

The Impact of Refugee Resettlement in the Phoenix Metropolitan Area:

Groundwork for Assessment

by

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## ABSTRACT

The United States resettles more refugees each year than any country, yet little is known about the influence that the Refugee Resettlement Program has on our communities.

Program evaluation in the United States is primarily concerned with outcomes and efficiency; while there has been an absence of collecting data to measure the impact that social programs have on communities. This study explores the impact of refugee resettlement on a metropolitan area by surveying professionals with experience working or volunteering with refugee populations. These professionals rate the extent to which they believe refugee resettlement influences social, economic, and environmental variables in the community, and explain the nature of the influence they believe the program has on the community. The data collected from these surveys will introduce the perceived impact of refugee resettlement from the perspective of those with professional experience in the area. By exploring the effects that the Refugee Resettlement Program has on Phoenix, this data can assist in the creation of community assessments for refugee resettlement and comparable social programs.

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Assessment

**Introduction**

The UNHCR reported in June 2017 that the current estimate of refugees worldwide is 22.5 million, half of which are children (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2017). This estimate of refugees is only one-third of the total number of displaced people worldwide. In 2016, approximately 189,300 refugees were resettled across 37 countries, amounting to less than 1% of the total refugee population, and an even smaller proportion of the total number of displaced people (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2017). Refugee populations are a product of political and social unrest, as well as environmental devastation. As climate change progresses, global conditions and abnormal weather such as sea-level rise and heatwaves will increase the extent of human displacement and the internationalization of social problems (Barnett & Adger, 2007; Dominelli, 2010, 2011). Consequently, extreme weather patterns and consequential scarce resources are likely to generate more political and social unrest.

Approximately thirty-four nation states have refugee resettlement programs, but the United States operates the largest refugee resettlement program in the world (Capps & Fix, 2015). As such, their capacity to serve refugees is going to be expected to increase as the number of refugees increases. The U.S., however, is showing signs of diminishing their support of the refugee resettlement due to conflict concerning the impact of the program on American communities. The Trump administration infamously retracted the

nation's support of the Refugee Resettlement Program by issuing executive orders suspending admissions and banning entrance for people coming from particular countries (Bruno, 2017). These executive orders were challenged and slated as discriminatory (Harris & Taeb, 2017; Human Rights First, 2017).

Nonetheless, public and legislative debates over the integrity of the program have created an inflated sense of uncertainty regarding the effects of refugee resettlement on the U.S. Furthermore, recent legislative challenges such as Executive Order 13769 (2017), have put substantial constraints on the programs operating around the nation, afflicting the resettlement agencies and local communities economically (Welch, 2017). Disparate economic conditions have strengthened anti-refugee and anti-immigrant sentiments in the U.S. and around the world, resulting in refugees increasingly becoming targets of discrimination (Human Rights Watch, n.d.). Recent research indicates that discrimination has effects on refugee wellbeing, particularly for youth (Correa-Velez, Gifford, & Barnett, 2010).

In the U.S., there is no public consensus concerning the impact of the Refugee Resettlement Program; Americans would oppose a ban of the refugee resettlement program, but they also believe in limiting the number of refugees admitted (Jones, 2015; Neufeld, 2017). As Friedberg and Hunt explain, there is “a tension between this open-door philosophy and fear of the economic and social impact of the next wave of immigrants” (1995, p.1). Much of the controversy is due to the lack of objective assessments of the impact of these migrant populations. In the U.S., the practice of conducting economic, social, and environmental impact assessments is a requirement in



legislature regarding new construction and development (Jacquet, 2014), and they are not typically completed unless legally required. Impact assessments are defined as processes to identify, analyze, monitor, and manage consequences of current or proposed action (Becker, 2001; Vanclay 2003).

The increased demand for evaluation efforts that began in the 1970s is also reflected in the Office of Federal Procurement Policy Act of 1974, which came in response to the need to regulate services contracted by the U.S. government. Shifts in evaluation priorities are reflected in legislative changes, such as those brought upon by the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) of 1993, maintained and updated as the GPRA Modernization Act of 2010. Many programs and projects are designed to appease the requirements of federal acquisition regulations and the investment considerations of funders (Kettner, Moroney, & Martin, 2017, p.4). As such, accountability, a process of rationalizing expenditures with stakeholders, has become the term associated with program evaluation (Grinnell, Gabor, & Unrau, 2016).

Accountability includes satisfying funders and contractors, the people being directly served by the program, and the general public in the community hosting the intervention. Measures of efficiency and effectiveness indicate how well a program functions, but it offers little information about the impact the program has on the larger community.

Many previous studies using indicators to measure the impact of refugee resettlement primarily focus on economic variables. This study aims to address the gaps in the research, investigating potential environmental, economic, and social impacts of refugee resettlement on a community. Findings from previous assessments of community

impact guided the questions in the survey for this study, particularly indicators that may be valuable for measuring the impact. Results will indicate the extent that professionals believe refugees have an impact on the community across social, environmental, and economic areas.

Of further concern, when community impact assessments are conducted, the party invested in the development project is placed with the responsibility of conducting the assessment and they are not typically educated in social sciences (du Pisani & Sandham, 2006). This makes the process susceptible to bias and exploitation, consciously or otherwise. Equity in the impact assessment process domestically and internationally should be an area of concern for the field of social work. Likewise, designing an intervention action, whether it be a development project, program, coalition, or otherwise, is a responsibility of social workers. Furthermore, social work ethics require social workers to ensure that intervention actions and the development of the community have positive impacts through evaluation methods (National Association of Social Workers, 2017).

A comprehensive impact assessment would require a mixed-methods approach; data collected from program assessments as well as field research would be necessary. As stated, supporting vulnerable populations in impact assessment practice is an equity concern that the field of social work has means to accomplish. Likewise, refugee resettlement impacts social workers in direct practice, community practice, government, and other broader contexts. The increasingly diverse makeup of American communities influences micro and macro social work practice. To address the impact of refugee

resettlement in Maricopa County, this study investigates the social, economic, and environmental variables.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Assessments of the impact of refugee resettlement in a community in the U.S. are limited. Assessing the impact of refugee resettlement on the community can provide evidence of the areas of program achievement and areas needing improvement, but a method of assessing the impact of refugee resettlement has not yet been established. Yet, there is little literature on the impact of refugee resettlement on communities throughout the world. Refugee resettlement is subject to political climate and international relations, so policymakers may use the program as leverage to accomplish other policy agendas or to influence relations with foreign nations. Considering, policy change regarding refugee resettlement impacts a wide range of stakeholders including resettlement agencies, schools, health care centers, and other nonprofit groups.

### **Statement of Purpose**

The purpose of the study is to explore the impact of refugee resettlement on the community. There is no validated assessment tool for ascertaining the impact of refugee resettlement on a host community, or for ascertaining the impact of social programs on the community in general. Thus, this study will gather information regarding social, environmental, and economic variables existing in impact assessments for development projects. The use of a survey alone as a mixed-methods approach is contested; however, this study uses a survey for both quantitative and qualitative methods of data analysis for a comprehensive examination of the results in order to identify areas of foci for the future

work on the development of an assessment tool. This study gathered information on perceptions of the impact of refugee resettlement on Maricopa County from local government, refugee resettlement, and ethnic-community based organization personnel.

### **Theoretical Perspective**

The study follows a transformative research paradigm. The central tenet of transformative research identifies and mitigates some of the issues concerning power differentials (Mertens, 2007, 2010). The ontological assumption is that there are multiple, socially-constructed realities that differ based on variables affecting privilege. Research should be explicit about this influence over reality and seek to support social justice. The epistemological assumption of the transformative paradigm says to identify these realities, research must be linked to community members. Realities are influenced by knowledge, and knowledge is created through historical and cultural contexts. Researchers should respect culture and power in relating to communities.

Methodologically, transformative research should address cultural complexity, power issues, and historical oppression (Mertens, 2007, 2010). Research methods such as focus groups, interviews, surveys, and threaded discussions use community members in the research process. Axiological assumptions are based on the three most prominent regulatory ethics: respect, beneficence, and justice. Respect should include a robust sensitivity to the culture of different communities. Beneficence should extend to the promotion of human rights and social justice. Lastly, justice should be explicitly linked to the research process and outcomes.

## **Research Method**

A survey was distributed to local government and NGO personnel involved in serving refugee communities using a snowball sampling method. These individuals were invited to take the survey and share the link and eligibility information with others who have experience working with refugees in the county. Participants had access to the online survey for two months.

## **Definitions of Key Terms**

In this study, definitions were provided to survey participants. Definitions were largely based on entries from the Merriam-Webster and Cambridge digital dictionaries and Dictionary.com. For example, impact was defined as “having an effect of influence” (“impact,” 2017; “impact,” n.d.). The definition of refugee resettlement, on the other hand, was informed by the legal definition of a refugee in the U.S. Refugee Act of 1980 (Sect 201 (a)). Participants judged the impact of refugee resettlement in this study based on the following definition: a process where people who had to flee their home country settle in another country that will ultimately grant them permanent residence.

Definitions for social, environmental, and economic impact used the established definition of impact provided above along with dictionary definitions of the particular characterization. For example, social impact was defined as “having an effect or influence on the life, welfare, or relations of people.” The definition of social comes from Merriam-Webster (2017) and Dictionary.com (n.d.). Environmental impact is “having an effect or influence on the conditions of the physical surroundings,” where the definition of environmental is influenced by definitions from the Merriam-Webster (2017) and

Cambridge (n.d.) digital dictionaries. Lastly, economic impact is “having an effect or influence on the economy, commodities, production, distribution, income, or wealth.” The definition of economic comes from definitions provided in the Merriam-Webster (2017) and Dictionary.com (n.d.) databases.

## **Scope**

Maricopa County consists of 27 cities and towns (Maricopa County Administration, n.d.) over 9,224 square miles, some of which belongs to Native American tribes. Since the early 2000s, Maricopa County has been one of the largest, most populated counties in the U.S. (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017). In 2017, Maricopa County experienced the largest net increase and fastest growth in the country. The number of refugees Arizona resettles every year is among the highest, the population is growing the quickest, and ability of the area to absorb the growth has been auspicious. This study asks professionals with experience working or volunteering with refugees about their perceptions of impact of refugee resettlement in Maricopa County. The impact of refugee resettlement concerns more than those individuals who arrived in the U.S. as a refugee, it concerns the entire community.

## **Literature Review**

### **Overview of Refugee Resettlement**

The U.S. Refugee Resettlement Program was formally created by the Refugee Act of 1980. The purpose of this legislation was “to respond to the urgent needs of persons subject to persecution in their homelands, including ... transitional assistance to refugees in the United States” (Refugee Act of 1980, Sect 101 (a)). The UNHCR released a review

of their resettlement policies in 1994 redefining refugee resettlement as both an instrument of last resort, to be used when first countries of asylum and voluntary repatriation are not viable options, and an instrument for burden-sharing when first countries of asylum are overwhelmed (Frederiksson & Mougne, 1994). Under this definition, as the number of displaced people increases, the weight each nation state carries should increase. Nonetheless, many nation states hesitate or refuse to accept more refugees.

Under the Obama administration, the ceiling number of refugees for Fiscal Year 2016 was 84,994 (Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, 2017). In Fiscal Year 2017, the ceiling number of refugees to be resettled in the U.S. was changed from 110,000 to 53,500 people when a new federal administration came into power. Subsequently, Fiscal Year 2018 has ceiling set at 45,000 people. There have been multiple times throughout history when the ceiling number of refugees to be resettled in the U.S. was much higher than the last decade. In 1980, when the Refugee Act was passed, the ceiling number was 231,700 refugees, and in 1993 the ceiling was raised to 142,000 (Capps & Fix, 2015). In the past, the U.S. raised the ceiling number of refugees to accommodate the number of displaced people, however, uncertainty regarding the impacts of migration such as refugee resettlement, has influenced the public and lawmakers' amenability.

In an era of technology, the public is increasingly aware of legislation and the policy-making process. The refugee crisis, however widespread, is still intangible to many Americans. Meanwhile, provocative language about immigrants and the

wastefulness of public programs common to conservative political arguments (Lakoff, 2014) are salient in America's largely monopolized media (Arsenault & Castells, 2008). Refugee resettlement, like much other legislation, is seen through frames reinforced by mass media. Refugee resettlement is not transparent enough about internal operations, evaluations, or studies of its' impact. Thus, in addition to being removed from the refugee crisis abroad, Americans are unsure how to understand the resettlement happening in their own community. Racially white individuals in a town in Texas are more likely to believe their local government can be trusted if there are high levels of deportations in their neighborhoods (Rocha, Knoll, & Winkle, 2015). Additionally, research assessing news coverage with attitudes towards immigration suggests news coverage of immigration in general have cast a negative veil, and people are responsive to the messages they hear in the news (Brader, Valentino, & Suhay, 2008; Valentino, Brader, & Jardina, 2013). Organizations such as the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR) have formed to attend to these circumstances legislatively (FAIR, 2015).

Where refugees are resettled in the U.S. is decided case-by-case (Berestein Rojas, 2015). If there is a friend or relative in the U.S., international resettlement organizations will try to resettle the case close to them. Other factors are considered such as the presence of similar ethnic communities, cultural and religious resources, interpreters, and availability of special health care as needed. Every U.S. state aids in resettlement, however, some areas carry more cases than others based on the area's ability to support the population growth.



The U.S. uses a public-private partnership where decisions concerning the number of refugees resettled in an area is shared between nongovernmental and governmental agencies (van Selm, 2003). The number of refugees resettled in an area is based on an ability of the state to contribute resources to resettle refugees. Community-participatory evaluations, however, are not yet systematically used in this process.

Arguments for publicly reporting results of evaluations have been made for health care (Colmers, 2007) that have applications to all service provision programs, especially those which are publically funded. Recording and reporting allows service consumers and other stakeholders to make informed decisions about their participation and provides service providers a benchmark with which they can compare their resources and performance against others. Including the community receiving services and the community supporting the organization in evaluations can distribute power in the process (Cousins & Whitmore, 1998, p.41). Public reporting of the results of such community-based evaluations has the potential to empower recipients of public program benefits. In the cases of displaced and stateless people, there is a clear power differential between service providers and service recipients.

### **Impact Assessment Practice**

Impact assessments are required by legislation in many area development projects to assess the impact of proposed and existing projects. There is a difference between program evaluation and impact assessments. When a program is being evaluated, information is being collected to assess if what is being done in the program and how each detail contributes to program outcomes, improve the program, or make decisions

about future program development (Grinnell, Gabor, & Unrau, 2016, p.498; Yu & McLaughlin, 2013). Data collected from program evaluations might include success rates or performance measures. Evaluation information is useful for answering questions about effectiveness and efficiency. In contrast, an impact assessment collects information about changes that resulted from a program (Yu & McLaughlin, 2013). Thus, impact assessments answer questions about how people's lives intentionally or unintentionally are influenced by the program.

Assessments contain socioeconomic and biophysical components to figure how each stakeholder group has or may be affected by the change (Dendena & Corsi, 2015). Over the last few decades legislation requiring governments and contractors to assess the impact of their projects was created. The Transportation Equity Act of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century mandated that the public be included in the decision-making process of projects that would impact their environment (Ward et. al., 2005). Community impact assessments are incorporated into the evaluation process for information about the project's impact and effectiveness.

In the U.S., environmental and social impact assessments became prevalent in the 1970s when requirements for impact assessment became required by the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (Esteves, Franks, & Vanclay, 2011). The Environmental Impact Assessments were criticized for failing to analyze social components of a project's impact, thus, social impact assessments were created to capture this dimension of the impact of a project (Dendena, & Corsi, 2015; Esteves, Franks, & Vanclay, 2012). Combining environmental and social components into the impact

assessment captures the connections between society and the land. Still, there is international concern that impact assessments are not conducted in a methodologically sound manner, and the party that is often left to live with repercussions of incomplete assessments is often the surrounding community, particularly those who were already vulnerable (du Pisani & Sandham, 2006).

The study of social impact assessments has developed an interdisciplinary field of its own right. Professions across disciplines have developed international organizations and guidelines for research and practice. The practice involves working with people in the community, project developers, and regulatory bodies to ensure that everyone affected has been heard (Esteves, Franks, & Vanclay, 2012). The purpose is to establish an equitable and sustainable environment for all, with special effort to improve the lives of vulnerable and disadvantaged people (Vanclay, 2003; Vanclay, Esteves, Aucamp, & Franks, 2015). Many are in favor of social impact assessments considering human rights even more heavily.

The nonprofit sector has long searched for ways to market the impacts of their work to the public and funders alike. Many professionals leading nonprofit organizations receive a social work or public affairs education which typically introduces them to theories and practice concerning internal assessment, but rarely about how to measure the organization's influence beyond their clients and staff.

To assess the impact of a program or action on a community, studies have used indicators of quality of life (Olsen & Merwin, 1976). Indicators have been used to record the impact of health initiatives (Fawcett et. al, 2001), alcohol use (Flynn & Wells, 2014),

immigration (Friedberg & Hunt, 1995) and refugee programs (Chmura, 2012; Maystadt & Verwimp, 2014; Rutinwa, Kamanga, & Washoma, 2003) on communities. The use of indicators is useful for measuring variables across a community. In refugee resettlement, however, there is limited information on what indicators should be used to measure the impact of refugee resettlement.

Social work has established ways to assess the impact of a program on the immediate recipients of services, but the field lacks a mechanism for assessing the impact of change efforts on the larger community. In many projects, the direct impacts of social work are personal or interpersonal in nature. By expanding the breath of evaluation process, social work can highlight the extended impacts of various change efforts. Further, many social work projects involve key community resources such as housing, food, transportation, medicine, and education. Thus, implementing a mechanism to evaluate the social, environmental, and economic impacts of projects can reveal useful information for improving services and advocating for funding.

### **Economic Impact of Refugee Resettlement**

The rise in the number of refugees being resettled in the United States over the last few years has supported economic growth through refugee-owned businesses, refugee household spending, and resettlement agency and personnel spending (Global Detroit, 2017; Chmura Economics & Analytics, 2012). Recently, a collaborative project was undertaken to quantify the economic impact of refugee resettlement in Cleveland, Ohio (Chmura Economics & Analytics, 2012). The study investigated the direct, indirect, and induced impacts of refugee resettlement. The direct impact of refugee resettlement

considers the spending of resettlement agencies, the household spending of refugee families, and refugee-owned businesses. Resettlement agencies spend money providing services to refugees, renovating facilities, and paying the salaries of social workers, counselors, interpreters, and many other personnel. Families that resettle in the Phoenix area also deliver a direct economic impact through patronage at local stores and utilization of services. Also, refugees who enter the small business community, stimulate the economy through taxes, hiring employees, and spending to support their business.

Additionally, indirect and induced impacts, also called ripple effects, of refugee resettlement were found to impact the community (Global Detroit, 2017; Chmura Economics & Analytics, 2012). This includes spending by those who benefit from the direct impact and the spending of employees and businesses that are affected by ripple effects. The businesses that resettlement agencies purchase goods and services from, as well as the spending of people employed by refugee resettlement, stimulated the local economy. Economic modeling was used in these cases to estimate the quantitative impact, accounting for overlapping data. In Detroit, the direct impact in 2016 was estimated to be around \$8.7 million, including the employment of 117 people, and the ripple effects were estimated between \$3.5 million and \$7 million, employing 47 to 94 people (Global Detroit, 2017). In Cleveland in 2012, the total economic impact was estimated to be around \$10 million and supporting approximately 180 jobs (Chmura Economics & Analytics, 2012).

A study of the economic impact of refugee resettlement on the Kagera region in Tanzania found that the economic consumption, used as a measure of welfare, increases

among all people in the region (Maystadt & Verwimp, 2014). Agriculture workers experienced the smallest gain in economic consumption, probably due to an increase in competition for employment. Additionally, those living in close proximity to refugee camps experienced some negative externalities such as environmental degradation, disease spread, and security issues, but those farther away were able to benefit economically while avoiding the negative externalities.

In the U.S., it is common for recently resettled refugees to utilize public benefits because, unlike most immigrant groups, they have access to these benefits almost immediately upon arrival (Capps & Fix, 2015). As such, refugees attain self-sufficiency more quickly than other immigrant groups. The programmatic support refugees receive from the Refugee Resettlement Program differentiates the economic impact of this type of migration from that of conventional and illegal immigration.

### **Social Impact of Refugee Resettlement**

Studies of the impact of refugee resettlement primarily concern refugees moving to neighboring countries. These studies illustrate the impact of the refugee crisis in the regions where they occur. In Tanzania, refugees fleeing the genocides in Burundi and Rwanda stay in camps and informal settlements in these regions. The Government of Tanzania has worked with aid agencies to provide for these families, but the country does not have the infrastructure to care for their citizen population along with approximately 12 million refugees who have migrated there over the last 30 years (Baez, 2011). Health outcomes of children living in the region where refugees resettle are lower than what would be expected of local children. Regions with heavier influxes of refugees

experienced more incidences of infectious disease and child mortality, along with reductions in childhood height, literacy, and years of school attended.

The area immediately surrounding the location of a humanitarian crises typically absorb the majority of resulting refugees. Even with funding from international aid agents, coordinating resources remains a challenge. These negative impacts are not reported in larger countries of asylum such as the U.S. The U.S. does not experience the population influx that other bordering countries have. Tanzania became the country of asylum for \_ refugees between 2009 and 2010, whereas the U.S. typically accepts less than 100,000 refugees per year. In addition, the U.S. has more robust infrastructure to handle these populations including sophisticated health care facilities, and a regulated public-school system.

Moreover, migrant groups can be targets of discrimination, impacting their ability to obtain resources and psychosocially adjust to their circumstances (Correa-Velez, Gifford, & Barnett, 2010; Viruell-Fuentes, Miranda, & Abdulrahim, 2012).

Research into the cultural impacts of immigration consider the effects of globalization on people in multicultural environments, particularly through acculturation and cultural encroachment. For businesspeople, having a bicultural identity or identifying as culturally independent (i.e. cosmopolitan) was associated with higher career attainment (Gillespie, McBride, & Riddle, 2010). Further, biculturalism and cosmopolitanism is associated with higher performance in the workplace compared to those who only identified with one culture. This influence has been shown primarily in those who migrate, whereas the influence on natives is less deciphered.

Conducting social impact assessments involves problem identification, assessing the baseline conditions and systems involved with the problem, designing an action plan, retrieving input from community members, assessing alternatives, and completing evaluations after plans have been implemented (Becker, 2001). These assessments consider the intended and unintended consequences that policy could have on the behavior of individuals, particularly across demographic groups, the behavior of organizations and social movements, and potential impacts on political or legal systems. There is no prescribed method for conducting a social impact assessment, however researchers have used indicator systems to consider the changes in social variables such as quality of life in community members (Olsen & Merwin, 1976).

### **Environmental Impact of Refugee Resettlement**

Studies by Saiz suggest that housing prices increase as a result of immigration to American cities (2007). Modeling approaches of neighborhood changes resulting from immigration highlight the activity of natives. Researchers have demonstrated how housing prices are impacted by natives fleeing districts immigrants were populating to resettle in other areas of the city (Accetturo, Manaresi, Mocetti, & Olivieri, 2013; Saiz & Wachter, 2011). Studying housing patterns on a district-level, rather than a city-level, yields more information about the sources of price fluctuations and demographic shifts.

Physical aspects of the community environment that impact assessments consider include cultural landmarks, historical sites, transportation facilities, scenic landscapes, and resident or business displacement (Ward et. al., 2015). These tangible variables were monitored along with intangible variables such as cultural community practices and



behaviors by the Florida Department of Transportation. According to Ward and colleagues, using environmental measures to assess the impact of projects improves project development and service delivery for the future.

### **Research Question**

This study addressed the research question “What is the perceived impact of refugee resettlement in Maricopa County?” Quantitative and qualitative data was used to explore the knowledge and judgements held by local leaders in the field of refugee resettlement on the impact of the program on the community of Maricopa County.

### **Methodology**

To support the transformative research paradigm informing this study, an interpretive paradigm is also employed to inform data collection and analysis of results. The interpretive paradigm examines social order by collecting subjective data and looking for trends in participant responses (Bhattacharjee, 2012). Ontologically, this research paradigm suggests reality is a collection of human experiences rather than an objective truth. Phenomena can be studied by integrating the experiences of participants with consideration of their social contexts. This research process interprets reality this way because it argues that reality cannot be understood independent from its context. This is an appropriate paradigm to study the perceived impacts of refugee resettlement on a community because respondents’ answers will depend on each person’s socio-historical variables.

A survey with open-ended questions and prompts was chosen as the data collection method in order to protect the identities of participants, and to encourage more

truthful and thoughtful responses. Had the survey questions been delivered via focus group or interview, they may be influenced by person(s) present. The topic being studied concerns respondents' jobs and the people they serve; thus, they may feel pressured to provide particular answers. An online survey was the best method to truly provide anonymity to respondents, allow them to take their time answering questions, and decrease the chances respondents were swayed by other people.

### **Research Design**

In general, quantitative methods are standardized measures that employ numeric data whereas qualitative measures do not rely on numeric data and are less appropriate for statistical procedures that produce results with a given level of certainty. Quantitative data can add precision to aspects of interpretive research (Bhattacharjee, 2012). This study used quantitative data to collect information on respondents' perceptions that provides distinguishable differences amongst them. In this study, quantitative methods include multiple-choice survey questions, and qualitative methods include series of short essay questions in the survey. The quantitative data illustrates each respondent's perception whereas the short essay questions provide explanations of the participant's viewpoint revealing their subjective reality about the phenomenon.

A mixed-methods approach was chosen to capture the perceptions of the impact of refugee resettlement from individuals who have experience working with this population. Mixed-methods approaches are desirable in social science research because they compensate for the weaknesses in each individual research type (Jick, 1979). This study is not mixed-methods in a kosher sense; the quantitative and qualitative

methodologies are employed using the same instrument. There is much debate over the ability of a survey with short-essay and multiple-choice questions to meet the qualifications of a mixed-method design, however, this study's aim is primarily exploratory, rather than confirmatory. For this exploratory study, the survey was the best tool to collect both types of data because of concerns over anonymity and response bias.

Access to the survey was provided to leaders of community and public service organizations serving refugees, and managers or directors of volunteer agencies delivering refugee resettlement services. A link to the survey was emailed to potential participants via email. The link took them to Qualtrics, where responses were stored. The survey was opened for approximately two months.

Transcripts from short essay response questions were printed and scanned for repeated words pertaining to actions (verbs), descriptions of value, quality or magnitude (select adjective and adverbs), physical places, and entity (nouns relating to people or groups). Action words are highlighted blue. Quality or magnitude words are highlighted pink. Places are highlighted gray, and entity words are highlighted red. Other key words selected as the subject matter of the statement were highlighted in yellow. Then, transcripts were compiled and assessed using thematic analysis. Similar phrases were grouped, and results were compared to the literature.

### **Sample**

The intended population includes leaders of community and public service organizations serving refugees, and managers or directors of volunteer agencies delivering refugee resettlement services. This includes adults employed as program

managers or directors in refugee resettlement programs, adults employed by or volunteering for nonprofit organizations who serve refugees, adults who are active or have a leadership position in a local Ethnic Community Based Organization, and local government employees who work closely with refugee populations, such as those employed by the school districts, police department, or City Council.

Sampling for this study utilized a chain-referral system. Initial participants were purposively chosen based on meeting the inclusion criteria. Initial participants are invited to forward the invitation to participate in the study to other professionals they believe meet the criteria for participation. To start the study, the researcher contacted all potential initial participants via email or phone in the month of January 2018. Individuals who did not meet the criteria for participation were not able to complete the survey. No compensation was given to participants. No individuals or particular group could have directly benefited from this study.

The estimated number of potential participants reached is 50. Seven individuals completed the survey, resulting in a response rate of 14%. This study was approved by the IRB at Arizona State University. The pool of potential participants did not include any at-risk populations. Consent was attained online prior to the survey. Participants were explained the extent of their anonymity and given the choice to participate or decline participation.

## **Measurements**

The anonymous survey had 34-items total. Four multiple-choice demographic questions were asked to describe the professional association of the respondents and their

experience in the larger community. There were three short-essay questions about each component of an impact assessment: social, economic, and environmental. Each short-essay question was followed by a series of multiple-choice questions about a particular variable associated with that component of the impact assessment. Respondents were given the opportunity to explain their answer to each of these fifteen multiple-choice questions in 200 characters or less.

The study followed a transformative research philosophy. As a quantitative approach, close-ended questions such as “Do you think refugee resettlement impacts the public-school system in Maricopa County?” allowed responses on a 4-point Likert scale with the options not at all, not much, moderately, and very much. Each of these questions was followed by an optional question “Why or why not?” where respondents have 200 characters to describe the rationale behind their answer. Additionally, a constructivist approach was used to generate the meaning of the impact of refugee resettlement using open-ended questions such as “What social impacts do you think refugee resettlement has on Maricopa County?”, where the definition of social impact is provided as having “an effect or influence on the life, welfare, or relations of people”.

### **Analysis**

The goal of data analysis is not to define all features of the themes or concepts created, rather, the goal is to capture diversity in the responses that exist in the target population (Jansen, 2010). Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics. As an exploratory study, the information gained from the multiple-choice questions only

describe the demographic characteristics of participants and the extent to which they agree with given statements.

Qualitative data was analyzed using word-based techniques. These techniques are well suited for short-answer questions (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). First, words were categorized as relating to action, quality or value, location, or person. Then, word repetitions were counted. Lastly, themes were generated using the scissor and sort method. Using this method, common themes emerged from respondents' short-essay answers. The scissor and sort method, also called the cut and sort method, involves re-reading the text and cutting out meaningful quotes. On the back of each quote was a short description describing the context from which they originated. Quotes that were similar were grouped together and each group was given a name that became the theme.

An interpretive approach uses the data to develop a theory about the phenomena being studied (Bhattacharjee, 2012, p.35). According to Ryan and Bernard, words that are repeated are key to explaining the ideas presented (2003). Themes from transcripts from short-essay questions in combination with Likert-scaled assessments provided a crude picture of the impact of refugee resettlement from the perspective of involved individuals.

### **Validity & Reliability**

Open-ended survey questions gave participants freedom to answer the question and explain their answer as they wish. Definitions were provided for “impact,” “refugee resettlement,” “social impact,” “environmental impact,” and economic impact” to ensure each participant was answering the question in the same manner. There is a possibility

that some participants did not review these definitions, or that these definitions were not restrictive enough to ensure participants all interpreted the questions in the same way.

Opinions are subject to change, particularly on topics that are subject to hasty political change as refugee resettlement is. Additionally, respondents' perceptions of the impact may be sensitive to context. If a respondent was at work, particularly if the workplace was a resettlement office, they may have been more inclined to provide positive answers. Further, answers could be influenced by the current political climate, locally and nationally, concerning refugee resettlement.

### **Assumptions**

This study assumes that individuals who have experience working with refugee communities in Maricopa County will provide their objective information regarding the impact of the program. It is possible that, consciously or not, individuals who have a stake in the success of a program would provide feedback that was exclusively positive. This study assumes respondents provided honest answers, however, it is possible respondents avoided providing negative information due to a fear of the repercussions of any criticism.

## **Findings**

### **Overview**

An absence of negative quality or magnitude words indicated that responses proposed no potential negative influences as part of the impact of refugee resettlement on the community. When asked an open-ended question about the social impact of refugee resettlement in Maricopa County, respondents described several aspects of society that

benefited such as “expanded understanding of people” and “inspired by refugees when they hear their stories.” Regarding refugee resettlement’s impact on cultural centers and festivities, respondents had different ideas. One respondent stated the result was “greater diversity” of cultural centers and festivities. Another respondent noted that refugees were “very receptive to being part of ... community activities,” yet another said that Arizona did not have “many venues or opportunities for cultural events”. Most responses on the social impact of refugee resettlement were categorized as “abstract benefits of diversity” and “prosocial benefits & integration.”

Responses reported positive economic impacts as well, stating that refugees are “productive workers,” “employers themselves,” and good for the “overall economic growth of the city.” Most statements on the economic impact had a theme describing “contributions to the economy.” Economic concepts appeared throughout responses on social and environmental impacts of refugee resettlement as well.

Perceptions of the environmental impacts were focused on utilization of social services such as law enforcement and emergency services, housing, and the public-school system. While some services were described as being challenged by the resource demands associated with refugee resettlement, farming and agriculture was described as benefiting. Many statements concerning the environmental impact contained themes of the “concrete impact of community services” associated with refugee resettlement.

### **Demographics.**

Of the seven survey respondents, five answered virtually every multiple-choice question, and between three and five answered the short survey questions. Five of the



seven respondents (71.4%) were employed by voluntary resettlement agencies, one person (14.3%) was from an ethnic-community based organization, and one person (14.3%) was from local government. Six of the seven respondents (85.7%) have been working or volunteering with refugee populations for 10 years or more, with one respondent (14.3%) having between three and six years of experience with the population. Five respondents (71.4%) have worked or volunteered in Maricopa County for 10 years or more, while the other two respondents (28.6%) reported between six and nine years in the area. Four of the respondents (57.1%) said they are or were once a refugee, and the remaining three (42.9%) said they had never been a refugee.

### **Quantitative Descriptive Analysis**

**Social Impacts.** The distribution of perceptions of the social impact of refugee resettlement in the community was particularly concentrated with most respondents acknowledging a moderate impact (*Table 1*). Two of five social variables were reported as “very much” having an impact on Maricopa County by at least one respondent. Two of five respondents (40%) said that refugee resettlement “very much” impacts ethnic-community based organizations and, conversely, that ethnic-community based organizations “very much” impact refugee resettlement. In addition, one respondent (20%) claimed that refugee resettlement “very much” has an impact on quality of life in Maricopa County. Two of five respondents (40%) said refugee resettlement impacts ethnic-community based organizations “moderately”, and one respondent (20%) said “not at all.” Similarly, two respondents (40%) believed that ethnic-community based organizations impact refugee resettlement in Maricopa County “moderately,” and one

person (20%) said “not much.” The majority, three of five respondents (60%), said that refugee resettlement “moderately” impacted quality of life in Maricopa County.

When asked if they thought that refugee resettlement impacted the number of quality of groceries in Maricopa County, three respondents (60%) said “moderately,” one respondent (20%) said “not much,” and another respondent (20%) said “not at all.” When asked if there was an effect on the number or quality of places of worship, four respondents (80%) said “moderately,” while only one respondent (20%) said “not at all.” Three respondents (60%) stated that refugee resettlement “moderately” impacts cultural centers and festivities. One respondents (20%) said there was “not much” of an impact, and one respondent (20%) said there was “not at all” an impact on Maricopa County.

Table 1  
*Distribution of Perceptions of Social Impact*

<b>Social Impact</b>	<b>Very much</b>	<b>Moderately</b>	<b>Not much</b>	<b>Not at all</b>
<b>Groceries</b>	0%	60%	20%	20%
<b>Places of worship</b>	0%	80%	0%	20%
<b>Cultural centers</b>	0%	60%	20%	20%
<b>ECBOs</b>	40%	40%	0%	20%
<b>Quality of life</b>	20%	60%	0%	20%

**Environmental Impacts.** There was one environmental variable that respondents believed was impacted by refugee resettlement “very much.” One respondent (20%) said that housing in Maricopa County was “very much” impacted, while three (60%) said it was “moderately” impacted, and one person said it was “not at all” impacted by refugee resettlement. Two of five respondents (40%) said that refugee resettlement “moderately”

impacts public transportation in Maricopa County, two (40%) described the impact as “not much” and one (20%) described the impact as “not at all.” Four of five respondents (80%) said that refugee resettlement “moderately” impacted the public-school system, and one (20%) said “not at all.” Three of the five respondents (60%) said refugee resettlement “moderately” impacted farming and agriculture in the area, while one respondent (20%) said “not much,” and one respondent (20%) said “not at all.” Lastly, two of five respondents (40%) said that refugee resettlement “moderately” impacted emergency services, two (40%) said that the impact was “not much,” and one respondent (20%) said “not at all.”

Table 2  
*Distribution of Perceptions of Environmental Impact*

<b>Social Impact</b>	<b>Very much</b>	<b>Moderately</b>	<b>Not much</b>	<b>Not at all</b>
<b>Public transportation</b>	0%	40%	40%	20%
<b>Public schools</b>	0%	80%	0%	20%
<b>Farming &amp; agriculture</b>	0%	60%	20%	20%
<b>Housing</b>	20%	60%	0%	20%
<b>Emergency Services</b>	0%	40%	40%	20%

**Economic Impacts.** There was one economic factor that one respondent said was “very much” impacted by refugee resettlement, and that was the small business sector. Three of five respondents (60%) said that refugee resettlement “moderately” impacted refugee resettlement, and one respondent (20%) said that refugee resettlement’s impact on the small business sector was “no much.” Two respondents (40%) said refugee resettlement “moderately” impacted jobs in Maricopa County, two people (40%) said

“not much,” and one person (20%) said “not at all.” Three respondents (60%) said refugee resettlement “moderately” impacted the labor supply, while one person said “not much,” and another person (20%) said “not at all.” Four of five respondents (80%) stated that refugee resettlement “moderately” impacted industry, while one respondent (20%) said “not at all.”

Table 3  
*Distribution of Perceptions of Economic Impact*

<b>Economic Impact</b>	<b>Very much</b>	<b>Moderately</b>	<b>Not much</b>	<b>Not at all</b>
<b>Jobs</b>	0%	40%	40%	20%
<b>Labor Supply</b>	0%	60%	20%	20%
<b>Small business</b>	20%	60%	20%	0%
<b>Industry</b>	0%	80%	0%	20%

### **Qualitative Thematic Analysis**

Using thematic analysis, the transcripts were read multiple times to capture emergent themes. First, word repetitions were counted to assess the language used to describe the impact of refugee resettlement. Next, the scissor and sort method was used to identify themes in short-essay responses.

**Word Repetitions.** First, words were categorized by type. Words that indicated a magnitude, value, or quality of impact, such as “some” or “good” were categorized. Actions such as “create” and “provide” were highlighted and counted. Words relating to persons such as “refugees” and “community” were categorized, and words relating to locations were put into another category. Community was chosen as a word describing

persons, rather than a location, due to the context in which it appeared throughout the text.

After words were categorized, the number of times the word was repeated was counted. Counts were based on the word stem. For example, “providing” and “provided” are both counted as instances of the word “provide.” When word counts were complete, the scissor and sort method was utilized to generate themes. Finally, answers were interpreted in light of the previous literature, the research question, and word choice in responses.

In totality, there were 42 unique verbs, 28 words identifying a person or group, 23 words describing value, quality, or magnitude, and 5 other words that were repeated multiple times. Other words appearing in the transcripts often include: “diversity,” “diverse,” “opportunities,” “welcome,” and “variety.” Each of these terms were used in more than one survey area: environmental, social, or economic.

***Social Impact.*** Overall, refugee resettlement was described as having a more positive than neutral or negative impact on Maricopa County. Two respondents (40%) noted that communities were more “welcoming” and three respondents (60%) noted an increase in “diversity.” To describe the social impact, respondents used the words like “significant,” “greatly,” “good,” “stronger,” and “better.” Verbiage was also strong. The words “expand,” “engage,” and “benefit” were repeated three times, and “create” and “organize” were repeated twice. Other verbiage included “promote,” “inspire,” and “help.”

In response to the questions about the impact of refugee resettlement on groceries, action words utilized include “start,” “give,” “visit,” and “stock.” All responses had a positive tone. Quality or magnitude words were “incredible,” “greater,” “larger,” and in contrast “small.” “Refugees” was written twice along with “community” and “stores.”

In reflecting on the impact of refugee resettlement on places of worship, two respondents (40%) mentioned “welcoming” environments. Action words used included “believe,” “talk,” “engage,” and “develop.” The term “refugees” was used twice, along with the use of “stranger” and “new comers.” The word “welcoming” was used twice for this question. Next, responses regarding the cultural centers and festivities used the action words “organizing” and “leads.” “Refugees” and “populations” were written once, but “community” or “communities” was written 3 times. Words describing quality and magnitude include “greater” and “very.”

Respondents were asked about the impact of refugee resettlement on ethnic-community based organizations, action words such as “benefit,” “engage,” “organize,” “create,” and “expand” were utilized. One respondent (20%) stated that ethnic-community based organizations were “created because of resettlement and new arrivals leads to expanded membership.” Conversely, when asked about the impact that ethnic-community based organizations have on refugee resettlement, the roles of ethnic-community based organizations were highlighted, including “offer[ing]...soft and hard skills...as well as ongoing orientation about American life.” Notably, this is the only variable that a respondent claimed could have “both [a] positive and negative influence.”

Finally, when asked about the impact that refugee resettlement has on quality of life in Maricopa County, action words included “benefit,” “pay,” “support,” and “expand.” Two respondents (40%) mentioned “diversity” and “benefits from having diverse persons.” Other common phrases related to quality of life included “different strengths and abilities” and “expands knowledge, global thinking, and overall global economy.”

***Environmental Impact.*** Responses had a more neutral than positive or negative tone in explaining the environmental impacts of refugee resettlement on the community. One respondent (20%) stated there was “none.” Two respondents (40%) mentioned an increase in “diversity.” Unique phrases in the responses included “art and aesthetics” and “contribute to safe communities.” Other action words used included “follow” and “promote.”

When questioned about the impact refugee resettlement has on public transportation, “accommodate,” “use,” “support,” and “rely” were utilized as action words. One respondent (20%) said that refugees “support the metro system” and another (20%) explained that “many refugees are initially reliant on public transportation.” Another respondent (20%) said routes may reflect the areas where refugee populations travel to and from work. The public transportation system in the metropolitan area was described as “inadequate,” especially for low income people.

In reflecting on the impact of refugee resettlement on the public-school system in Maricopa County, respondents used action words such as “strain” and “overwhelm.” Two respondents (40%) mentioned Title VI, the requirement for schools to offer English as a

Second Language (ESL) classes to students. One respondent (20%) explains how the diverse composition of student languages caused some “programmatically challenges in the beginning.” However, as another response explained that “not all school districts are affected” equally, especially in large metropolitan areas such as that of Phoenix, Arizona.

***Economic Impact.*** The tone regarding the economic impact of refugee resettlement was mixed between being positive and neutral. Respondents described the overall economic impact in terms of the efforts made by refugees. For example, action words used included “create,” “bring,” “pay,” “buy,” “work,” “serve,” “provide,” and “shop.” Refugees were described as “self-sufficient” and “productive workers.” Like the previous sections, the impact of refugee resettlement on the community was primarily explained through the actions refugees take. One respondent (20%) mentioned the economic programs that refugees utilize, such as “micro lending” and “business development education.”

When asked about the impact that refugee resettlement has on jobs in Maricopa County, respondents used the action words “work,” “provide,” “bring,” and “fill.” They mentioned refugees working “entry level jobs,” “filling employment gaps,” and “providing a stable workforce.”

**Scissor and sort method.** Transcripts from all short-essay questions in the survey were assessed for themes. Text was scanned several times to search for repeated themes among the responses. Approximately 96% of all text included in responses were included in the scissor and sort method of thematic analysis. Text was cut into a quote if it constituted a partial- or complete statement. Partial statements were isolated when they



alluded to something different than the rest of the statement. After several reviews, five distinct categories were formed: contributions to the economy, inadequate community services, concrete examples of community service impact, abstract benefits of diversity, and prosocial benefits and integration. *Table 4* lists the statements in each of these five categories.

***Contributions to the economy.*** This theme was influenced by the frequent presence of rhetoric such as “work,” “employ,” “tax,” and “business.” Statements that fall under this theme describe the type of workers or work that refugees complete, homeowner potential of refugees, explain the employable skills refugees have, and highlight refugee-owned business, spending, and taxes paid. All statements had positive undertones. Refugees were described as being “able bodied” and “productive” workers who “support the housing economy,” and as people who “start and support small businesses,” fill “employment gaps,” “are self-sufficient by 180 day[s],” and “pay taxes, rent and buy homes, and other goods and services.” Additionally, it was noted that refugee resettlement “brings money into the state.”

***Inadequate community services.*** These statements describe a need that exists in services used by refugees that is not currently met. Community services that raised concerns were varied. The most commonly noted issue involved providing English as a Second Language classes, particularly in schools. Other issues raised concerned the duplication of services offered by ethnic-community based organizations and resettlement agencies, inadequate housing options for large families, inadequate public

transportation, inadequate venues for cultural events, and limited ability of Emergency Services to communicate with refugee populations.

***Concrete examples of community service impact.*** Statements that informed the creation of this theme focus on services that refugees utilize or reinforce. These services were varied. Several statements mentioned “farming cooperatives,” “cultural food” and “grocery” needs and “ECBOs['] benefit” such as “expanded membership.” The presence of refugees was associated with “cornerstone,” “community gardening,” “greater access to non-processed food.” Additionally, respondents talked about refugees’ utilization of public transportation, law enforcement, and employment services. Lastly, one respondent noted that refugee resettlement “promote[s] diversity.”

***Abstract benefits of diversity.*** Several statements said that refugees “bring diversity” with their “art and aesthetics,” “thinking and life experiences,” and “strengths and abilities.” One respondent said that “diversity of people expands knowledge, global thinking,” and another person said that diversity brings “better global preparedness.”

***Prosocial benefits and integration.*** Many comments that make up the “prosocial benefits and integration” theme describe faith, values, or sense of community. A few statements mentioned the presence of a “welcoming” environment. Refugees were described as being positive influences in the community: refugees “are very receptive to being part of local and/or community activities,” “refugees make good tenants,” and “contribute to safe communities.” Some respondents mentioned refugees “form[ing] their own groups,” formally known as ethnic-community based organizations. One statement declared ECBOs “can be both [a] positive and negative influence.”

## **Validity & Reliability**

An interpretive approach to qualitative data analysis is advantageous because knowledge is generated using the language of the people experiencing the phenomena. This approach avoids treading too deep in particular theories which can lead to overfitting the data or finding only what the researcher is searching for (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). However, in this study, the researcher had discretion over the creation of themes. Survey respondents were offered anonymity and all survey respondents chose to maintain that anonymity.

There is also a possibility that participants were not honest about their impressions of the impact of refugee resettlement on the community. About half of the participants have been refugees themselves, so there is a chance they would not want refugee resettlement to receive any negative publicity. Thus, they might have only shared positive experiences.

There are several contextual factors that could influence the reliability of the survey results. For one, the current political climate in the U.S. is hostile towards refugees. Respondents could have hesitated to share negative feedback because of possible retaliation from negative results. Similarly, respondents could have provided more neutral or negative feedback as a response to their environment becoming increasingly negative.

## **Conclusions**

### **Summary**

The purpose of this study was to explore perceptions of the impact refugee resettlement has on the community. Respondents gave varied answers to the multiple-choice questions, suggesting they provided honest responses. Had responses sounded very similar in this sample, it would have been a concern that they were scripted rather than candid. Further, the diversity in responses indicates that there is not a consensus on the impact that refugee resettlement has on the community, even amongst the individuals who are involved in the resettlement process. The responses may have been just as varied in a random sample of the general population as they were in this sample.

The answer to the research question posed in the beginning of this study, the impact of refugee resettlement on the community involves individual people, the infrastructure of the community, the relationships between organizations, and relationships between groups of people. Overall, the social and economic impacts are described positively, and, according to respondents, this is largely due to the will of refugees themselves, and the work of resettlement agencies and ethnic-community based organizations. The environmental impacts highlight the role of macro systems in the community, such as the public-school system, in shaping the influence of refugee resettlement on the community.

### **Strengths & Limitations**

Ascertaining the impact of a program on such a large community is challenging. Moreover, as the largest metropolitan in the southern border state of Arizona, Maricopa

County is home to many migrants from other North American and South American countries. The metropolitan area is also a popular destination for domestic migration. Thus, there is a diverse set of realities within the community and differentiating the impact of one migrant group from another is difficult.

The impacts described by respondents and the themes that emerged may not be analogous to the impact of refugee resettlement in other communities. Generalizability is limited because the ethnic and cultural composition of refugees differs across communities, and communities have different strengths and weaknesses, varying the impact that migrant populations would have socially, economically, and environmentally. In addition, the sample size of this study was small, and the sampling method was not random. The perceptions represented in this study may not be representative of the target population (those with experience working with refugee resettlement) or the rest of the community.

## **Discussion**

Some statements included in short-essay responses about the impact of refugee resettlement on the community were analogous to social impacts identified in the literature. The focus of the study is to analyze what is said about the impact of refugee resettlement, however, consideration is also given to what was not said in the responses.

The overall sentiment regarding the contributions refugees make to the economy may reflect the overall perceived economic impact of refugee resettlement in Maricopa County. There was no mention of negative economic impacts of refugee resettlement on the community, which is in line with previous investigations of the economic impact of

refugee resettlement in the U.S. Refugee resettlement is charged with benefiting the local economy via refugee-owned businesses, refugee household spending, and spending by resettlement agencies and their personnel (Chmura Economics & Analytics, 2012; Global Detroit, 2017).

“Contributions to the economy” is the second largest coded theme with 24 statements. Refugee-owned business and spending by refugee households were particularly salient in survey transcripts. This aligns with the Likert-scale results. Overall, participants felt economic factors such as jobs, labor supply, small business, and industry were only moderately impacted by refugee resettlement. Perceptions of the extent of the economic impact were more dispersed than the other two categories.

Statements falling under the theme of “inadequate community services” have implications for both economic and social impacts of refugee resettlement. The deliverance of ESL classes, absence of diversity-informed Emergency Services, and unavailability of affordable housing for large families are products of conflicts between social needs and local norms, but they can also be understood in terms of inadequate funding for programs supporting diverse populations. Issues with ESL classes, while likely reflective of the impact of refugee resettlement in other communities, has historical contexts in Arizona. In 2000, the state of Arizona passed Proposition 203 (English Language Education for the Children in Public Schools), which took children out of bilingual classrooms and divided them into traditional classrooms, often with teachers who only speak English (Kaplan & Leckie, 2009). Also, regarding the report of issues refugees have with emergency services, as Viruell-Fuentes, Miranda, and Abdulrahim

explain, Western cultural-competency is still very focused on the individual (2012). Health care for migrant populations does not properly address the influences of structural contexts such as racism on health. The issues reported were regarding ambulance services, however, Western individualization can be an issue in law enforcement as well.

Unlike “inadequate community services,” “concrete impact of community services” statements have a neutral or positive tone regarding the relation between the service and refugee populations. Statements covered topics involving food supply, transportation, and emergency services. One respondent mentioned “employment services to employers and the refugee clients they serve,” relating to the presence of a relationship across sectors in the economy. Sixty percent of respondents believed that housing was moderately impacted by refugee resettlement, and 20% said it was very much impacted.

“Abstract benefits of diversity” focused primarily on the impacts that the presence of refugees has on thinking. One respondent went further to explain that this helped with “global preparedness.” Several respondents implied that diversity of thought was beneficial to society. It is worth noting that responses mentioned positive effects of diversity and globalization commonly found in the literature such as expanded standards and individual or social mindsets (e.g. cosmopolitanism), and there were no mentions of negative impacts like cultural degradation or xenophobia (Chiu, Gries, Torelli, & Cheng, 2011). Further, biculturalism and cosmopolitanism, identities largely brought about by globalization, are associated with higher career performance and attainment (Gillespie, McBride, & Riddle, 2010).

Like “abstract benefits of diversity,” “prosocial benefits and integration” primarily have implications for the social impact of refugee resettlement on the community. Statements explaining the role of ethnic-community based organizations highlight the important complementary support that refugee populations need that are not being met through the federal program. These functions include “orientation about American life,” “cultural norms and expectations,” and “be a voice for their community.” Other statements proposed motivations people have for helping refugees and the role of religious institutions. Social behaviors of refugees was described positively as well (i.e. “follow[ing] the law” and “being a part of local and/or community activities.” Multiple responses described refugees as contributing to the sense of community. This contrasts with xenophobic and territorial reactions some communities have to migrant populations (Chiu, Gries, Torelli, & Cheng, 2011; Tomlinson, 2003). For the Phoenix metropolitan area, this may be influenced by the sociopolitical spotlight on Latinx people and migrants from Spanish-speaking countries on the western hemisphere.

To supplement the qualitative information, a quantifiable conceptualization of the perceived impact of refugee resettlement on the community was created using scaled Likert-questions. The results of these multiple-choice questions illustrated the miscellaneous ways respondents perceived the impacts of refugee resettlement.

### **Implications**

Many theorists depict globalization as a product of technological advances and a networked global economy (Guillén, 2001; Kellner, 2002), but these phenomena only partially explain the impacts various migration movements, social justice movements,



information exchange, and climate change has on communities. For varied reasons, the population of refugees is destined to increase in the coming years, as will the number of resettlement cases the U.S. will be expected to maintain. There are more than 22.5 million refugees registered for future resettlement and approximately another 45 million other displaced people who are in need of such an opportunity (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2017). In 2015, there were 50 armed conflicts worldwide, the highest this number has been since the Cold War (Dupey et al., 2015). Global climate change will impact the environment in ways that increase competition for resources, compounding existing global conflict (Dominelli, 2010, 2011). As Dominelli points out, globalization and the internationalization of social problems test nations' abilities to organize and collaborate to attend to humanitarian crises (2010).

Globalization has influenced social work in several ways, including through the rise of services targeted to those defined as needy over the solidarity available in universal services, the emergence of international corporations and creation of a market for providing international welfare, and the impact that migration of people has on service provision (Dominelli, 2010). The field of social work is adjusting to an increasingly globalized environment, and as such, the need to address the underdevelopment of evidence-based culturally-relevant services to refugee populations increases. Nongovernmental organizations have made great strides in the development of culturally-appropriate services (Nash, Wong, & Trlin, 2006; Rankopo & Osei-Hwedie, 2010; Wright et al., 2016), but intervention models need to keep pace with our changing society.

Information gleaned from this study of the impact of refugee resettlement on the community can be used in future consideration on how to assess the impact of refugee resettlement and other social programs on the community. Progressing social services requires the information collection, networking, collaboration, and data analysis. While data collection processes are commonly regarded as bureaucratic in social work settings (Dominelli, 2010), the data can be interpreted through a transformative or other social justice paradigm to empower populations, and improve service provision and community relationships (Mertens, 2007, 2010).

### **Suggestions for Future Research**

This study has implications for future assessments of the impact of refugee resettlement on a community. Researchers should explore social, economic, and environmental variables that can be used to indicate the impact of refugee resettlement on a community. Communities are distinct, evolving, organisms with unique sociocultural, political, economic, and environmental variables that should be accounted for in an impact assessment. Further, impacts of refugee resettlement and other programs should take consider ways that marginalized and disadvantaged groups in a community are impacted. As the literature shows and these results suggest, refugees typically enter a country of resettlement through the lower-income strata of society, competing for resources such as jobs and affordable housing (Capps, Newland, Fratzke, Groves, Auclair, Fix, & McHugh, 2015).

Future research should also explore the differentiation between the impact between different forms of immigration on communities. Studies may also consider how

different areas in a community respond to refugee resettlement. This study surveyed a population familiar and affiliated with the federal program, but previous research has shown that perceptions of migrants and diversity can depend on the one's neighborhood (Accetturo, Manaresi, Mocetti, & Olivieri, 2013; Saiz, 2007; Saiz & Wachter, 2011). Thus, future research should explore the diversity of perceptions throughout a community.

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APPENDIX

EMERGENT THEMES OF THE IMPACT OF REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT

Appendix

Table 4. Emergent Themes of the Impact of Refugee Resettlement

<p><b>Contributions to the economy</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Refugees are productive workers</li> <li>2. Refugees are self-sufficient by 180 day</li> <li>3. Able bodied workers</li> <li>4. Later become home owners</li> <li>5. Industries struggle without a strong pipeline of refugee laborers from across a variety of work settings from entry level to higher skilled jobs</li> <li>6. A stronger work force</li> <li>7. They [refugees] utilize affordable and low income housing</li> <li>8. Refugees are working, paying taxes, shopping locally, etc.</li> <li>9. Refugees pay taxes, rent and buy homes, and other goods and services</li> <li>10. Refugees usually work, at least initially in entry level jobs</li> <li>11. Able to start their own businesses and grow their own income as well as the overall economic growth of the city</li> <li>12. They [refugees] do work in tourism/hotel in large numbers</li> <li>13. They [refugees] create jobs</li> <li>14. Refugees start and support small businesses</li> <li>15. They [refugees] provide a stable workforce for companies</li> <li>16. Refugees bring a variety of skills and abilities to the workforce, often filling employment gaps</li> <li>17. Soft and hard skills that needed for employment</li> <li>18. They [refugees] are also opening their own small businesses</li> <li>19. Refugees create more businesses</li> </ol>
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	<p>20. They [refugees] are an employer themselves</p> <p>21. Refugees once employed, pay taxes, support businesses, etc.</p> <p>22. Help support the housing economy of the state</p> <p>23. Refugee resettlement brings money to the state</p> <p>24. Overall global economy</p>
<p><b>Inadequate community services</b></p>	<p>1. Actual partnerships rather than duplication of services need to be created</p> <p>2. Diverse groups of students with a wide variety of academic levels and English levels leads to some programming challenges in the beginning</p> <p>3. It [refugee resettlement] impacts affected school districts very much</p> <p>4. Schools must meet their title six requirement (to provide ESL) to refugee children. This can place a strain on school, thus the need to place refugees throughout the county as to not overwhelm district</p> <p>5. Increased need to for larger housing for bigger families</p> <p>6. Some bus routes may be adjusted to accommodate the routes to employers who happen to hire refugees</p> <p>7. Public transportation in this city is inadequate for any low income person</p> <p>8. Arizona in general does not have many venues or opportunities for cultural events, in comparison with other communities</p> <p>9. ER services need to be better prepared to serve limited English</p>

	speakers and different cultural expectations
<b>Concrete impact of community services</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Employment services to employers throughout the valley and the refugee clients they serve</li> <li>2. Refugees are customers who use the bus and thus support the metro system</li> <li>3. Some [ECBOs] have been created because of resettlement and new arrivals leads to expanded membership in these groups over time</li> <li>4. Many refugees will visit small owned ethnic grocery stores, as well as larger chain groceries</li> <li>5. Many refugees are initially reliant on public transportation</li> <li>6. They do utilize the police and law enforcement</li> <li>7. Also increases the need and involvement of refugee produce in corner store</li> <li>8. Community gardening also involves refugees who then grow a wider variety of products including those from their homeland</li> <li>9. ECBOs benefit from engaging refugees at every stage of resettlement</li> <li>10. Provide service directly to clients to increase income and assets across the broad spectrum from initial employment to home ownership and business starts</li> <li>11. They do start farming cooperatives</li> <li>12. Refugees have created farming cooperatives and is a great example of their entrepreneurial ability</li> </ol>

	<p>13. Stores stock shelves to meet cultural food needs</p> <p>14. Often start their business including gro[c]ery stores, giving the entire community greater access to non-processes food</p> <p>15. Promote diversity</p>
<p><b>Abstract benefits of diversity</b></p>	<p>1. Diversity of people expands knowledge, global thinking</p> <p>2. Many individuals are inspired by refugees when they hear their stories. Some times we do not know how good we have it until we see what other people have experienced</p> <p>3. Refugees create opportunities</p> <p>4. Bring diversity to communities, different ideas and resources</p> <p>5. Better global preparedness</p> <p>6. There is greater diversity of art and the aesthetics of the community</p> <p>7. Expanded understanding of people around the world</p> <p>8. Greater diversity of thinking and life experiences</p> <p>9. The community benefits from having diverse persons with different strengths and abilities</p> <p>10. Greater diversity of populations [leads] to greater diversity in this area as well.</p>
<p><b>11. Prosocial benefits &amp; integration</b></p>	<p>12. Persons of all faiths believe in the concept of “Welcoming the Stranger”</p> <p>13. They [ECBOs] are a good resource for cultural norms and expectations of a population</p> <p>14. Refugees provide significant impact in Maricopa County related to diversity, employment, housing, education</p>



15. Faith-based organizations are able to talk about and then put this belief into practice when engaged with refugees
16. Many refugees will continue to worship at the nearest center for their faith
17. Most refugee groups will organize and form their own groups
18. [ECBOs] can be both positive and negative influence
19. Places of worship develop welcoming environments for new comers
20. [ECBOs] can be a voice for their community
21. Refugees do a great job of organizing their communities
22. Presence of a welcoming community
23. [Refugees] contribute to welcoming community
24. Refugee crime rates are very low
25. They usually follow the law and contribute to safe communities
26. They offer a very important sense [of] community
27. [Refugees] are very receptive to being part of local and/or community activities
28. Being able to fulfill their [VOLAG personnel's] personal values and in some cases spiritual beliefs
29. Helping others is a great way to help yourself
30. Refugees are incredible
31. Refugees make good tenets
32. [ECBOs offer] ongoing orientation about American life