migration Policy Institute (Figure 2).

Proposed FY 2020 Allocations

Population of special humanitarian concern	***Admit up to***
Refugees who: • have been persecuted or a have well-founded fear of persecution on account of religion; *or* • who are within a category of aliens established under subsection (b) of Section 599D of Title V, P. L. 101-167, as amended (the Lautenberg and Specter Amendments).	5,000
Refugees who are within a category of aliens listed in Section 1243(a) of the Refugee Crisis in Iraq Act of 2007, Title XII, Div. A, P. L. 110-181, as amended.	4,000
Refugees who are nationals or habitual residents of El Salvador, Guatemala, or Honduras.	1,500
Other refugees not covered by the foregoing categories, including: • Those referred to the USRAP by a U.S. embassy in any location. • Those who gain access to the USRAP for family reunification through the Priority 3 process or through a Form I-730 following-to-join petition.[13] • Those currently located in Australia, Nauru, or Papua New Guinea who gain access to USRAP pursuant to an arrangement between the United States and Australia.	7,500
Total proposed refugee admissions in FY 2020	***18,000***

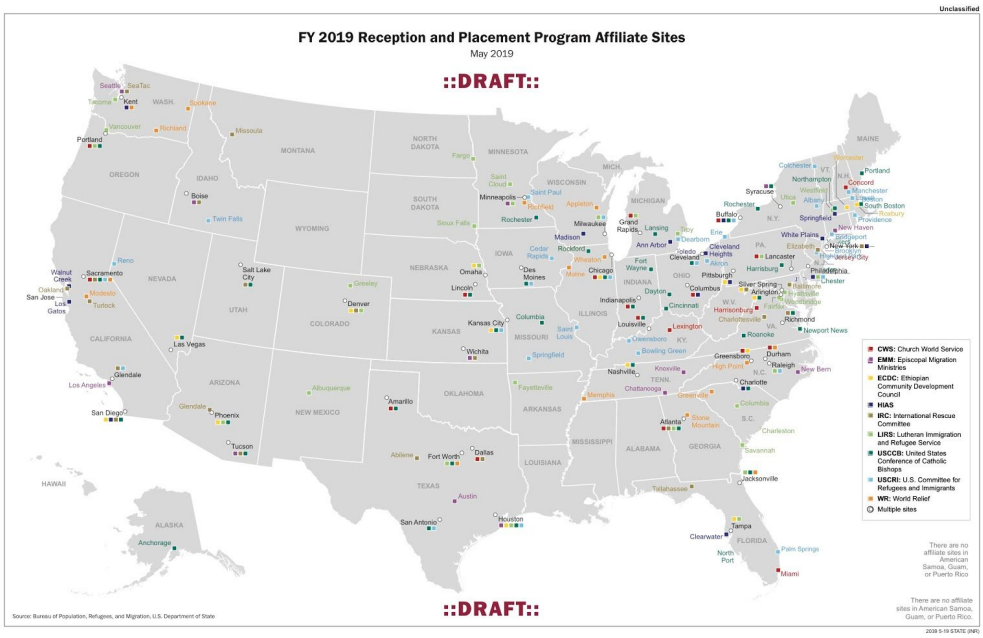


Citing a focus on humanitarian conflicts in countries such as Afghanistan, Venezuela, and Syria, the State Department claimed that as a representation of 'the Trump Administration,' "the United States is the most compassionate and generous nation in history," but, " the current burdens on the U.S. immigration system must be alleviated before it is again possible to resettle large number of refugees," (U.S. Department of State, n.d.b).

It is against this contextual background that I sought to study the goals and implications of the recently enacted law. I specifically sought to analyze the goals of this continuing reduction in admissions, as well as identify the implications this policy has on stakeholders in affected communities and on U.S. foreign policy. Ultimately, this research aims to untangle the current status of refugee resettlement in the United States, and in turn, uncover where the program may be headed.

LITERATURE REVIEW: CRITICISM OF USRAP

In the past decade, the USRAP has been called "underfunded, overstretched, and failing to meet the basic needs of refugees," (Utržanet al., 2018). Some scholars say the USRAP gives the executive branch and the President too much power to be determining how many refugees resettle in the U.S. every year, especially when the United Nations and the nine contracted agencies do most of the work. The argument for this is that refugee resettlement is treated too much like foreign policy rather than humanitarian work (Legomsky, 1995).



See graphic above: where resettlement offices are located around the country, source Department of State (Figure 3).

One of the greatest criticisms of the USRAP is its degree of involvement with the United Nations. The UN determines who is classified as a refugee, and this determination takes power from the sovereign countries charged with resettling the applicants. Many American immigration lawyers have studied the assumption of risk-- including what factors affect refugee status or what qualify as a legitimate reason to flee-- and disagree with what the UN decides is correct (Atkinson, 2008). The United Nations has also been seen as 'biased' toward certain countries over others, or not properly fulfilling its purpose to maintain world peace and develop cooperative relations among nations (Sengupta, 2016).

Professor and displacement expert Stein warned in 1983 of several "danger signs" to the refugee resettlement program, including "reduction in the flexibility of

governments to respond in a timely manner to new refugee situations," "introduction of a numerical ceiling [...] that would put refugees into competition for admission with others," and "reduction in either quotas or actual admissions to levels that do no meet the need for resettlement or do not protect the principle of asylum," (Stein, 1983). These three danger signs have come to fruition under the Trump administration.

Only a few years after USRAP came into law, policy expert Norman Zucker identified three main problems with the refugee resettlement process in the United States, those being systemic-managerial, philosophical, and refugee-specific. Systemically, it's difficult to manage refugee flows. Philosophically, it is difficult to analyze federal placement strategies. Refugee-specific, there is an aspect of population competition as well as scarcity of programs and services. Even nearly 40 years ago, Zucker was identifying abrupt federal policy as an administrative problem for the states, including specifics like cash and medical assistance regulation and admissions numbers (Zucker, 1983).

The government is not alone in causing problems in this field. Zucker described it as "the VOLAGs, like cars, come in a variety of models and have differing capabilities," (Zucker, 1983). Many of these issues stem from cooperation with partner agencies including the government as well as loose financial operations and core service definition (Zucker, 1983).

Philosophically, there are many different programmatic approaches to resettlement, and some disagree on which model works best. For example, some see refugees as needing only quick employment and short-term assistance, which some refer

to as “front-loading” services, whereas others view refugees as “disadvantaged persons unable to cope with their new environment,” leading them to need longer term assistance (Zucker, 1983). Both contribute to the goal of self-sufficiency and social integration, but it is debated as to which philosophy more effectively achieves that goal. This debate has “direct financial consequences for the federal and state governments, and they also impinge on refugees’ choice and affect their lives,” (Zucker, 1983).

Regarding refugee-specific problems with resettlement, there are community-affective problems stemming from impact and competition, and then on the other hand, there are personal refugee problems that relate more to acculturation. For example, refugees in the United States are congregated together in certain communities, not spread out evenly across the nation. This is for many reasons, but causes issues that would not occur if the refugees were divided equally across the country. Impacts of refugees on the community only becomes a problem when reduction to integration services occurs, creating a chicken-and-egg fallacy. Negative impacts of refugees on the community occur “especially when the population is poorly educated, speaks little or no English, is unfamiliar with the culture, and may be malnourished or ill,” (Zucker, 1983). Culture clashes also may come out of this between the refugees and their host communities, causing great hardship on the migrants emotionally and physically.

However, there is still a great deal of pushback from refugee resettlement agencies on this latest cut to the admissions. Refugee Council USA, a coalition network of these organizations, brings together advocates and allies to lobby for policy changes and sign petitions (Refugee Council USA, n.d.). RCUSA has mobilized thousands,

initiated the GRACE Act within Congress, and started a #Blackout4Refugees movement in fall of 2019 (Sadeque, 2019).

The GRACE (Guaranteed Refugee Admission Ceiling Enhancement Act) Act was introduced to Congress in April of 2019 in attempt to set the refugee admissions ceiling at the highest it's ever been at 95,000 refugees (H.R. 2146, 2019). This act has not yet moved out of committee, but I plan to continue to follow it closely.

Utzran conducted a similar study to this thesis in 2019, surveying VOLAG employees across the nation and gathering sentiment regarding resettlement specifically of Syrian refugees. Within his study, he found that communities tend to not tolerate refugees based on fearful threats to security, economic resentment, and misconceptions linked to political rhetoric (Utržan et al., 2018).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This thesis will address the following question: What are the implications of the Trump administration's decision to decrease the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP)'s ceiling from 30,000 refugees to 18,000 refugees for fiscal year 2020?

I have not found that this exact research question in particular is being asked or answered anywhere in scholarship yet. Having worked directly with refugee resettlement, I understand that even a limited drop in admissions can prevent resettlement agencies from effectively providing services such as transportation, employment, education, and housing assistance. Less admissions means less funding to carry out these basic tasks for clients. Resettling refugees is a key part of the U.S. government's foundation in regard to foreign policy and humanitarian work. The USRAP diminishing indicates a significant change in what fundamental policies the U.S. prioritizes. It is critical to better understand refugee resettlement policy shifts so that those engaged with this work (nonprofit organizations, the refugees abroad, Americans who support the USRAP) can better prepare for the implications of further cuts to the USRAP.

My approach to answer the research question concerning this policy change is appropriate because the United States government that makes the policy is designed to be representative of the people it serves. Thus, if I interview people that professionally

engage with refugee work, they will have the best understanding of what the policy needs to look like and perhaps why it looks different.

I will make an assessment of the recent changes to the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program by using program model and thematic analysis of original qualitative data. After analyzing the findings collected from the original interviews, the program model and theoretical framework are devices that helped better inform the conclusions of my study. This model looks at a certain program or policy and logically addresses its managerial challenges and possible solutions (Wilder Foundation, 2009). The model effectively considers a program's motives, services, and outcomes, so I will be applying that to the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program. My hypothesis for this study is that the reducing refugee admissions leads the government to reduce its support for the nonprofits that do this resettlement work, which reduces their ability to fulfill their role in our democracy. This hypothesis is rooted in a mix of Michael J. Worth's sociological theory and political science theory of nonprofits, which I detail below. In order to come to my conclusions, I identified the unit of analysis as the declining nonprofit services to the refugees, which was caused by the Trump administration's cuts to refugee admissions. Overall, it is this study's aim to connect the unit of analysis to Worth's theory by using program model, and ultimately make a conclusion supported by thematic analysis of my qualitative research.

By conducting personal phone calls and surveys, in coordination with extensive background research of peer-reviewed literature, government documents, and academic journals, a conclusion can be assessed from the implications of the Trump

administration's changes to the USRAP. Regarding my analysis of the interviews, I chose to connect common themes from the different interviews to come to 15 collective conclusions regarding the community impact of these policy changes.

In order to properly address these themes and come to a conclusion about the answer to my research question, I rooted my analysis in Michael J. Worth's nonprofit theory. Worth is a professor of nonprofit management in the Trachtenberg School of Public Policy and Public Administration at George Washington University. Worth utilizes two theories used to examine the functions of nonprofits: sociology theory and political science theory. I assert that a mix of sociology theory and political science theory best describe the purpose of U.S. refugee resettlement agencies and their significant partnership with the government.

The political science lens theorizes that nonprofits play a key role in "supporting democratic traditions and in terms of power relationships between citizens and government," (Worth, 2019). In relation to government especially, political scientists have identified four major functions nonprofits perform, which are: accommodating for diversity, undertaking experimentation, providing freedom from bureaucracy, and attention to minority needs. In particular, this study focused on the functions of accommodating diversity and providing freedom from bureaucracy and determined if this theory is found applicable to refugee resettlement.

Nonprofits supplant public services in order to "maintain diversity and provide a corrective to bureaucratic inflexibility," which "makes it possible to accommodate the views and preferences of a greater range of the community than could public provision

alone," (Worth, 2019). This gives nonprofits the advantage of being more flexible than the federal and state bureaucracies, because they are not susceptible to the constraining expectation of universality. In the past, these nonprofit services were seen as alternatives to government provision, but the sector has grown to instead complement government programs. Experts say that "extensive collaboration between government and the nonprofit sector emerges not as an unexplained aberration but as 'a logical and theoretically sensible compromise'" due to each of the sectors' strength being different and important, such as the government's ability to generate revenue and nonprofits' knack for providing public goods (Salamon & Toepler, 2015).

Government contracting out services to nonprofits or private organizations can create an accountability problem, but some instead see "decentralization of policy provision as a path to the revitalization of democractic participation at the local level," (Powell & Steinberg, 2006). This dichotomy emphasizes the nonprofit sector being representative of communities around the nation, similar to the United States's hope with its democratically elected leaders. Worth's political science and sociological lenses for nonprofits reinforces this idea.

Sociology theory also discusses the nonprofit-government relationship by asserting that nonprofits help bridge the relationship between citizens and their elected leaders. Worth affirms that his sociology theory imposes that nonprofits serve as "mediating structures that help people interact with large bureaucracies, such as government and business," (Worth, 2019).

My unit of analysis is abstract in nature as I worked through personal interviews as well as literature review to determine the implications of the shifting refugee resettlement program. The unit of analysis broadly accounts for the dwindling refugee admissions ceiling, as well as the reduction in services that I discovered through personal interviews. Both of these perceived reductions in U.S. administrative support for refugee resettlement are rooted in a domino effect of general declining budgets and stark administrative staff cuts. The less refugees resettled, the less money nonprofit agencies receive. The less money they receive, the less people they have working. The less people they have working, the less services they are able to offer.

In sum, this thesis is based on the USRAP's declining services, which the theoretical framework I have applied deems devaluing to nonprofits' role in our democracy.

METHODOLOGY

In order to properly address the research question, I conducted phone call interviews with professionals who work in this field from December 2019 to February 2020. I believe this journalistic method of qualitative interviews was more productive than quantitative analysis because there is a lack of human reporting from those who actually work with refugees. Each interviewee from the respective organizations represents a small case study into the realities of how these changing policies are impacting real work. These professionals are considered the implementers of refugee policy since they directly provide resettlement services. My interview questions were University of Mississippi Institutional Review Board approved and uniform, but each interview revealed a new and unique implication of the Trump Administration policy change.

I reached out to over 50 individuals and organizations largely via email, and finished with eight total interviews. The individuals I reached out to were from diverse locations and organizations. All work with refugees in the United States. These interviews ended up being representative of eight different states across the U.S. including Arkansas, Illinois, Massachusetts, Missouri, New Mexico, New York, Tennessee, and Texas, as well as being representative of five of the nine national volunteer agencies that are contracted with the Department of State to resettle refugees, including the Church World Service (CWS), the Ethiopian Community Development

Council (ECDC), the Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services (LIRS), the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), and World Relief Corporation (WR). It was my intention originally to have data representative of all nine VOLAGs, but that did not occur. Even after sending lots of blind emails and calls to encourage participation as well as trying to make connections over social media, etc, I did not end up with an interview from each VOLAG, unfortunately. My interviews were not representative of all 50 states nor did the interviews reflect the remaining four resettlement agencies, which are Episcopal Migration Ministries (EMM), the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS), the International Rescue Committee (IRC), and the U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI). Combined, there are nearly 200 refugee resettlement offices around the country. My interviewees had anywhere from one to twenty years of experience professionally serving immigrants and refugees and served in various capacities, from case managers to office directors themselves, even English teachers and volunteer coordinators, etc.

My interviewees were as follows:

I. **Beth Spafford**
Lutheran Family Services
English as a Second Language Teacher
Albuquerque, New Mexico
Interviewed on December 13, 2019

II. **Grace Wildenhaus**
Catholic Charities
Volunteer/Outreach & Adult Education Coordinator
Columbia, Missouri
Interviewed on December 17, 2019

III. **Karissa Pletta**

World Relief
Resettlement Director
Memphis, Tennessee
Interviewed on January 10, 2020

IV. Emily Linn
LIRS Affiliate - Canopy NWA
Resettlement Director
Fayetteville, Arkansas
Interviewed on January 17, 2020

V. Mark Hagar
Church World Service Affiliate - Refugee Services of Texas
Director
Dallas, Texas
Interviewed on February 9, 2020

VI. Daniel LaPorte
Church World Service
Associate Director for Integration and Innovation
New York City, New York
Interviewed on February 14, 2020

VII. Rebecca Zellelew and Aklilu Adeye
Ethiopian Community Development Council
Case Manager & Executive Director
Chicago, Illinois
Interviewed on February 21, 2020

VIII. Clare Orie
Catholic Charities
Case Manager
Boston, Massachusetts
Interviewed on February 25, 2020

By interviewing the implementers-- the professionals that work directly in the local resettlement offices-- I was able to better understand the everyday implications that

trickle down from these overarching, systematic changes in federal policy. This thesis would be strengthened if I was able to interview the policymakers themselves, but efforts to contact the Department of State as well as members of the U.S. Congress were unfortunately unsuccessful. Understanding the motivations behind the executive weakening of the USRAP could be a valuable opportunity for future research.

The phone call interviews ranged from twenty to forty minutes, and I documented them in an audio recording as well as taking notes throughout the conversation. I have used these notes and recordings to reference and compile the data before analysis. One of the interviewees, Daniel LaPorte of Church World Service NYC, was not available for a phone call, so his answers were produced via email exchange. Within these interviews, I asked a set of five to ten University of Mississippi Institutional Review Board (IRB)-approved original questions that were open-ended and focused on the implications of the recent shifts in U.S. refugee policy.

The questions are as follows:

1. What is your role regarding refugee resettlement within your community?
2. What are the implications of reducing the refugee admissions from 30,000 to 18,000? In what way does this policy change impact your direct community?
    a. In what ways financially, socially, and politically does the reduction of refugee admissions impact your community?
3. What measures has your office taken to adjust to the implications of the program reduction?

4. Why do you believe refugee admissions were reduced from 30,000 to 18,000 for the 2020 fiscal year?
5. According to the Refugee Act of 1980, the U.S. president decides the refugee ceiling each fiscal year. As foreign policy is usually a top priority to the U.S. President, how does this annual decision impact the United States foreign policy (relationships with other sovereign nations)?
6. What has changed about USRAP in its almost 40 years of existence? What caused those parts of it to change?
7. Even though asylum seekers and refugees are processed through different departments of the U.S. government, in what way does U.S. policy toward asylum seekers and refugees intersect? How does one impact the other, if so?
8. In light of the Trump administration's 2019 executive order requiring localities to affirm or deny refugee resettlement in their communities (which has since been stalled through federal courts), Governor Greg Abbott of Texas is the only governor so far to speak out against refugee resettlement. With Texas resettling some of the most refugees in the nation, how reflective are governors' stances on the issue regarding the everyday American's support for refugee resettlement?
9. What implication does Executive Order 13888 have on the refugee admissions program?
10. Why or why not are you supportive of various refugee resettlement advocacy measures, such as the GRACE Act?

11. What symbolism or message is sent in the recent trend of refugee admissions decreasing over these past few years?
12. Looking forward, what do you think the future for the USRAP looks like?

Due to constraints on time and distance, I was not able to gather more than these eight interviews and I was not able to conduct them in person, both of which I originally intended out of preference.

Within these interviews, I sought to answer my research question: What are the implications of the Trump administration's decision to decrease the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP)'s ceiling from 30,000 refugees to 18,000 refugees for fiscal year 2020?

It was also my original intent to conduct a 15-question survey as an alternative to the phone call interview. I did create the survey, and sent it to tens of people professionally involved in the field of refugee resettlement, including encouraging my interviewees to forward it to their colleagues. However, I unfortunately did not receive any respondents. I believe that anticipating robust analysis from both personal interviewing as well as surveying may have been a bit overly ambitious of me. Although it did not turn out exactly how I expected, I was able to conclusively answer the research question.

INTERVIEWS

In asking five to ten questions per interview, each subject responded uniquely to the question, as the program cuts affect each office differently. Provided below are summations of each interview.

Beth Spafford: LIRS - Albuquerque, New Mexico

(Personal interview, 12/13/2019)

In my first interview, Beth Spafford of LIRS had a distinct perspective on the topic as the longest serving professional interviewed, having worked with migrants for over twenty years. Spafford has devoted much service and energy into building the English language capacity of the clients LIRS serve in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

What Spafford first mentioned after being asked about the implications of the cut from 30,000 refugee admissions ceiling to 18,000 for FY 2020 was that it forced teachers at LIRS to convert from paid employees to unpaid volunteers in an effort to keep the office open. Before, they were paid. She explained that this change had only occurred in the last year and said it's "really a bummer," but that "they really want to keep the office open," so they had to make this change. Spafford also said that seeing the quotas for this year was "upsetting" to the director of LIRS Albuquerque because with the Trump administration's new categories focused on religiously persecuted refugees, it seems like there will be less Congolese refugees arriving in 2020. LIRS's primary demographic that

is resettled in Albuquerque comes from the Democratic Republic of Congo. In 2019 in the United States, 14,763 refugees of the total 21,159 resettled were Congolese (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2020). This demographic is no longer being prioritized by the Trump administration. Spafford cited her community's support for refugee resettlement, but also perhaps lack of awareness of it, as Albuquerque is more commonly associated with U.S.-Mexico 'border issues,' when it comes to discussions of migrants in general. Spafford went on to highlight how discussions of immigration have changed over time, especially since she has been in the work. She stated that in the 1980s when she started to work with migrants in Albuquerque, her work was not publicly controversial or political, and the fact that it is now with everyday Americans worries her, since it is seemingly now a conversation "red flag." With the sentiment shifting over the past few days, Spafford highlighted President Donald Trump's unique rhetoric when talking about migrants used to "justify" his policy decisions. She also said that becoming a refugee is a really difficult process, "like winning a lottery ticket." Specifically, Spafford has concern for her Afghani and Iraqi clients. She said they became refugees because of the United States' political intervention in their respective countries. These populations specifically are important to the program, she said, because they assisted our government overseas. Spafford mentioned that part of the reason the PD was not zero for FY 2020 was because of United States military officials advocating for our security needs compliant with these specific populations as well as the effect it would have on our global allies and adversaries.

Grace Wildenhaus: Catholic Charities - Columbia, Missouri

(Personal interview, 12/17/2019)

The next interview was Grace Wildenhaus with Catholic Charities in Columbia, Missouri. Wildenhaus primarily works in outreach and education for Catholic Charities and due to her line of work, she has seen refugee resettlement and policy changes to their program from a unique lens.

Wildenhaus said that the office is very reliant on its volunteers, with around 50 or so active and available at all times. These volunteers will help with secretarial tasks, case management, and educating clients through different transitions such as health processes, driving, English language learning, and more. What Wildenhaus pointed out as the most stark change as the PD has decreased significantly within Trump's time in office was the reflection of it in their number of arrivals. In 2016, Catholic Charities in Columbia resettled 226 refugees, whereas in 2019, there were only 93 arrivals. Wildenhaus pointed to the most 'obvious' implication she said of these cuts, which is less funding, and the loss of employees with needed knowledge of the field. She did not mention how many employees the office has lost recently. Wildenhaus called the cuts to the admissions ceiling "really difficult" and "disheartening," because most of the petitions abroad waiting to be granted, she said, are relatives of refugees already arrived and resettled in the United States. Wildenhaus also mentioned that the populations arriving in past few years are more homogenous than in previous years, making it hard for clients to want to stay in this community when they don't see people from their country arriving here anymore. An example of this was Somalian refugees. However, she said, the community

of Columbia is very supportive of refugee resettlement and integrates them well. The main population Catholic Charities resettles nowadays in Columbia is Congolese refugees, she said. But she said for FY 2020 they anticipate their largest resettled demographic to be Burmese and Ukrainian, per the Trump administration's new emphasis on religiously persecuted refugees. When asked why she believes these cuts to refugee admissions are continuing to happen, Wildenhaus said that President Trump plays on people's 'irrational fears' and so, reducing the admissions puts those 'fearful people in his favor.' Wildenhaus said Trump's base is "discriminatory and not favorable of immigration," and that the reduction in refugee arrivals "makes no logical sense" to her. Wildenhaus called the PD for FY 2020 "ridiculously low" as we are in the "worst refugee crisis globally in human history," she said. She touched on asylum seekers at the U.S.-Mexico border and said that using that situation as reasoning for reducing the refugee admissions ceiling is "so messed up," because that problem at the border isn't being solved either, "so what is the money being shifted to?" Wildenhaus expects and hopes that the future of the USRAP will grow again like it did under the Obama administration, she said. She said the PD of 18,000 is an 'abnormality,' not a continuous trend, and that it is based on fear, which "cannot sustain long term when there is no logical reasoning" to make these reductions.

Karissa Pletta: World Relief - Memphis, TN

(Personal interview, 01/10/2020)

Karissa Pletta serves as the resettlement director at World Relief Memphis and was previously a case manager. She has been working in refugee resettlement for a few years now.

Pletta started by expressing the drastic decline in arrivals over the past three years. In 2016, World Relief Memphis resettled 356 refugees. In 2017, that number decreased to 124; in 2018, it was cut in half at 56 total arrivals; and in 2019, the office resettled only 44 refugees. At the time of the interview in January, already a quarter of the way through the fiscal year, the office had only resettled one family since October, and had not received formal projections for remaining arrivals from its national leadership yet. As World Relief Memphis's main resettled demographic is Congolese and not the newly emphasized religiously persecuted populations articulated in the FY 2020 PD, Pletta anticipates for the arrivals to decline drastically yet again, especially reunifications. In fall of 2019, Pletta said, a Congolese elderly woman was set to arrive and meet her son in Memphis, another Congolese refugee who had previously been resettled. However, due to cuts, they cancelled her flights and she is still waiting in a camp in Rwanda. Because of her age, health, and separation from family, Pletta expressed concern. Pletta also acknowledged that the Special Immigrant Visas for demographics like Iraqis and Afghanis are prioritized over traditionally resettled refugees. Pletta also mentioned the asylum seekers at the U.S.-Mexico border causing a shift in refugee policy. In regards to the significance of these consistent cuts to the refugee admissions, Pletta said, "This season is going to be a stain on the program and on the evangelical community who is going to look back on these last three or four years and wish they were on the other side

of history." Pletta brought up how refugee resettlement is a "bipartisan issue" and that "[the USRAP] passed unanimously in 1980." Pletta said that because of these cuts to the program under the Trump administration, it is going to take some time to build the infrastructure of the USRAP back up, but she does see it become a robust program because of the current growing advocacy and awareness in the evangelical community. In relation to Executive Order 13888 mandating that all states give explicit consent to refugee resettlement, Pletta explained that if a state did not release a statement of consent, it is automatically considered to be a "no" or rejection to refugee resettlement occuring in your state. December 25 was the original deadline to give consent, she said, but it has now become a rolling deadline until June 1, which is the end of the third quarter of FY 2020. (Now we know that this EO has since been stalled and shot down in courts). In response to the EO, Pletta said the Tennessee Republican governor's consent was "shocking," and "a historic moment." On Jan. 3, the Shelby County leadership did a public press event giving consent, which World Relief also found to be unexpected. In 2019, out of a staff of not many more than ten people, World Relief Memphis had three layoffs and two staff members leave without the office being able to afford to refill those positions. Most importantly, World Relief had to cut its immigration legal services department, which was a big need in the community, Pletta said. She cited "long waiting lists for immigration lawyers in Memphis." From a fundraising perspective, these cuts are also significant in their impact. As less refugees arrive and more staff get laid off, donors might see the office on the demise anyway, which discourages them from having a sustainable investment. On the other hand, some donors see it as a catalyst for their

donation -- that they can save the office from closing. Pletta says she will continue to do this work because of its evangelical mission and that she has been excitedly submitting lots of grant applications for new programs to better serve their clientele that's currently on the ground and on the path to integration, not waiting in a refugee camp abroad for several more years.

Emily Linn: LIRS - Fayetteville, Arkansas

(Personal interview, 01/17/2020)

Emily Linn serves as the outgoing resettlement director and founding director of Canopy NWA, an affiliate of Lutheran Immigrant and Refugee Services, which opened in 2016, making it the youngest office I interviewed.

To start the interview, Linn explained that funding for VOLAGs from the federal government is done on a per capita basis, so this has been tough for their small office especially. "There's only so much downsizing you can do," Linn said. To make alterations in response to these cuts, Canopy has diversified programming as well as trained staff to work multiple roles. Linn mentioned an important "loss of institutional knowledge" that comes from downsizing. When the program stops being stalled, she said, there will be an opportunity to rebuild. Linn went on to speak about her community's support of refugee resettlement, as well as the Arkansas governor's support. Governors are "more representative" of the support of this issue than the federal government, she said. Linn also mentioned that most of the support for their program comes from conservatives actually, despite what people may think because of the current

administration's leanings. "[Conservatives] don't want to speak up if they don't have to," Linn said, as she has experienced it firsthand from failed advocacy with the Arkansas Congressional delegation in Washington, D.C.. Linn said she believes the cuts are being made politically to "play to the interests of the president's base, not based on costs or needs." The general public sentiment toward refugees has changed, she said, and that change has largely been "brought about by this administration." Linn mentioned that she believes if there is a change of party in the White House this year, the refugee admissions ceiling would increase for FY 2021, but not back to 100,000 like it was before the Trump administration. Going back to 100,000 that quickly would be foolish, she explained, because the infrastructure of the program has been lost and we have to consider the political sustainability of this program since sentiment keeps turning over.

Mark Hagar: CWS - Dallas, Texas

(Personal interview, 02/09/2020)

Mark Hagar serves as the director of Refugee Services of Texas, which is an affiliate of the VOLAG, Church World Service. Texas is the state that, in recent history, resettles the most refugees in the nation (Krogstad, 2019).

Hagar started the interview by saying that the cuts to the USRAP is a "conflation of different issues," and is an effective "political" move to reduce immigration as a whole. Hagar said the rhetoric is 'fueling' Trump's re-election campaign. Hagar called it "bogus," and that's it's "pretty clear" the administration wants to get rid of all refugee resettlement. He said that now is the 'desperate' time for more education and advocacy

because we “left the mic open” for false rhetoric which has now “taken hold.” Hagar said the administration’s decisions are not reflective of what communities really want at all levels, and that refugee resettlement is a ‘bipartisan’ issue. Hagar said the program has worked for so many years and is now being dismantled. He also mentioned the quarterly consultations required by the State Department that the VOLAGs have to meet with community officials to report the outcomes of the office. It “has always been an expectation,” he said, for the community and the resettlement offices to be on the same page. This, he says, explains the lack of a need for Executive Order 13888, which mandates community consent of refugee resettlement before it can occur. The continuous cuts create “not a sustainable environment” for them to operate in, Hagar said, but Texas is lucky to have not had any offices being forced to close. Texas offices, instead, have had to do some moderate restructuring and diversification of services, in order to make ends meet under the new cuts to the program. Hagar said discussions such as these and ones in which someone must defend refugee resettlement has brought “solidarity” and “awareness.” He mentioned the new categories and quotas this year focusing on the religious minorities. He called it an “interesting shift.” New changes such as those-- as well as one he mentioned for the administration to not be taking any more refugee applications from UNHCR-- are very unclear and come without a lot of guidance for implementation.

Daniel LaPorte: CWS - New York City, NY

(Personal interview, 02/14/2020)

Daniel LaPorte serves as the Associate Director for Integration and Innovation at Church World Service headquarters in NYC. The interview with LaPorte was conducted via email.

When asked about the implications of the cuts to the refugee admissions ceiling, LaPorte mainly highlighted a loss of institutional knowledge and expertise, which in turn is deteriorating the infrastructure of the resettlement program. The message these cuts unfortunately send, LaPorte said, is that providing safe haven to people fleeing persecution is not in the administration's priorities, nor is reuniting families separated by war and persecution, and nor is maintaining a robust system for supporting newcomers with integration into their new communities. It is ironic, he said, because the cuts have brought attention to the issue, which fuels more people becoming interested in refugee resettlement and perhaps even wanting to support the cause. LaPorte said the future is "hopeful" to return back to "normal" since the United States is capable of it, he said, and also because refugees over time contribute to their communities "far more" than is received through public benefit programs they are eligible for.

Rebecca Zellelew and Aklilu Adeye: ECDC - Chicago, IL

(Personal interview, 02/21/2020)

Rebecca Zellelew and Aklilu Adeye serve as a case manager and the executive director of the Ethiopian Community Development Council in Chicago, respectively. This interview was conducted with both of them engaging in answering the questions simultaneously.

Zellelew and Adeye said for the FY 2020 PD, the administration is shifting its priorities and focusing mainly on religious minorities such as Ukrainians. Because of this administration's differing priorities and continuous cuts to the USRAP, the ECDC Chicago office has shrunk in staffing since 2017, they said. They did not specify how many staffers had left or been laid off. Adeye said the office is having to shift to be a different kind of nonprofit offering different services, and also are not able to afford to refill positions of those who decide to leave or who are laid off. Adeye called this season a process of "soul searching" for his office, in order to rebuild from the damages the Trump administration's cuts caused. Adeye mentioned focusing on "revenue makers" several times as the office is shifting to focus on other programs that serve the already resettled communities in Chicago that can pay for ECDC extra services such as continued language classes, job training, after school and children's programs, etc. Adeye said especially in the context of the 2020 U.S. presidential election, he is going to give refugee resettlement "one more year" before they decide to make any big decisions regarding changing the office's services. Adeye and Zellelew explained together why they think the cuts are being made, and that it is largely due to "othering rhetoric becoming mainstream" and "identity politics." Zellelew said President Trump is a "mouthpiece" to address the group that has made immigration an "ideological" issue and "easy target." She said President Trump will do "whatever will get him the most votes" and "momentum." Zellelew said Trump is able to make politically uninformed groups go vote based on his energized nationalism. Adeye called these cuts a "difficult wound," and that the administration uses refugee resettlement as a "flashpoint" for conversation, "just like

abortion and healthcare." He backed this up by saying he's observed this as new because the refugee program wasn't demonized until recently, not "even after 9/11," when American fear of outsiders was at an all-time high. Zellelew said the underlying factor of all of the Trump administration's immigration policy, refugee resettlement cuts included, is "racially motivated." She said that his administration "shows a history of racist policies" and she takes this into account since refugees are often people of color, not Anglo-Saxon European like a stereotypical looking 'American.' Regarding the future, Adeye said it matters who wins the election in November, but that it will take at least two years to rebuild the capacity of the program since all of these cuts have occurred. If Trump wins, Zellelew said, a zeroing policy for FY 2021 is "inevitable," and the program infrastructure will completely collapse. On a positive note, Adeye said there has been a big "awakening in society" and that there will be "lots of future policy change" after we "get over this rut we're in."

Clare Orie: Catholic Charities - Boston, MA

(Personal interview, 02/25/2020)

Clare Orie is a case manager at Catholic Charities in Boston. Orie is newer to the field of refugee assistance and resettlement and has been working with Catholic Charities for approximately one year.

When asked about the most major implications of the program cuts, Orie said "forgetting numbers and funding, this has had a huge impact on the culture and morale" of this field. Since October when the fiscal year began, her office has only had one

arrival. To compare-- in FY 2019, the office resettled around 70 refugees. Orie mentioned the 2020 election and said that even with a new president, there would still not be enough structure left of the program in place for it to "go back to normal." On a positive note, Orie said because of the fewer arrivals, she's been able to provide more comprehensive case management and is more attentive to the already-arrived clientele. When asked why she thinks these cuts keep being made, Orie mentioned the Trump administration's America First policy and the fact that immigration "feels like a far-removed issue." She also said that the administration spreads a "derogatory narrative" surrounding migrants, and that people often think of refugees as a "cost," not a "benefit." However, she said, Massachusetts and Boston are both very supportive of the USRAP and the GRACE Act that is currently in Congress. Orie believes that in the future, churches will be doing the majority of this work to "fill in the gap the government created."

FINDINGS

Through conducting these interviews, there were fifteen recurring impressions mentioned that I've identified regarding the various implications these national cuts to the USRAP have had on the eight different local offices. These impressions are as follows:

1. The most significant implication of the cuts to refugee admissions are the major cuts in funding and arrivals for these already small-staffed offices.
2. Energized nationalism, sentiments of fear, and negative rhetoric toward immigrants and refugees from the Trump administration play a large role politically.
3. Along with the cuts to admissions, there is a new focus from the Trump administration on religiously persecuted groups over all other refugees.
4. The Trump administration illustrates that it does not prioritize providing safe haven for these fleeing populations nor reuniting separated families.
5. The Trump administration continues to make unclear policies regarding refugee resettlement, which in turn causes poor implementation of those policies.
6. There will be a lasting impact of these cuts on the infrastructure of the resettlement program - a great loss of institutional knowledge and expertise due to so many layoffs and office closings.

7. In order to recover from the implications of these cuts on the program, the offices have commonly been applying for outside grants to subsidize their loss in government funding and to better serve already-arrived clientele, as well as making structural shifts into becoming a new type of community organization by diversifying services and altering job descriptions.
8. Refugee resettlement is customarily a bipartisan issue with much conservative political support despite what the administration portrays.
9. Local communities are generally very supportive of refugee resettlement in their areas.
10. There is a large need for more advocacy and education about refugee resettlement.
11. In this season of negative sentiment toward refugees and immigrants, it has paradoxically brought attention to the issue, generating more awareness and involvement of refugee resettlement across the nation.
12. Professionals in this field are hopeful for a progressive future, but say if President Trump is re-elected in November, a zeroing policy for the FY 2021 PD is almost inevitable.
13. Many professionals in this field believe if a Democratic candidate is elected President in November, the refugee admissions ceiling will increase to be more than 18,000 for the FY 2021 PD.

14. Americans tend to think of refugees as a cost not a benefit, but the interviewees emphasized that economically, refugees contribute more to their communities over time than they receive in public assistance.
15. These interviewees tend to believe that as time progresses, American Christian churches will be doing the majority of this work in order to fulfill their evangelical missions.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This thesis set out to study the implications of the Trump administration's cuts to the USRAP. Once implications were identified through interviews and literature review, the thesis aimed to use program model to comment on the theory that the decline in these resettlement services devalues the nonprofits' role in our democracy. The framework was rooted in reasoning from Worth's sociological and political science theories.

Program model requires an "if, then" understanding for explaining a program's motives, services, and outcomes (Wilder Foundation, 2009). What I've modeled for the USRAP is as follows: "If the United States desires to assist in integrating refugees into American society, then the USRAP will coordinate critical services and resources to help these new populations maximize their potential in the U.S.." This statement directly mirrors the U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR)'s statement on its website, "ORR helps new populations maximize their potential in the United States by linking them to critical resources that assist them in becoming integrated members of American society," (Office of Refugee Resettlement, n.d.). See the program model laid out below.

APPLYING PROGRAM MODEL TO THE USRAP			
	Motive	Service	Outcome
USRAP (The refugee resettlement program)	'desires to assist in integrating refugees into American society'	'the USRAP will coordinate critical resources'	'help these new populations maximize their potential in the U.S.'

Above, Figure 4 - original.

As gathered from the literature review and interview findings, the USRAP's services have declined dramatically due to the Trump administration's cuts to the admissions ceiling. The status of a program's services have a direct correlation to the program's motives and its outcomes, as displayed above in the modeled table. This model helps effectively evaluate the program and its outcomes (Shakman & Rodriguez, 2015). If the program's services have declined, the program's outcome is going to be affected, as well. Applying this to the USRAP, the program will not be able to help new populations maximize their potential in the U.S. (outcome) as effectively as it once was if it is not able to coordinate critical resources (service). This decline in services is explained in the interviews by an emphasis on the reduction of arrivals, having to layoff staff members, and diversify the nonprofits' services.

The implications found through interviews confirm what the program model displays. The 15 impressions listed above can be grouped based on program model's categories of 'motive,' 'service', and 'outcome' in order to better look at USRAP from a perspective of program evaluation. I organized these 15 impressions by categories by assessing each impression to see if it mainly was discussing implications on the USRAP's motives, services, or outcomes. I considered 'motives' as what drives the mission of the program, which often looked like support or narrative around resettlement (whether there's a 'desire to assist in integrating refugees into American society'). Implications to 'services' were usually overt, just whether the Trump administration's

cuts to USRAP changed the amount or type of services it can offer ('coordinating critical resources'). Finally, as for 'outcomes,' these impressions were concerned with the implications of these cuts on the future of the program ('help these new populations maximize their potential in the U.S.').

APPLYING PROGRAM MODEL TO INTERVIEW FINDINGS			
	Strong leaning toward the topic of USRAP's 'motives'	Strong leaning toward the topic of USRAP's 'services'	Strong leaning toward the topic of USRAP's 'outcomes'
Impression #	2, 4, 8, 9, 10, 11, 15	1, 3, 7	5, 6, 12, 13, 14

Above, Figure 5 - original.

What came most unexpectedly is that when the 15 impressions from the interviews are evaluated based on these three categories of 'motive,' 'service,' and 'outcome,' interviewees emphasized implications to 'motive' more than they did to 'service' or 'outcome.' This finding expresses that the implications of the cuts to USRAP are assumed to be more about motivation and values than the cuts are about the actual services or outcome aspects of the program, according to the interviewees. Here, I am considering 'values' and 'motives' to be related terms. Overall, assessing the implications of the Trump administration's changes to USRAP by applying the program model to the qualitative data resulted in an understanding that is reflective of the cuts indeed devaluing the nonprofits' role in our democracy.

In order to further properly apply the theoretical framework, Worth's sociological and political theories must be upheld. Worth's political science theory focuses on nonprofits' support of democratic traditions and the nonprofits' role in terms of power relationships between citizens and the government. In this sense, democratic traditions "allow the voice of diverse groups" as well as "encourage the freedom to advocate for social change" (Worth, 2019). The resettlement agencies indeed promote these democratic traditions by entering foreign voices into everyday and even political conversations, and the agencies reflect a unique freedom to advocate for social change in the way that they lobby to Congress. Especially with the fact that the executive branch has nearly complete power over the USRAP, these nonprofits are provided a unique legislative opportunity to advocate for more support for the program from any level of government. For example, interviewee Emily Linn of LIRS Fayetteville explained their office's relationship-building attempts with conservative members of Congress. Without the platform Linn has to stand on as part of being an LIRS staffer, she might have never advocated for social change in the way that she did. Lobbying is a direct reflection of that role in power relationships between citizens and government that Worth describes nonprofits playing. Other political scientists support the claim in saying that nonprofits "act as a counterpoise against excessive displays of power emanating from the public or private sectors," (Bucholtz, 1998). Interviewee Karissa Pletta of World Relief Memphis had a similar experience lobbying in Washington on behalf of refugee resettlement, and she mentioned it being an unexpected part of her job, but now one that she understands is critical to the work because of the unique partnership between these VOLAGs and the

government. Unlike the government which must prioritize needs of the majority, nonprofits like these VOLAGs "can respond to the demands of people who feel intensely about special interest activities," (Mendel, 2011). Refugee resettlement might be of a minority or niche issue compared to other policies legislators interact with more often, but as Worth's nonprofit theory explains, these specialized needs play just as integral of a role in a democratic society.

This aligns with what Worth calls the four functions of nonprofits in relation to government: accommodating for diversity, undertaking experimentation, providing freedom from bureaucracy, and attention to minority needs. These functions are integral to American society, according to Worth. How do refugee resettlement agencies uphold these functions? Refugee resettlement agencies accommodate diversity because the certain groups they serve cannot be fully accommodated within government, with its "obligation to treat all citizens equally," (Worth, 2019). Since the government reports to taxpayer dollars, it legally must be transparent and fair. It would not be fair if the government provided niche services to only refugees and did not make those same services accessible for other Americans. For example, a government employee cannot help each and every citizen obtain stable housing or improve their English acquisition. But resettlement caseworkers can and should do this for refugee clients. These services act as a proxy from the government to aid the greater goal of successful integration of refugees into American society. Bureaucratic government is not able to accomodate diversity in that same way like the nonprofit is able to. Refugee resettlement agencies also provide freedom from bureaucracy-- as nonprofits should according to Worth--

because they are able to respond more efficiently and quickly to new needs of the clients because they do not have what Worth calls the "large bureaucracies that characterize government," (Worth, 2019). For example, if a refugee is without employment for several weeks, the caseworkers at the nonprofit can manage that situation directly, accommodating effectively where needed, whereas it would take a government worker much longer to help because of the way their obligations are stretched thin and specifically. The government cannot be wholly dedicated to one case and one client alone, whereas a nonprofit can.

Worth's sociological theory of nonprofit-government relations can also uphold that a decline in refugee services weakens the nonprofits' role in our democracy. Worth says in accordance with this theory, nonprofits "socialize individuals, reinforce norms and values, and develop social capital," (Worth, 2019). The refugee resettlement nonprofits aim to help refugees properly integrate into American society. This is a direct illustration of socialization. Socialization is "a particular type of political learning whereby people develop the attitudes, values, beliefs, opinions, and behaviors that are conducive to becoming good citizens in their country," (University of Minnesota Libraries, 2016). It is not a primary function of the government to socialize individuals, but it is a benefit that builds on keeping citizens orderly and safe, the government's prime motivation. Socialization aids in reinforcing norms and values as Worth said, which in the United States, these values typically consist of respecting and supporting democracy, capitalism, public servants and authorities, and laws (University of Minnesota Libraries, 2016). Thus, if you have less nonprofits serving in this sociological theory role, you have

less Americans being socialized. When less Americans are socialized, less U.S. values--such as support of democracy, capitalism, etc-- are upheld. So when USRAP services decline, less refugee clients are being socialized through these nonprofits, therefore less the nonprofits' role in democracy is devalued.

In conclusion, using program model and Worth's sociological and political science theory of nonprofits to explain that declining resettlement services devalues the nonprofit role in government and democracy was successful. It was with this pairing as well as the thematic analysis of the interviewees' common impressions that allowed for a formative assessment of the Trump administration's reforms to the USRAP.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The United States Refugee Admissions Program is in its fortieth year and the most volatile one yet. After three consecutive years of the most significant cuts in the program's history, professionals in the field of refugee resettlement are back to the drawing board to navigate the Trump administration's shift in this policy. This thesis is the culmination of literature review from a multitude of academic journals and government publications, as well as the coordination of original interviews with nonprofit staffers, together with an intent to answer the research question: What are the implications of the Trump administration's decision to decrease the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP)'s ceiling from 30,000 refugees to 18,000 refugees for fiscal year 2020?

With support from Michael Worth's sociological and political science theories on nonprofit-government relations, I used program model to discuss the reduction of resettlement services diminishing these nonprofits' role in our democracy. With the assistance of analyzing themes from the qualitative interviews conducted for this thesis, an assessment of the policy implications was able to be formed. The 15 identified themes of interviewees' impressions regarding the implications of the Trump administration's changes to the USRAP against the backdrop of the theoretical framework produced strong findings.

It is with great hope that in the future, the significant findings from this research will better inform policymakers and implementers of the implications created by cutting the U.S. refugee admissions ceiling. Due to this thesis's program evaluation of the USRAP through a logic model, it is believed that contributing this information and analysis of the USRAP's motives, services, and outcomes can forecast the ways in which refugees are affected here and abroad. The evaluation and theoretical tests also forecast the implications on the program as a whole. Broadly, this thesis aims to assist immigration policy analysis, especially in regard to the unparalleled impact the Trump administration's track record has already implemented and will continue to implement on the infrastructure of the refugee resettlement program.

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