The Role of Hospitable and Inhospitable States in the Process of Refugee Resettlement in the United States

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Although the resettlement of refugees is always politically contentious in host countries, the current global refugee crisis has only magnified those contentions. In the United States and in many European countries, there has been a strong backlash against the resettlement of refugees—particularly those from Muslim-majority countries. However, within countries such as the United States, there are areas of the country that are more anti-refugee than others. The purpose of this article is to explore the variation in refugee resettlement across the 50 US states from 2002 to 2010. Refugee resettlement in the United States is done in conjunction with the federal government, religious and secular non-profits, and state governments. Some states are far more hospitable to refugee resettlement than others and this article explores the political, economic and social factors that influence the number of refugees resettled in each state. We find that states with a moralistic political culture resettle the most refugees but more liberal states do not resettle more refugees than conservative states. Also, states with a better quality of life resettle more refugees but so do states with higher poverty rates.

Introduction

On 13 November 2015, eight European nationals in Paris bombed a national stadium during a football match, attacked civilians in a theatre and shot patrons in nearby cafes and restaurants, killing 130 people and injuring 413 (Tharoor 2015). One of the attackers killed by law-enforcement officers was found with a passport linked to a Syrian refugee recently admitted into the European Union (Tharoor 2015). In response to the Paris attacks, many US

states urged limiting Syrian-refugee placements, called for an immediate suspension of the refugee programme and initiated state action to curtail refugee placements within their territories (Seipel 2015; Tau and Peterson 2015; Elias 2017). Twenty-nine Republicans and one Democratic governor (Maggie Hassan of New Hampshire) objected to the admission of refugees without an enhanced screening process. Shortly thereafter, the Office of Refugee Resettlement ('ORR') released a letter admonishing the US states that they 'may not categorically deny ORR-funded benefits and services to Syrian refugees' (Fandl 2017: 84).

The hostile actions of state governors to the resettlement of refugees in their states raises a more fundamental question of what factors explain the resettlement of refugees within the US states. Refugee resettlement occurs in all 50 states in the United States and Washington, DC, with the exception of Wyoming. The process of resettling refugees in the United States is shared between the federal government and non-profit voluntary agencies ('VOLAGS'). State governments play a secondary role in the resettlement of refugees, with some more supportive of the process and working in tandem with the federal government and the VOLAGS, while others are more hostile to the process and provide minimal support, if any at all, for the resettlement of refugees within their borders. This article explores how hospitable or inhospitable US states are to refugee resettlement with the hope of explaining the pattern of refugee resettlement within the United States.

The rest of the article will proceed as follows. The next section will detail the US refugee-resettlement process. Specifically, it will address how the various federal agencies interact and work with the VOLAGS (both national and local) that, together, comprise the resettlement process in the United States. The following section will explore various theoretical and empirical explanations for the refugee-resettlement patterns in the United States focusing the decision-making process of the VOLAGS, with particular attention on how state economic capacity, policy and social environments influence this process. Following this section, we describe our theory of hospitable and inhospitable states and how it may explain the pattern of refugee resettlement across the US states; this section also contains the hypothesis we will test. The succeeding section will contain the data description and methodology. This will be followed by the results section and finally the conclusion.

Refugee-resettlement Process in the United States

The refugee process in the United States is governed by the Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1965 ('INA') and the Refugee Act of 1980.[1] The 1980 Refugee Act modified the INA by: (i) providing federal funding for the placement of refugees within local communities, (ii) creating the ORR to coordinate the disbursement of federal funds to the states and (iii) providing transitional funding for the first 18 months of placement and a three-year limit on reimbursable expenses by states (Elias 2017; Fandl 2017). Under

the 1980 Refugee Act, the president determines how many refugees will be admitted to the United States each year (Elias 2017; Fandl 2017; Pritchett 2017). From 2013 to 2015, the ceiling was set annually at 70,000 in response to the Syrian-refugee crisis. Then, President Obama increased the quota to 85,000, including 10,000 refugees from Syria for the 2016 fiscal year (Memorandum from Office of the Press Secretary to the Secretary of State 2016). Conversely, the Trump administration has shown outright hostility to the resettlement of refugees in the United States not only with the president's Executive Order 13769 (commonly known as the 'travel ban') prohibiting people from certain countries (refugees or not) from entering the country, but also suspending the entire refugee admission system for 120 days and the Syrian-refugee programme indefinitely (Yuhas and Sidahmed 2017). Furthermore, the Trump administration has been slow-walking refugee admissions—the United States admitted only 22,491 refugees, well below the refugee cap for that year, which was 45,000 (itself a record low), for the fiscal year 2018, which is significantly fewer than the 84,994 resettled in the last fiscal year of the Obama administration (Solis and Limon 2018).

Refugee applicants are initially screened and referred to the United States by either of three agencies—the international United Nations High Commission for Refugees ('UNHCR') organization, a US embassy or a non-governmental organization (Carey 2015; Elias 2017; Fandl 2017). The US Citizenship and Immigration Services ('USCIS') conducts extensive interviews, background checks and medical screenings of refugees assigned for relocation to the United States (Pope 2015; Immigration and Nationality Act 2016). Under the 1980 Refugee Act, the director of the ORR and the State Department's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration ('PRM') are required to consult with states, local governments and non-profit agencies 'concerning the sponsorship process and the intended distribution of refugees among the States and localities before their placement' (Fandl 2017: 81). Among others, they are required to: (i) insure that a refugee is not initially placed or resettled in an area 'highly impacted by the presence of refugees' unless a 'spouse, parent, sibling, son, or daughter' resides in that area and (ii) ensure that representatives of local community-based organizations of voluntary agencies regularly meet with state and local government representatives to coordinate the placement and distribution of refugees prior to their arrival (Refugee Act 1994).

The PRM coordinates admissions and allocations to specific cities and resettlement agencies with the assistance of nine national VOLAGS[2] that oversee a network of 250 community-based organizations in 49 states and the District of Columbia (Zucker 1982; Kenny and Lockwood-Kenny 2011; Forrest and Brown 2014; Office of Refugee Resettlement 2015; Elias 2017). The VOLAGS coordinate with local and state agencies to find appropriate placements within local communities (Wright 1981; Zucker 1983; Mott 2010; Capps *et al.* 2015; Darrow 2015a, 2015b; Fandl 2017). The VOLAG then notifies a local community-based organization of the pending refugee arrival

(Darrow 2015a, 2015b; Fandl 2017). The local community-based organization receives a payment from the PRM to arrange housing, essential furnishings, food, necessary seasonal clothing, orientation and assistance with access to other social, medical and employment services during the refugees' first 30–90 days in the United States (Bureau of Population, Refugees & Migration 2016; Fandl 2017: 94; Xi 2017: 1205). Refugees arriving in the United States receive a one-time cash stipend as initial resettlement money under the State Department's Refugee Admissions Reception and Placement (R&P) programme. For fiscal year 2017, the per-refugee grant provided to voluntary resettlement agencies participating in the R&P programme is $2,075, which consists of $1,125 for direct support of refugees and $950 for expensed related to staff and infrastructure of its local community-based organization (Bruno 2017).

Upon arrival and within the first eight months thereafter, the ORR, through its Cash and Medical Assistance ('CMA') programme, also provides refugees who are not eligible for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families ('TANF') and Medicaid with short-term Refugee Cash Assistance ('RCA') and Refugee Medical Assistance ('RMA'). Other ORR benefits include Supplemental Security Income for refugees over age 65 ($674/month) and various social services to facilitate their successful transition in the United States and help them to attain self-sufficiency (Ruffing 2011; Office of Refugee Resettlement 2015). After eight months, these benefits cease and a refugee must apply for benefits like any other US citizen (Office of Refugee Resettlement 2016).

The ORR's CMA programme was significantly affected by the 1996 Welfare Reform Act and subsequent amendments (Congressional Research Service 2018). Prior to this legislation, refugees who met the requirements of federal public-assistance programmes were immediately and indefinitely eligible to participate in them in the same manner as US citizens. Table 1 summarizes refugee eligibility for major federal public-assistance programmes, including R&P and CMA programmes.

The ORR's CMA programme is administered by individual states and are available through state benefit-granting agencies. The CMA programme provides reimbursement to states for 100 per cent of RCA, RMA and states' administrative costs of providing these benefits to refugees. The ORR also provides funding to states for social services, including employment services, English-language instruction, case management, translation and interpreter services, skills recertification and other services (Kennedy 1981). On 24 August 2018, the ORR consolidated and replaced three separate programmes—Refugee Social Services ('RSOC'), formula and discretionary Targeted Assistance Grants ('TAG') and the Refugee Health Promotion Program (RHP)—into the Refugee Support Services ('RSS') programme pursuant to Article 412(c)(1) of the Immigration and Nationality Act. However, not all local agencies access these programmes—some local agencies run on R&P alone. The RSS programme continued to fund 'employment services

Table 1

Refugee Eligibility for Major Federal Public-assistance Programmes

	Programme	Description	Time limit
Initial assistance			
	PRM's Reception and Placement Program	Pre-arrival, reception, initial housing, food, clothing, referral services and social programmes	Up to 90 days after entry
Cash assistance			
Either of the following alternatives:	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)	Time limited cash assistance and other support services for qualifying low-income individuals with dependent children	Up to 5 years after entry
	ORR's Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA)	Program similar to TANF for refugees who do not qualify for TANF	Up to 8 months after entry
	Supplemental Security Income (SSI)	Cash assistance to low-income individuals who are aged, blind or disabled	Up to 9 years after entry
Medical assistance			
Either of the following alternatives:	Medicaid (non-emergency care)	Health-care coverage for qualifying low-income individuals	Up to 7 years after entry
	ORR's Refugee Medical Assistance (RMA)	Programme similar to Medicaid for refugees who do not qualify for Medicaid	Up to 8 months after entry
Social services			
	ORR's Refugee Support Services (replacing Refugee Social Services, Targeted Assistance Grants and the Refugee Health Promotion Program)	Employment preparation, job placement, retention services and social adjustment, including interpretation and translation, childcare, and citizenship and naturalization	Up to 5 years after entry
Other benefits			
	Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)	Food-stamp programme or food assistance for qualifying low-income individuals	Eligible without time limits

and programs to address employment barriers, such as social adjustment, interpretation and translation, childcare, and citizenship and naturalization' (Lloyd 2018: 1). Two primary changes to allocation of funding under the new RSS programme are as follows: (i) the ORR no longer allocated funds for certain counties as was done under the formula TAG programme and states had discretion to decide how to distribute funds based on arrival patterns, allowing more flexibility, and (ii) the ORR determined funding levels based on the number of arrivals during the previous 12 months instead of the previous 24 months (Lloyd 2018).

The ORR awards grant money either directly to the states or administered through non-profit agencies. There are four types of federal refugee-resettlement programmes implemented in the US states: (i) state-administered, where 32 states voluntarily receive federal funds to administer their own ORR-approved state refugee-resettlement programmes; (ii) federally funded public–private partnerships where the states enter into a partnership with local resettlement agencies to provide cash assistance to refugees while maintaining 'policy and administrative oversight';[3] (iii) ORR-funded Wilson-Fish projects that establish or maintain a refugee programme in a state that either does not participate or withdrew from the federal programme (Bruno 2011); these alternative Wilson-Fish projects provide refugees with interim support, medical services and social-support services to encourage their 'self-sufficiency' (Bruno 2011: 13) and are currently implemented in 12 states that withdrew from the federal programme—VOLAGS and other non-profits within these states function as 'state-designees' to provide 'support for refugees' (Elias 2017: 374–375; Pritchett 2017: 290–293; Xi 2017: 1207);[4] and (iv) no refugee-resettlement programme whatsoever[5] (Elias 2017; Pritchett 2017; Xi 2017).

Review of Literature on the Refugee-resettlement Process in the United States

Immigration Federalism and State Role

US Supreme Court jurisprudence is replete with cases affirming the pre-eminence of the federal government over state and local governments with respect to immigration issues (Bulman-Pozen and Gerken 2009; Fandl 2015). Although jurisdiction over immigration matters is traditionally reserved to the national government, subnational and local governments play an increasing role in controlling or integrating immigrants into local communities (Ramakrishnan and Gulasekaram 2012; Gulasekaram and Ramakrishnan 2013). Varsanyi (2010) explains that local jurisdictions influence immigration by creating policies that are integrative ('immigrant policies') or restrictive ('immigration policies'). These policies can be classified into: (i) policies arising from devolution of integration from federal to local governments (e.g. devolution to states of power to determine eligibility for welfare programmes), (ii) policies arising from devolution of control from central to

local governments (e.g. annual immigration quotas and local immigration policing), (iii) integrative immigrant policies arising from grassroots (e.g. housing, employment, local welfare) and (iv) immigration-control policies arising from the grassroots (e.g. penalizing local employers and landlords who hire or rent housing to undocumented residents). In the United States, states and local jurisdictions have developed policies that are either integrative, enabling the adaption and assimilation of immigrants and undocumented residents, or promote immigration control to exclude and constrain the rights of undocumented residents (Varsanyi 2010).

In the context of refugee resettlement as a subfield of the US immigration policy, some legal scholars have advocated for the states to take a more assertive role by identifying in advance locations where refugees and groups of refugees would be accepted and useful (Elias 2017; Xi 2017). Johnson (2018: 229), however, counters that 'allowing states to pick and choose among admitted refugees opens the door to local decision-making' based on, among others, 'race, religion, education, gender, and sexual orientation'. She argues instead that the US refugee-resettlement process is not based on the premise that the refugee could potentially contribute to the state, but because 'it is the right thing to do', 'refugees are in need', contiguous countries that offered shelter are 'overwhelmed by the demand' and because 'we aspire to be a country that carries its share of global burdens' (Johnson 2018: 229).

Despite the dominant role of the federal government in the resettlement process, there is more than ample room for states to influence the process. States can make themselves more or less hospitable to refugee resettlement through a variety of actions and policies that either encourage refugees to integrate into the local community or constrain their rights, restricting avenues to assimilation. Our next section looks at how the VOLAGS may consider the hospitableness of a state or locality to refugees as criteria for resettlement.

Organizational Decision-making: The Role of VOLAGS

The role of VOLAGS in US immigration started as early as World War II (Winkler 1981; Harrell-Bond 1985; Forrest and Brown 2014: 13). As a consequence of Jewish persecution in Russia and Eastern Europe during the Holocaust, the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, founded in 1881, relocated many Jewish survivors to the Midwest and East Coast (Morawska 1995; UN Refugee Agency 2011). Other religious organizations were subsequently created to assist in refugee resettlement (Wright 1981; Forrest and Brown 2014). These religious organizations later became institutionalized in the US refugee-resettlement process as the intermediaries between admission to the United States and local resettlement (Zucker 1983; Brown *et al.* 2007; Forrest and Brown 2014).

Labour demand and job opportunities   Forrest and Brown (2014) explain refu-gee-resettlement efforts by VOLAGS within the context of large-scale labour contracting in migration studies. They explain that early resettlement patterns and secondary migration reflected 'industrial progress and technological advances in coal mining, iron-steel production, railroads, glass manufacturing, cement production, and the chemical industry' (Forrest and Brown 2014: 14). Examples include the following: (i) Chinese and Japanese resettlement to the West Coast for railroad construction and mining (Dinnerstein and Reimers 1999); (ii) resettlement of Filipinos to Hawaii and California for sugar culti-vation; (iii) emergence of San Francisco and Seattle as regional centres for agricultural immigrant labour (Fujita-Rony 2003); and (iv) resettlement of East Europeans and West Asians in the 1880s in the Midwest and East to work in iron and steel production, coal mining, construction, meat packing and textiles (Morawska 1995; Forrest and Brown 2014: 12). The presence of high concentrations of refugees in Iowa is partly explained by the availability of jobs, for example, in the meat-packing and other agricultural industries (Grey 2006a, 2006b).

Resettlement efforts of the ORR and VOLAGS also reflected the ancillary but central mandate of facilitating integration and assimilation of refugees within US society (Mortland and Ledgerwood 1987; Newbold 2002; Ott 2011). Cambodian refugees in the early 1980s, for instance, were resettled in 12 medium-sized cities within nine states that lacked large refugee popu-lations but where local officials cooperated in efforts to provide housing and employment opportunities (Gordon 1996). As part of the national 'scatter system', there was also an 'unwritten southern strategy' of moving refugees from 'impacted northeastern cities and stiffer job competition' into 'second-tier' southern cities with stronger economies and right-to-work legislation (Winders 2006: 425–426; Forrest and Brown 2014: 15). The presence of em-ployment opportunities for refugees is an important factor in the decision of where to resettle refugees in the United States.

Federal funding and local community-based resources   Successful resettlement within the United States depends on monetary support from the ORR (Zucker 1983), the ability of VOLAGS to establish linkages with ethnic groups in the United States and the presence of community-based resources such as 'local sponsors, financial support, human assistance, community co-operation, and/or cooperative local agencies' (Forrest and Brown, 2014: 15). VOLAGS coordinate with local organizations that can: (i) provide specific resources such as language-services programmes and economic opportunities for the refugee, (ii) maximize use of local private resources such as 'ethnic and community organizations' and (iii) provide necessary services such as 'case management, medical treatment, language training, housing placement' (Forrest and Brown 2014: 16). Therefore, a critical factor in refugee resettle-ment is the 'long-standing institutional relationships between national VOLAGS and local agencies' (Forrest and Brown 2014: 18).

Local organizations provide two essential services for refugees: help in securing affordable housing (Darrow 2015b) and economic opportunities (Darrow 2015a). Two factors in particular that support the provision of these services are the presence of mass transit and housing concentration. Refugees are often placed in only a few selected buildings in specific apartment complexes and in concentrated areas to make service provision by local agencies easier (Hansen 2005). Since the majority of federal funding for the resettlement process is for employment support, VOLAGS and local organizations also spend a significant amount of their time supporting refugees in their search for employment (Darrow 2015a). In summary, the presence of local community-based organizations that the VOLAGS can work with increases the likelihood of resettlement in those areas.

Family reunification and ethnic ties In addition to the relationships VOLAGS have with local community-based organizations and the services those groups provide, they are also mindful of the role social and ethnic ties can play in the successful resettlement of refugees. Post-World War II European refugee resettlement involved family-reunification cases—refugees were resettled in the locations where their relatives already resided in the United States (Mott 2010). Free cases or refugees who did not have family or relatives in the United States were resettled by VOLAGS randomly in locations with 'established ties and/or nontraditional immigrant destinations' (Forrest and Brown 2014: 16). Although the ORR and VOLAGS make efforts to reunite family members in the resettlement process, they also resettle refugees in non-traditional immigrant destinations to ensure that a refugee is not initially placed or resettled in an area 'highly impacted by the presence of refugees' (Refugee Act 1994).

Secondary migration, however, indicates that refugees relocate by choice from areas where they were initially resettled if their ethnic groups are 'not represented by earlier migrants', they are 'not in culturally-comfortable communities' or they are 'not near other family or community members' (Forrest and Brown 2014: 16). Secondary-migration patterns of refugees show that they tend to coalesce in locations with similar ethnic groups, affordable housing and employment opportunities (Mott 2010). Karen refugees, for instance, moved after initial resettlement in the Northeast to Texas (large social networks) and Nebraska (better employment opportunities because of meat-packing plants) (Kenny and Lockwood-Kenny 2011).

Placement in communities with high concentrations of same-ethnic groups can have a positive impact on integration of the newly settled refugees (Sherrell *et al.* 2007; Spicer 2008; Bolt *et al.*, 2009) through assistance with cultural transition into the new community (Ives 2007; Miyares 2010) and help with economic opportunities (Portes and Stepick 1985; Kibria 1994; Haines 1996; Mamgain and Collins 2003; Portes and Rumbaut 2006; Murdie and Ghosh 2009). However, spatial concentration can also negatively impact resources of the community because of the potential to overwhelm

local resources and capacity (Leibowitz 1983; Massey *et al.* 2002) and due to the increased conflict between the new minority and the established dominant majority (Brick *et al.* 2010). In their study of the urban geography of resettlement patterns of refugees, Brown *et al.* (2007: 57) found three mechanisms as influential: 'distance decay', where refugees tended to resettle in localities near the immigrant group's origin location; 'migration chains', where they are resettled near earlier groups of immigrants of the same or similar ethnic group; and 'intermediary actors', where non-profit agencies such as VOLAGS and local community-based organizations of resettlement agencies direct refugees to particular places. Beaman (2012) examined refugee placements by the International Rescue Committee ('IRC'), finding that, once a city was established as a site for refugees from a particular place, that city will continue to resettle refugees from that same place, although the numbers decline over time. In general, there is an effort within the resettlement process to support family reunification and ethnic ties, which helps to make the integration process into American society easier for the refugee.

State and local government policy and social environment   Finally, other more general factors for resettlement considered by VOLAGS include 'government policy, resource availability, and willingness in a particular community or availability of sponsor agencies or groups' (Forrest and Brown 2014: 16). Government policy, resource availability, willingness in a particular community and the availability of sponsor agencies or groups are fundamentally functions of the political and social environment of a state or locality. By considering the specific factors such as 'government policy' and 'willingness in a particular community', the VOLAGS are taking into consideration the political and social environment of a locality when determining the placement of refugees, even if they do not do so explicitly or consciously. Previous research shows that the political and social environments of a state can impact the resettlement of refugees. The large number of refugees in Minnesota and Iowa, for example, are due to their reputations as welcoming states—Minnesota was one of the first states to respond to federal refugee resettlement through the creation of the Citizen's Committee (Fennelly 2005, 2006), while Iowa created in 1975 the nation's first state bureau for the resettlement of refugees (Mott 2010).

What are the political and social factors that make a state more welcoming for refugee resettlement? More specifically, what are the political and social factors that would create government policies, resource availability, willingness in a community and the availability of sponsor agencies and groups that would steer the VOLAGs to resettle refugees in those areas? Studies indicate there is a relationship between partisanship and political ideology and openness to refugee resettlement. A recent study by the Pew Research Center found a sharp partisan and ideological divide in support for refugee resettlement—74 per cent of Democrats said the United States had a responsibility to accept refugees in contrast to only 26 per cent of Republicans (Hartig

2018). In another recent study looking at support for the resettlement of Syrian refugees in the United States, Adida *et al.* (2017) found that attitudes and behaviours of support towards refugees were mediated by partisanship. Specifically, they found that increasing empathy in survey respondents made Democrats, Republicans and Independents more supportive of refugees but the effect was largest in Democrats. Additionally, they found that, when they provided more information to respondents about Syrian refugees, there was a backlash among Republican respondents, who reacted more negatively towards refugees after receiving the information. Furthermore, almost all the governors who expressed reservations about the resettlement of Syrian refugees in their state were Republicans, which was discussed at the beginning of the article. This would suggest that Republicans and ideological conservatives would be less open to refugee resettlement in their states.

In addition to partisanship and political ideology, political culture may also play a significant role in refugee resettlement because it influences perceptions of and expectations from government (Elazar 1984; Fisher 2016a, 2016b). The US national political culture is an aggregate of three political subcultures that are widespread and pervasive in different parts of the country: moralistic, individualistic and traditionalistic (Elazar 1984; Mead 2004). Each political subculture is strongly tied to specific areas, reflecting the patterns of immigration and migration of people of different ethnic origins, backgrounds and religions across the country (Elazar 1984; Mead 2004; Fisher 2016a). One thing to note is that political culture is distinct from political ideology— states with any of the three political subcultures can be either liberal or conservative or a mixture of both (Fisher 2016a). Both Utah and Minnesota, for example, are moralistic states but Utah is considered a conservative Republican state while Minnesota has consistently been Democratic in its politics (Elazar 1984). Table 2 provides a summary of Elazar's three types of political subcultures with their view of politics and their views on the function of government.

Elazar's typology of political culture is 'as relevant as ever in understanding American politics' (Fisher 2016a: 88). Fisher (2016b), for instance, found significant differences in public-policy preferences among the different subcultures. Among others, he found that individualistic states are most likely to favour reduction of immigration levels, while moralistic states are least likely to support reduction of immigration (Fisher 2016b). Dincer and Johnston (2016) similarly found that political subculture remained relevant in contemporary American politics. Their study indicated, for instance, that: (i) political culture accounted for more than a quarter of the variance in prevalence of corruptions issues across all states, (ii) moralistic states exhibited the least corruption issues and (iii) traditionalistic states had more corruption issues than individualistic states (Dincer and Johnston 2016).

Mead (2004) examined the link between political culture and local state capacity. His study on state implementation of welfare reform and the TANF measured several indicators of successful performance: (i) political

Table 2

Elazar's (1984) Typology of American Political Subcultures

	View of politics	Function of government
Moralistic	• Centred on the notion of the public good • Devoted to the advancement of the public interest	• For betterment of the commonwealth
Individualistic	• As a marketplace	• Strictly utilitarian • Does not need to be directly concerned with questions of the good of society but handle only those functions demanded by their constituents • Primarily economic areas that promote private initiative
Traditional	• Reflects a pre-commercial attitude that is paternalistic, elitist and hierarchical • Political activities are limited to elites who claim legitimacy based on family ties or social position	• To preserve the existing social order • New programmes are initiated only if they serve the interest of the governing elite

performance consisted of indicators measuring policymaking, consensus and availability of resources and (ii) administrative performance consisted of indicators measuring commitment, coordination and capability. Mead (2004) found that moralistic states were the most successful at satisfying the performance criteria, followed by individualistic states and traditionalistic states scoring last. Moralistic states scored particularly highly in measures of consensus and commitment. Moralistic states 'were able to form a majority behind reform that stretched behind the legislature' and resolved differences with advocates 'who questioned reform' (Mead 2004: 282). Also, administrative bureaucracy in moralistic states was 'fully engaged in reform', accepting the goals as their own (Mead 2004: 282). Mead (2004: 285) also ran several regression models on state welfare reform, finding that 'moralistic states score 2.7 points higher, and individualistic states 1.6 points higher, than the average of the traditionalistic states'. Although not directly related to refugee resettlement, his study demonstrates the strong association between political culture and state or local capacity. Moralistic states achieved a higher degree of

consensus among various interest and advocacy groups and showed greater commitment of bureaucracy in implementing welfare programmes at the state level. Moralistic states may achieve greater consensus among local organizations and volunteers in resettling refugees and higher commitment from state bureaucracy in implementing policies that enable integration of refugees. In summary, there are numerous factors that enter into the organizational decision-making process of the VOLAGS. Along with long-standing ties to local organizations, the availability of economic opportunities and resources (Forrest and Brown 2014), social networks, economic conditions (Mott 2010) and state and local policy and social environment appear to be the most important factors for VOLAGS when determining where to resettle refugees.

Theory of State Refugee Resettlement—Hospitable and Inhospitable States

To summarize, the existing literature provides valuable insights into the refugee-resettlement process. *First*, although refugee resettlement is a federal concern, states are expected to implement refugee-resettlement policies through coordinating with federal government agencies and VOLAGS. *Second*, placement of refugees is largely dependent on local state capacities, including economic opportunities and the presence of local ecumenical or secular community-based organizations of VOLAGS, which often rely on community networks of volunteers to assist in resettlement. To a certain extent, the presence of religious organizations or religious residents may facilitate successful placement of refugees within the state because VOLAGS often rely on local volunteers to assist in refugees in providing support such as language services and acculturation. *Third*, there is generally an attempt to resettle refugees in localities that have immigrants from the same or similar ethnic groups to allow greater integration. *Fourth*, state politics and political culture determine openness to new programmes such as refugee-resettlement programmes that may contribute to the common good. Political culture affects local state capacities (Mead 2004). Although not directly related to refugee resettlement, Mead's (2004) study indicates that political culture directly affects local state capacities, which, in turn, may influence resettlement decisions of the ORR and VOLAGS. Moralistic states achieved a higher degree of consensus among various interest and advocacy groups and showed greater commitment of bureaucracy in implementing welfare programmes at the state level. Resettlement programmes are analogous to welfare programmes that are implemented at the state level. Moralistic and more politically liberal states may be more welcoming of refugees and may thus experience greater resettlements of refugees than non-Moralistic states or more conservative states.

  Based on the review of existing literature, we propose a theory of state refugee resettlement. A state's capacity to resettle refugees (i.e. the strength of its local support system) is influenced by how hospitable that state is to refugees. In other words, the more hospitable a state is to refugee

Table 3

Theory of State Refugee Resettlement—Hospitable States and Inhospitable States

	Hospitable states	Inhospitable states
Political	Liberal	Conservative
	Democratic	Republican
	Moralistic	Non-moralistic
Economic	High wages	Low wages
	Affordable housing	Expensive housing
	Good quality of life	Poor quality of life
	Employment opportunities	Lack of employment opportunities
	Low poverty	High poverty
Social	High volunteerism	Low volunteerism
	High religion	Low religion

resettlement, the greater the local support system will be for refugee resettlement. Hospitableness to refugee resettlement is determined by various political, economic and social factors. Table 3 identifies the relevant characteristics of what we call 'hospitable' states and 'inhospitable'. Hospitable states are those that are most welcome to refugee resettlement and inhospitable states are those that are the least welcome. These are ideal types so no actual state may meet all the criteria for each category, but rather some states will be closer to one pole than other states. The criteria that define hospitable and inhospitable states are political—partisanship, ideology and political culture; economic—wages, housing, quality of life, employment opportunities and poverty rate; and social—level of volunteerism in a state and level of religious adherents in a state. This latter category is included because many of the VOLAGS are religious-based organizations and their local community-based organizations rely on their congregants to volunteer to support their resettlement operations.

Based on this theory, we propose the following hypothesis to test regarding refugee resettlement in the 50 states:

H1: More liberal states will resettle more refugees than more conservative states

H2: More Democratic states will resettle more refugees than more Republican states

H3: States with a moralistic political culture will resettle more refugees than states without a moralistic political culture

H4: States with higher wages will resettle more refugees than states with lower wages

H5: States with less expensive housing will resettle more refugees than states with more expensive housing

H6: States with a higher quality of life will resettle more refugees than states with a lower quality of life

H7: States with more employment opportunities will resettle more refugees than states with low employment opportunities

H8: States with lower levels of poverty will resettle more refugees than states with higher levels of poverty

H9: States with high levels of volunteerism will resettle more refugees than states with low levels of volunteerism

H10: States with more religious adherents will resettle more refugees than states with fewer religious adherents

A review of existing literature on refugee resettlement reveals the lack of empirical studies that statistically analyse the patterns of refugee resettlement among states. There are few studies, if at all, that conduct statistical analysis of the state characteristics that determine refugee placement in the US states. Mott (2010) conducted a qualitative analysis of refugee interviews to determine factors affecting resettlement patterns and secondary-migration patterns. Several studies examine geospatial patterns of refugee resettlement (Brown *et al.* 2007; Forrest and Brown 2014), while two studies by Darrow (2015a; 2015b) conducted qualitative ethnography on local community-based organizations of VOLAGS. This study contributes to existing literature by conducting a statistical analysis of state characteristics that determine refugee placement and resettlement in the United States.

Data and Methods

To test the above hypotheses, we utilize state-level data from 2002 to 2010. We include data for all 50 states over this time period, which leaves us with 450 total observations. Unfortunately, data limitations prevent us from analysis beyond 2010 so we cannot capture the recent anti-refugee sentiment that has appeared in the states since 2015. However, the time period included in this study is sufficient to analyse refugee-resettlement patterns across the 50 states and within states, as the political, economic and social factors within states change.

We estimate our models using pooled cross-sectional time-series regression with panel-corrected standard errors and a lagged dependent variable. The concern with time-series cross-sectional data is heteroscedasticity and auto-correlation (both contemporaneously and serial). Panel-corrected standard errors allow for errors that are heteroscedastic and correlated across panels (Beck and Katz 1995). To address potential serial correlation, a lagged dependent variable is included. This makes for a more conservative test because the lag usually accounts for a significant amount of the variation (Smith 2004). This variable will also have substantive use in this analysis as well because previous research suggests that, once an area has been established as a place for resettlement, VOLAGS continue to place refugees there, although those number decline over time (Beaman 2012). Finally, because the number of refugees resettled in the United States as a whole fluctuates significantly

each year based on a variety of factors, year dummy variables are included in the model.

Dependent Variable

Our dependent variable is the number of refugees resettled per 100,000 people in each state. The variable was constructed by dividing the total number of refugees resettled in a state by its population and multiplying that number by 100,000. The refugee data was taken from the ORR's annual reports to Congress. We utilized the total refugees resettled per state per 100,000 people variable over simply just using the total number of refugees resettled per state because such a variable controls for the large variation in state populations across the 50 states. Figure 1 presents the number of refugees per 100,000 people per state from 2002 to 2010. In the years under observation here, Minnesota had the single highest number of refugees resettled per 100,000 people, with 124 in 2005. Wyoming, which has no state resettlement operation, did not resettle any refugees in this time period.

Independent Variables

Our independent variables are divided into three categories—political factors, economic factors and social factors. With regard to political factors, we have three variables: *Ideology*, *Democratic Governor* and *Moral*. *Ideology* is measured using the revised 1960–2013 citizen ideology measure created by Berry *et al*. (1998). The measure is 0 to 100, with higher scores indicating a more liberal ideology. *Democratic Governor* is measured as partisan control of the executive branch and is a dichotomous variable, with 1 = the governor is a Democrat and 0 = the governor is not a Democrat. The assumption behind including these measures is that more liberal states (as measured by citizen ideology and Democratic control of the executive branch) will be more supportive of resettling refugees in their states. Our variable for *Moral* is dichotomous, with a 1 for moralistic states and 0 for individualistic and traditionalistic states. We create a dichotomous variable as opposed to keeping the original three categories developed by Elazar (1984) because a preliminary means test suggested a large difference between moralistic states on the one hand and traditional and individualistic states on the other in terms of the average number of refugees resettled in those states.

With regard to economic factors, we have five variables—*Wages*, *Housing*, *Quality of Life*, *Unemployment Rate* and *Poverty Rate*. All of these measures indicate whether a state has the economic capacity to successfully resettle and integrate large numbers of refugees. Our measure of *Wages* is the state's minimum wage. We focus on minimum wage as minimum-wage jobs are most likely to be the types of jobs newly resettled refugees will be competitive for. Additionally, the ethos of the federal refugee-resettlement programme is for refugees to achieve self-sufficiency shortly after they arrive in the United States and states that offer a higher minimum wage might make a more
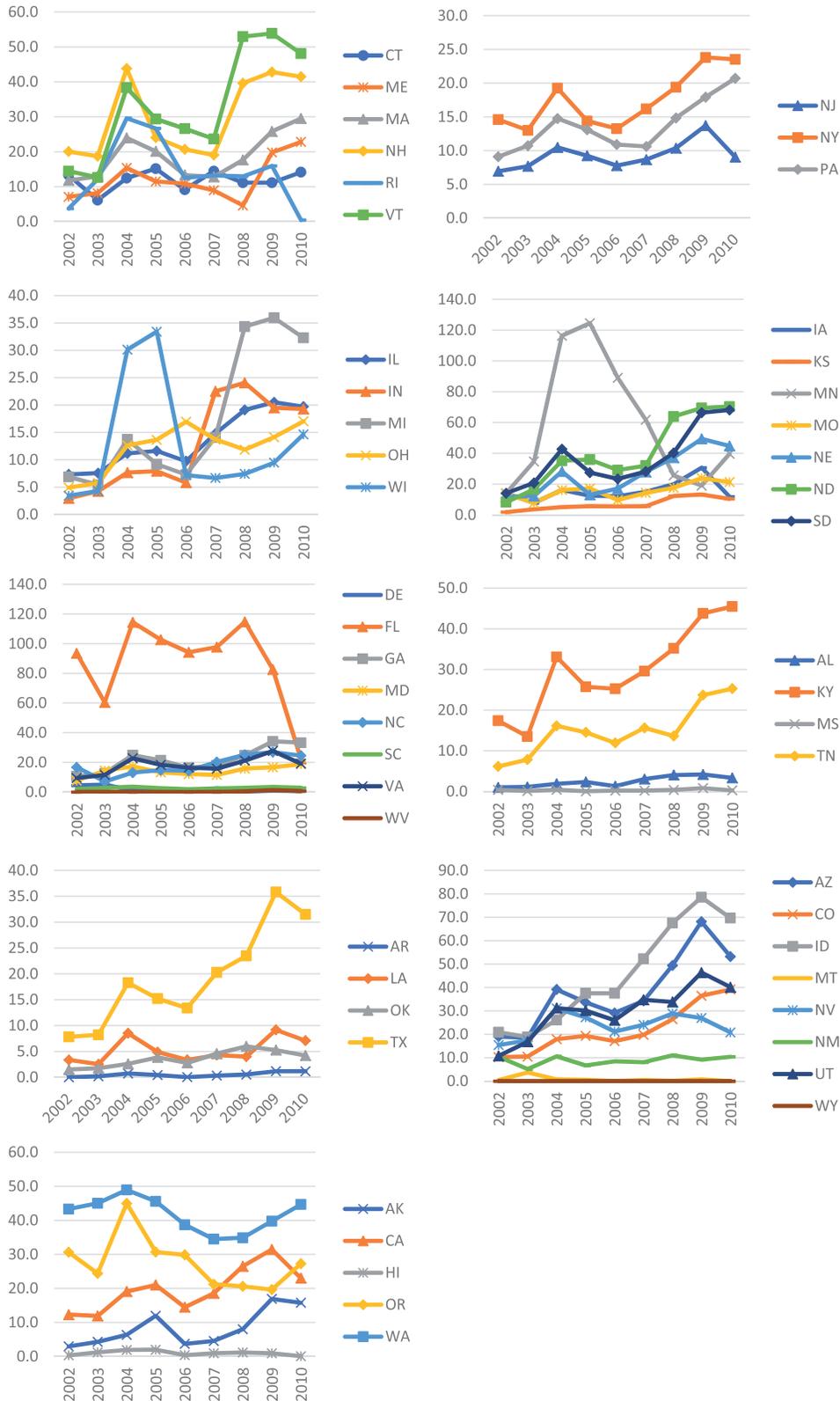
Figure 1.
Number of Refugees per 100,000 People per State, 2002–10

enticing situation for VOLAGS to resettle refugees in and help them achieve self-sufficiency sooner. State minimum-wage data comes from the University of Kentucky Center for Poverty Research (2017). The *Housing* variable is an index using sales prices and appraisal data and is the average of four quarterly measures per year. The housing data is taken from Carl Klarner's 'State Economic Data' dataset (2013). This measure is included because being able to secure housing for refugees is an important factor considered by the VOLAGS when determining resettlement and securing housing is also an important element for success. The state *Quality of Life* variable aggregates 19 economic indices into one ranking (1–50). We include this as a broad economic measure of state hospitableness to refugee resettlement, since the primary objective of the resettlement process is economic self-sufficiency for refugees as soon as possible. The rankings have been inverted to ease interpretation. The ranking was constructed by the website *Ballotpedia* and the data comes from the Correlates of State Policy dataset (Palley 2013; Jordan and Grossmann 2017). Finally, the *Unemployment Rate* is the percentage of a state's population that is unemployed and the *Poverty Rate* is calculated as the percentage of a state's population that lives in poverty. The data for both of these variables also comes from the University of Kentucky Center for Poverty Research (2017). We include the unemployment-rate variable under the assumption that refugees are more likely to be placed in areas where there are available employment opportunities, since one of the main drives of the refugee-resettlement programme in the United States is for refugees to attain self-sufficiency as soon as possible. We also include a variable of the state's poverty rate under the assumption that poverty rates are an indicator of lack of sufficient community resources that are important in the resettlement process.

We include four variables for the social-factors category—*Volunteerism*, *Mainline Protestant*, *Catholic* and *Jewish*. The resettlement process in the United States is primarily driven by voluntary organizations (the VOLAGS and their local community partners). Because of this, we include measures of the volunteering rate in each state as a proxy for the amount of support the resettlement process may garner from each state. *Volunteerism* is a composite measure of a state's volunteer rate, which is the percentage of the state population that volunteers, and the volunteer hours per capita, which is the average number of hours someone volunteers in that state per capita. Our volunteerism measure is constructed by multiplying these two numbers. The volunteering data comes from the Corporation for National and Community Service (2018).

Additionally, since many, but not all, of the voluntary organizations involved in the resettlement process are religious-based, we can assume that these organizations utilize local congregations for volunteers and support for the resettlement of refugees; therefore, we include variables on the religious composition of each state. Specifically, we include variables for the number of mainline Protestants in a state, the number of Catholics in a

state and the number of Jews in a state. We focus on these three religious groups because they align with the religious missions of six of the nine VOLAGS responsible for the resettlement of refugees in the states. Church World Service (CWS), Episcopal Migration Ministries (EMM), World Relief Corporation (WR) and Lutheran Social Services are all Protestant organizations. We include the measure of the number of mainline Protestants in a state to capture the potential volunteers who may work with organizations to help resettle refugees in their state. The US Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) is a Catholic organization, so we include the measure of Catholic adherents in a state to capture potential volunteers for this organization. The Hebrew Immigration Aid Society (HIAS) is a Jewish organization and therefore we include a measure of Jewish adherents in a state to account for potential volunteers for this organization and its subsidiaries. For the three religious adherents' variables, we utilize the Religious Congregations and Membership Study from 2000 and 2010: (i) the measure of *Mainline Protestants* is the number of mainline Protestants per state per 1,000 people, (ii) the measure of *Catholics* is the number of Catholics per state per 1,000 people and (iii) the measure of *Jewish* is the number of Jews per state per 1,000 people (Jones *et al*. 2002; Grammich *et al*. 2012). The Religious Congregations and Membership Study is conducted once every 10 years in conjunction with the census, so we only have data on religious adherents for 2000 and 2010. To fill in the missing data, we utilize linear interpolation.

Finally, we also include a control variable on the type of state refugee programme a state runs in conjunction with the federal government. The idea is that states with their own government-run resettlement operation may be more open to resettlement than states with no programme or a privately run programme. *Refugee Program Administration* is a nominal variable with four categories: 0 is for states with no refugee-resettlement programme (which only includes the state of Wyoming), states that operate a Wilson-Fish programme are coded as 1, states that operate a public–private partnership are coded as 2 and states that have their own state government-run refugee-resettlement operation are coded as 3.

Results

The results are presented in Table 4. As expected, the lagged dependent variable is a strong predictor of state refugee resettlement at time *t*. This shows that, even with the wide fluctuation in the total number of refugees resettled each year, this does not change the pattern of resettlement in the states. As for the other results, there is mixed support for our hypothesis. Starting with the political factors, on the one hand, we have clear support for our hypothesis that states with a moralistic political culture will resettle more refugees than states with individualistic or traditionalistic political culture. The coefficient is strongly positive and significant. The ethos of the moralistic

Table 4

Determinants of State Refugee Resettlement, 2002–10

Variable	Model 1
Refugees per 100,000$_{t-1}$	0.821***
	(0.085)
Ideology	–0.064*
	(0.031)
Democratic governor	–1.10
	(0.772)
Political culture	2.17*
	(0.954)
Wages	0.940
	(0.518)
Housing	0.258
	(0.606)
Quality of life	0.114**
	(0.043)
Unemployment rate	–0.745
	(0.421)
Poverty rate	0.439*
	(0.178)
Volunteerism	0.021
	(0.094)
Mainline Protestant	–0.002
	(0.010)
Catholic	–0.004
	(0.004)
Jewish	0.049
	(0.040)
No state programme	–3.74*
	(1.69)
Wilson Fish	1.51
	(1.10)
Public–private	0.399
	(2.45)

*$p < 0.05$, **$p < 0.01$, ***$p < 0.001$; panel-corrected standard errors in parentheses.

political culture that 'we are all in this together' extends to the plight of refugees as well. On the other hand, our additional political variables did not confirm our hypothesis. The signs for both *Ideology* and *Democratic Governor* were in the opposite direction from what was hypothesized and *Ideology* was significant at the 0.05 level. What this indicates is that more conservative states rather than more liberal states resettled more refugees.

This stands in stark contrast to the rhetoric and policy action undertaken by Republican governors in response to the possible resettlement of Syrian refugees in 2016.

We offer two possible explanations for these findings. First, the partisan and ideological divide over refugee resettlement is perhaps not as large as the survey data and current political rhetoric would suggest. For example, Ferwerda *et al.* (2017) using a survey experiment, find that Democrats are more supportive of refugee resettlement than Republicans. However, when respondents in the survey were asked about local resettlement versus national resettlement, the partisan difference is reduced. In other words, Democrats are more supportive of refugee resettlement nationally but are similar to Republicans about being less enthusiastic about resettlement locally. Similarly, Hainmueller and Hopkins (2015), also using a survey experiment, found what they term a 'hidden American immigration consensus', meaning that Democrats and Republicans have similar preferences for the type of immigrants they 'want' in the United States.

Second, our model may not be capturing the diversity within the religious right.[6] As stated above, many of the VOLAGS are affiliated with a religious tradition and rely on local congregants to help fulfil their obligations of helping resettle refugees in the United States. Qualitative literature on refugee resettlement in the United States has investigated the nuances in the role of religious organizations in refugee resettlement (Nawyn 2006; Eby *et al.* 2011). Religious volunteers who work to help with the resettlement of refugees often do so not to proselytize or convert, but rather because they view service as inherent in their religious mission. This element of service is most likely not related to partisanship or political ideology. In other words, one can imagine someone who is a religious conservative willing to volunteer locally to help resettle refugees because it accords with their religious beliefs of service despite the fact that it may not fit well with their political beliefs.

For the variables encompassing economic factors, only *Quality of Life* and *Poverty Rate* were statistically significant, although the sign for *Poverty Rate* was not in the hypothesized direction. A positive sign for *Poverty Rate* and statistical significance for both variables seems contradictory, since a high quality of life seems inversely related to the poverty rate in a state, although both are predictors of more refugee resettlement in a state. A possible explanation for the *Poverty Rate* results could be that the level of poverty in a state is related to the cost of living and perhaps more refugees are resettled in those states because the cost of living is lower. To test this explanation, we present another analysis of state-level resettlement of refugees by substituting the *Poverty Rate* variable with a variable that measures the cost of living in a state, which is the *Consumer Price Index* (*CPI*). The *CPI* variable we use is a state-level cost-of-living measure first developed by Berry *et al.* (2000) and extended by Klarner (2013). The results are presented in Table 5. The *CPI* variable is not statistically significant, although the coefficient is in the direction we would hypothesize (so an increase in the cost of living in a state

Table 5

Determinants of State Refugee Resettlement, 2002–10	
Variable	Model 2
Refugees per 100,000$_{t-1}$	0.820***
	(0.085)
Ideology	–0.065*
	(0.033)
Democratic governor	–1.33
	(0.823)
Political culture	2.19*
	(0.975)
Wages	0.872
	(0.474)
Housing	0.344
	(0.601)
Quality of life	0.072*
	(0.036)
Unemployment rate	–0.673
	(0.419)
Consumer Price Index	8.22
	(5.85)
Volunteerism	–0.015
	(0.080)
Mainline Protestant	–0.004
	(0.010)
Catholic	–0.001
	(0.004)
Jewish	0.047
	(0.039)
No state programme	–4.24*
	(1.81)
Wilson Fish	1.48
	(1.11)
Public–private	0.320
	(2.46)

*$p < 0.05$, **$p < 0.01$, ***$p < 0.001$; panel-corrected standard errors in parentheses.

would mean fewer refugees resettled in that state) and the coefficient is quite large. We would not state this as dispositive of the idea that the cost of living is driving the resettlement of refugees, which may explain why refugees are resettled in states with more poverty, but it is suggestive in that direction. None of the other economic factor variables was statistically significant, but

the *Wages* variable and the *Unemployment Rate* variable were in the hypothesized direction while the *Housing* variable was not.

None of the social-factor variables—*Volunteerism*, *Mainline Protestant*, *Catholic* and *Jewish*—was significant. Additionally, the coefficients for each, with the exception of the *Jewish* variable, were very small, indicating that they provide little to no explanation for the distribution of refugees across the states. Perhaps more fine-grain analysis needs to be conducted in this area. It is possible that our measures of the religious composition of a state are too broad to capture the influence of state religiosity in the resettlement of refugees. A possible example of a more fine-grained analysis could be breaking apart the *Mainline Protestant* variable into specific denominations to see how that might influence the results. Another example could be to examine the number of religious congregations in a state as opposed to the number of adherents to any particular faith, since it is usually the religious congregations that motivate volunteers. It is also possible that, despite these more fine-grained approaches to measuring the religiosity of a state, we would still not be able to determine the role that state-level religiosity plays in refugee resettlement. This is because the non-profits responsible for the resettlement in states do not require an extremely large number of volunteers to fulfil their function and therefore states with large numbers of religious adherents and states with fewer religious adherents are still able to marshal the necessary number of volunteers for resettlement.

Finally, our results for the *Refugee Program Administration* variable shows that states with no refugee-resettlement programme resettle far fewer refugees that states with a state-run refugee-resettlement programme (the comparison category). However, only Wyoming does not have any type of refugee-resettlement programme and therefore resettles almost no refugees. The other 49 states have either a state-administered programme (which served as the base-level comparison category for our analysis), a public–private system and/or a Wilson-Fish programme, which allows non-governmental agencies to implement the resettlement of refugees in a state. It is interesting that the signs for Wilson Fish and public–private are positive, indicating that those states resettle more refugees than states with a state-administered programme, but the results are not statistically significant.

Conclusion

In summary, we found mixed support for our hypothesis. The political culture of a state appears to have a strong impact on the number of refugees that are resettled in each state, with moralistic states resettling more refugees than non-moralistic states. However, the ideology of the state in determining the number of refugees resettled was opposite to our expectations, with conservative states resettling more refugees. Further work is needed therefore to investigate the more precise role that state-level ideology and partisanship play in determining the number of refugees resettled in a state. This research

should focus on a more nuanced understanding of the differences between Republicans and Democrats and their opinions about refugee resettlement, and also a more nuanced understanding of the religious right. Economic factors also produced mixed results, with states with a higher quality of life but also with higher poverty rates resettling more refugees. More attention on the cost of living across states is required to see how those factors influence refugee resettlement across the United States. With regard to social factors, the variable measuring the level of volunteerism in a state was not significant, nor were the variables measuring the levels of religious adherents in a state. Based on the mixed support for our hypothesis, we can also only offer mixed support for our theory of state refugee resettlement, which is the more hospitable a state, the more refugees will be resettled in that state. Conflicting support for our political and economic factor hypotheses and no support for our social-factor hypotheses show that more refinement of the theory and/or more data is necessary to provide further support for our theory. The inclusion of a lagged dependent variable in our model is necessary for the statistical challenges represented when using pooled cross-sectional time-series data, but it also provides for a very conservative test of our hypothesis, since the lag accounts for a large amount of the variation in the dependent variable (Smith 2004).

Future research on the determinants of state-level refugee resettlement in the United States should work to tease out more of the role that political, economic and social factors play in refugee resettlement. Future research should also examine how previous refugee resettlement in a state affects future resettlement. By including a lag of the dependent variable in our study, we capture some of this effect, but it would be fruitful to see whether refugees from specific countries tend to be resettled in certain states and whether that is a determinant for future refugees from those countries to also be resettled in those states. One of the principles the VOLAGS try to operate on is family reunification. Although this does not constitute a majority of refugee resettlement, it could prove to influence the distribution of refugees within the US states.

The patterns of refugee resettlement within the United States is an understudied phenomenon. This is unfortunate because it is an issue that cuts across a variety of disciplines. There is also a heavy normative component to this research, since whether a country like the United States should accept refugees, and how many, is a both a legal and normative issue and is often presented as such. But there is also a strong political component to how and where refugees are resettled that also needs to be considered when trying to understand this topic, which makes it a ripe area for study.

1. The 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act ('INA') defines refugee for domestic-law purposes as: 'Any person who is outside any country of such person's nationality or, in the case of a person having no nationality, is outside any country in which such person last habitually resided, and who is unable or unwilling to return

to, and is unable or unwilling to avail himself or herself of the protection of, that country because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion.'

2. These nine VOLAGS are: (i) Church World Service; (ii) Episcopal Migration Ministries; (iii) Ethiopian Community Development Council; (iv) Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society; (v) International Rescue Committee; (vi) Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service; (vii) US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants; (viii) United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (Catholic Charities); and (ix) World Relief.

3. Federally public–private partnerships operate in Maryland, Minnesota, Oklahoma, Oregon and Texas.

4. Wilson-Fish programmes are in place in Alabama, Alaska, Colorado, Idaho, Kentucky, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Nevada, North Dakota, South Dakota, Tennessee and Vermont.

5. Wyoming has no refugee-resettlement programme.

6. We would like to thank the reviewers for this suggestion.

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