Refugee Resettlement in Metropolitan America

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San Francisco
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Refugee Resettlement in Metropolitan America

I Introduction

II Data and Methodology

III Findings
Little is known about refugee settlement at the metropolitan level.

Describing the geography of refugee resettlement can help predict future flows and enable local actors to meet the accompanying challenges.

Refugee flows contribute to growth of the foreign-born in U.S. places.
Introduction: Background and Purpose

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Variables included year of admission, country of origin, city, county, and state of settlement.

We used the available geographical data to assign metropolitan areas to each record using 1999 OMB definitions.
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I
Introduction

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Findings
## Findings: Refugee Origins

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Former USSR</td>
<td>493,040</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>387,741</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Yugoslavia</td>
<td>168,644</td>
</tr>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Laos</td>
<td>113,504</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Cambodia</td>
<td>71,433</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>61,349</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Cuba</td>
<td>51,787</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Somalia</td>
<td>47,753</td>
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<td>Iraq</td>
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<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>35,144</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Romania</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
<td>31,180</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>28,809</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Sudan</td>
<td>22,647</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Liberia</td>
<td>20,925</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Findings: Refugee Origins

Three periods, which we characterize by the geographical origins of the refugees:

3. Civil Conflict Period: late 1990s to present
Refugees Resettled in the U.S. by Year and Region of Origin

Prior to 1983: large Cuban and Indochinese waves

USSR dismantled, 12/91

Expulsions of ethnic Albanians in Kosovo, 1998

Glastnost/Perestroika, 1985-1991

Break-up of Yugoslavia, 1992

Political Conflict: Somalia, Sudan, Liberia, Ethiopia 1990s-present

September 11, 2001
### Findings: Settlement in Traditional Immigrant Gateways

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Refugee Rank</th>
<th>Foreign Born Rank</th>
<th>Metropolitan Area</th>
<th>Refugees Resettled</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>New York</td>
<td>186,522</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Los Angeles</td>
<td>114,606</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Chicago</td>
<td>63,322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Orange County</td>
<td>50,714</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Seattle</td>
<td>48,573</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>San Jose</td>
<td>42,565</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>41,795</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Minneapolis-St. Paul</td>
<td>41,239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Atlanta</td>
<td>40,149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Sacramento</td>
<td>37,436</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Portland</td>
<td>34,292</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Philadelphia</td>
<td>32,981</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>St. Louis</td>
<td>22,046</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Findings: Top 30 Refugee Metropolitan Areas

Region of Origin for Metropolitan Areas
- Southeast Asia
- Former USSR
- Europe
- Other Asia
- Caribbean/Latin America

Note: Size of circle is proportional to number of refugees resettled. See Table 3 for numerical data.

Number of Refugees Resettled by State
- 150 to 15,084 (27)
- 15,085 to 43,068 (15)
- 43,069 to 85,750 (7)
- 235,325 to 405,806 (2)

*Refers to fiscal years with the exception of 2004, for which data ends in June.
### Findings: Shift away from traditional immigrant gateways to newer gateways and non-gateways

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>41,532</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>134,130</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>10,860</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Los Angeles</td>
<td>60,305</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>44,966</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>9,335</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago</td>
<td>18,666</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>37,131</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>7,525</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orange County</td>
<td>18,710</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>30,138</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>1,866</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seattle</td>
<td>11,889</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>28,129</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>8,555</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Jose</td>
<td>15,407</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>24,471</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>2,687</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>13,398</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>22,860</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>5,537</td>
<td>2.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minneapolis</td>
<td>11,061</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>19,980</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>10,198</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atlanta</td>
<td>6,392</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>25,119</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>8,638</td>
<td>4.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sacramento</td>
<td>5,383</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>23,719</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>8,334</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boston</td>
<td>12,571</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>19,957</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>3,704</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portland</td>
<td>6,066</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>20,891</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>7,335</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Findings: Shift away from traditional immigrant gateways to newer gateways and non-gateways
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![Graph showing the percent of all refugees resettled in the U.S. for different years and cities.]
Findings: Refugees dominate the foreign-born population in smaller places

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Utica-Rome, NY</td>
<td>6,084</td>
<td>7,013</td>
<td>86.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fargo-Moorhead, ND-MN</td>
<td>2,718</td>
<td>3,572</td>
<td>76.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Erie, PA</td>
<td>2,969</td>
<td>3,992</td>
<td>74.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Binghamton, NY</td>
<td>2,601</td>
<td>4,760</td>
<td>54.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spokane, WA</td>
<td>4,466</td>
<td>9,131</td>
<td>48.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portland, ME</td>
<td>1,871</td>
<td>3,888</td>
<td>48.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lincoln, NE</td>
<td>4,131</td>
<td>9,398</td>
<td>44.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waterloo-Cedar Falls, IA</td>
<td>1,397</td>
<td>3,307</td>
<td>42.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burlington, VT</td>
<td>1,803</td>
<td>4,559</td>
<td>39.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manchester, NH</td>
<td>2,325</td>
<td>6,096</td>
<td>38.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Des Moines, IA</td>
<td>5,540</td>
<td>14,722</td>
<td>37.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Findings: Refugee Hubs

Refugees from similar origins often resettled together.

Voluntary agencies often specialize in placing refugees from specific backgrounds.

Sometimes, the placement of too many refugees in one area has overwhelmed local communities or stirred tension.
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Findings: Refugee Hubs: Iran

San Jose
Modesto
Los Angeles
New York
Washington
Findings: Refugee Hubs: Cuba

- Miami
- Tampa
- Jersey City
- Albuquerque
- Las Vegas
Findings: Vietnam

III

- San Jose
- Los Angeles
- Orange County
- Houston
- Washington
Findings: Laos and Cambodia

- Seattle
- Fresno
- Merced
- Stockton
- Sacramento
- Los Angeles
- Minneapolis
- Chicago
- Philadelphia
- Boston

- Laos
- Cambodia
Findings: Former Yugoslavia
Findings: Iraq

III

San Diego
Phoenix
Dallas
Chicago
Detroit
III Findings: Somalia

- Seattle
- San Diego
- Minneapolis
- Washington
- Atlanta
Findings: Ethiopia
Conclusions and Policy Implications

Unlike other immigrants, refugees have access to considerable federal, state, and local support.

Meeting local service needs: affordable housing, health care, job training and placement, language

Metro areas differ in their experience with and ability to integrate refugees.
Meeting local service needs: affordable housing, health care, job training and placement, language

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