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"Refugee Industrial Complex," Neoliberal Governance Within the Resettlement Industry and Its Effects: Is An Alternative Structure Possible?

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“REFUGEE INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX,” NEOLIBERAL GOVERNANCE WITHIN
THE RESETTLEMENT INDUSTRY AND ITS EFFECTS: IS AN ALTERNATIVE
STRUCTURE POSSIBLE?

AMIRA FATIMA AL-DASOUQI

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And accepted on the recommendation of

Anita Fabos, Chief instructor

ABSTRACT

“REFUGEE INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX,” NEOLIBERAL GOVERNANCE WITHIN THE RESETTLEMENT INDUSTRY AND ITS EFFECTS: IS AN ALTERNATIVE STRUCTURE POSSIBLE?

AMIRA FATIMA AL-DASOUQI

Within the current political climate and discussions surrounding displacement, refugee resettlement is a ‘hot-button’ issue. While working at one of the largest resettlement agencies in New England, the author began to analyze how power itself is structured within the Refugee Resettlement Industry (RRI) nationally. This paper argues that the RRI is embedded within neoliberal governance and can be better understood and improved with this understanding. The author argues for the term “Refugee [Resettlement] Industrial Complex,” to more adequately understand the ways that power is enacted through the current structure, and how it inhibits social justice work rooted in advocating for systemic change. Using secondary literature and participatory observation, she will explore RRI, neoliberalism, and the Non Profit Industrial Complex (NPIC) to argue her points. These findings aim to expand the existing literature and advocacy initiatives aimed at improving programs and services for refugees in the United States, and the possibilities of creating grassroots newcomer centers focused on social justice principles.

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I would also like to acknowledge my privilege as a non-immigrant and the work and literature of migrants in writing this paper. Especially my peers and co-workers at Ascentria that have experienced displacement directly, who at the end of the day as one of my co-workers says, still have the ability to wake up every morning and smile and believe in the graciousness of humanity. May we one day live in a world where people's livelihoods, and not borders, are protected at all costs.

Introduction

“Our strategy should be not only to confront empire, but to lay siege to it. To deprive it of oxygen. To shame it. To mock it. With our art, our music, our literature, our stubbornness, our joy, our brilliance, our sheer relentlessness – and our ability to tell our own stories. Stories that are different from the ones we’re being brainwashed to believe. The corporate revolution will collapse if we refuse to buy what they are selling – their ideas, their version of history, their wars, their weapons, their notion of inevitability. Remember this: We be many and they be few. They need us more than we need them. Another world is not only possible, she is on her way. On a quiet day, I can hear her breathing.” (Arundhati Roy 1997)

“Did you make sure to bring all of your documents today, miss?” She shuffles through her purse to find the folder that contains all of her government-issued documents since she received refugee status in her home country. I look through her documents to see if they fit the government’s specific requirements. I write down her Alien number on the I-485 Application for Permanent Resident Status. It asks for her status to which I write refugee. It asks for her expiration of her status to which I am told to write ‘indefinite.’ The clock is ticking and I have an hour and a half to complete her application before the next client. I must have time to put them in the database system. Will I have time to file their applications today before I leave the office? I hope I meet my supervisor’s quotas for the month. I have to get these applications in. Is her interpreter here?

“Have you ever ordered, incited, called for, committed, assisted, helped with, or otherwise participated in any of the following: acts involving torture or genocide?” The interpreter struggles to translate. I see the looks on each of their faces as they shake their heads in confusion and disappointment. These are one of the eighteen ‘processing

questions' that make up the majority of the 'green card' application that I am required to ask. I must hurry to have time to have the applications signed and approved by my supervisor. The woman communicates with her husband over Whatsapp that is still overseas. She shows me pictures of her children, some who are with her, and some who are still in her home country. I look at my phone and realize that I only have five minutes until my next appointment. We reschedule for the next week, during the small window that I am at the office, and she asks to take off from work at her new job at FedEx. She shakes my hand and rushes to take the next bus.

This is when I was first adjusting to my position as a Legal Assistant Intern at the Ascentria Care Alliance Client Office in Worcester, MA. Over time I have become used to asking difficult questions, that only continue to get more abrasive and intrusive as I began to also complete naturalization applications. Nearly one hundred applications later, and much of the process is still uncomfortable. Resume-building and grant-writing experience became less important as did the personal interactions that I was having with these people or so-called 'clients.' I began to see how these interactions, and general relations between staff workers/interns/volunteers and 'clients' created opportunities to reproduce gender and racial/ethnic hierarchies (Nawyn, 2010). These were the very hierarchies and structures that I had worked to name and deconstruct in the 'activist' work that I had been involved in throughout my undergraduate career. Acting as an agent of the larger structures at play, the agency itself and the federal government applications, I began to see the ways in which power is embedded within the Refugee Resettlement Industry (RRI), and the difficulties in

avoiding reproducing these hierarchies. It was in this crux that I began to critically engage with the role of neoliberal governance within the RRI as a potential structural challenge within this work. While this is the central thesis within my paper, I also aim to open up a larger discussion on the role that grassroots newcomers centers rooted in social justice could play as a viable alternative to the RRI.

This paper will open with Part 1, a history of the Refugee Resettlement Industry in the United States and its structure. Part 2 will discuss neoliberalism and the welfare state, including an exploration of the Non Profit Industrial Complex and a potential understanding of a new term “Refugee Resettlement Industrial Complex.” Part 3 will interrogate aspects of neoliberalism within the RRI directly, and how hegemonic structures can be reproduced within the agencies themselves, using the case study of my internship as an example. Part 4 will conclude the paper with a list of recommendations and alternative models that can be implemented within and outside of the current structure of the RRI.

*The narrative described above is not based on one person or their personal experience, and is a general description of a typical day at the author’s internship.

Methodology

In this research, I provide several, varied and diverse methods to collect data on this topic. I provide primarily qualitative data, however I also encompass quantitative data where it is useful or complementary to the qualitative research I am addressing. For

instance, I write on the structural challenges and gaps surrounding resettlement into receiving resettlement cities, such as Worcester. This implies that I study the histories and development that have led up to this context, using background data on US resettlement policy in recent decades, and the relationship between these policies and the delivery of services to these receiving populations. My data mostly comprises of secondary research that has been derived from government documents and policy papers, academic journals on US refugee and immigration studies, and through participatory observation compiled from national resettlement agencies on these issues, primarily within their annual reports. I also collect primary data research through participant observation within my internship at a local resettlement agency, Ascentria Care Alliance.

Within this research, I use the larger, broader data to compare to the access of services and effects of government contracts, loans, and grants at the local level, using Ascentria Care Alliance in Worcester as a point of observation. The sequence of analysis or the steps that I plan to take comprise first collecting all of the necessary ‘background’ and/or secondary research on the evolution of resettlement policies in the US, the subcontracting to these nine large resettlement agencies, and the influence that these federal grants have on the structures and ‘sustainability’ ie the ability to provide access to services for clients. Secondly, I collect primary research containing participant observation notes with those that work within this field which challenges my hypothesis that these non-profit entities have struggled to provide services due to these [neoliberal] practices and models of governance. I then comprise a list of primary challenges that these practitioners

have noted on this topic and see whether it correlates with this hypothesis, also inquiring on the ways in which these people believe that these structures and/or frameworks could be improved upon. These observations and inquiries, existing within the larger recent debates on this topic, help provide me with a potential framework to design and a list of suggestions for practitioners and host communities (including other municipalities and departments) to improve. These different steps then provide a conclusion section and a brief summary of my findings that can be condensed into a media platform to present to state legislative bodies, resettlement agency workers, and activists engaged in grassroots migrant justice work. The primary data is not a central component of my research. This research focuses primarily on the theoretical arguments and literature within the field on these topics, and uses this primary data (participatory observation) as a subsidiary of this work.

Some limitations of this work include the geographic scope of this case study, as well as a sustained example of viable alternatives to this framework within the US. While this work will provide a representation of one of the top resettlement agencies in the state, and will be compared with stats and figures throughout the country, the case study itself will only analyze one organization within one city, due to the time and logistics it requires. Also, while neoliberalism has been analyzed as a subject of critique within the nonprofit world for decades, this will be a relatively new exploration within the field of resettlement organizations and I have not found an example of a ‘successful’ city that has been able to successfully challenge these dynamics and adequately integrate and provide these services

in creative ways to the recipient populations, concurrent to their funding challenges with the government. This requires an expanded set of alternative models, possibly from other welfare agencies.

It is also important to note the ways in which the words refugee and immigrant are often used interchangeably in this research. While they each carry very different legal and political implications, this paper intentionally uses the terms in place of one another for two significant reasons. The first is a rather practical reason, being that a refugee is an immigrant. Although not all immigrants are refugees and this may be confusing for some readers, it is important for logistical purposes and understanding this paper within the much larger discussions surrounding migration and immigrants in this country. The second reason is a political decision, aimed at contributing to the existing literature within forced migration studies to blur the lines that exist legally within nation-states between refugee and immigrant. While this exists within a much larger debate that cannot be discussed in this paper due to the purposes of space, this decision came about based on several recent events that have influenced the author. One of these being the deportation of thousands of Central American migrants who are denied asylum or refugee status (Huffington Post, 2016). While many of these people flee their homes for both safety and economic reasons, they are denied refugee rights under the arguably narrow and strict definitions given by the United States (based off of UNHCR definitions). This paper argues for a more nuanced, context-dependent use of these terms, as well as the understanding that these labels are

always ever-changing, fluid, and should be used in ways that are self-determined by these populations themselves, respectively.

1 – Refugee Resettlement History, Governance, and Structure

Refugee Resettlement Industry History

The number of forcibly displaced people has reached a high peak since World War II in the last year. In 2015, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reported that there were a total of 59.5 million people worldwide who have been displaced including refugees, asylum seekers, and internally displaced persons (UNCHR, 2015). Refugees represent 20 million, or one-third, of this entire population. The most favored option by the international community has been for voluntary and safe repatriation of refugees to their countries of origin, the first of the UN's Three Durable Solutions. When this is not possible, integration into a country of asylum is viewed as the second most durable solution. The UNHCR solutions framework carries many assumptions, including the perception that these people's experiences of forced migration is one that can be 'solved.' The last of the three durable solutions is for resettlement, which when successful, accounts for only one percent of refugees. Of this one percent, about 70,000-80,000 of these refugees are resettled to the United States annually. This number is a ceiling amount and is decided by the President the previous fiscal year. This practice began after the US decided to support the UNHCR financially and eventually adopt the 1951 Convention on Refugees. Much of the basis for the welcoming of some refugees into the US during this

time was based on the premise that many of these refugees would eventually return home when conditions improved, not necessarily that these people would permanently settle into the United States (Zucker 1983).

Resettlement, as defined by the UNHCR Mandate: International Protection and the Search for Durable Solutions, “involves the selection and transfer of refugees from a State in which they have sought protection to a third State which has agreed to admit them - as refugees - with permanent resident status” (UNHCR Resettlement Handbook, 3). Prior to World War II, there was no government agency or state structure that was responsible for helping settle refugees. Instead, faith-based nonprofit voluntary agencies or “Volags” were the primary entity responsible for assisting immigrants and refugees that came to the United States. Although people had been fleeing persecution and migrating to the US since the founding of the nation and the modern political structure, the federal government did not take an active role in the resettlement process until 1946. At this time, funding was given towards these volags that had been providing assistance to these immigrants through the Corporate Affidavit Program, which guaranteed financial support to these agencies so that it would not become a public responsibility (Zucker 1983: 173). Due to the high volume of displaced persons at this time and the need for a more formalized action on the issue, legislation was passed for the first time in the Displaced Persons Act in 1948 which put the primary responsibility on individual state structures and volags. During this time, federal funding to these volags came to less than \$40 per refugee (Zucker 1983, 173), or an estimated \$393.22 per refugee in current US dollars (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2016), for

a total of 400,000 displaced Europeans. The Office of Refugee Resettlement spends approximately \$600 million annually on refugees, where as \$350 million is spent by the State Department Reception and Placement (R&P) program (MPI 2015, 2). The structure, however, relies on the public-private partnership between the government agencies and private sponsors.

Brief Period of Direct Federal Assistance to Volags

After World War II, there was a period from the 1960s to the 1980s whereby the United States government was contributing direct assistance to Volags, with certain communities in mind. These refugees were coming from Cuba and Indochina, respectively. It was the first large scale arrival of refugees from Castro's Cuba in 1960 that, for the first time, gave volags federal funds to assist in resettlement (Zucker 1983: 174). Under the Cuban Refugee Program, the public-private partnership consisted of an arrangement between federal, state, and local agencies whereby states were fully reimbursed for their services. This period did not last a long time however, and was challenged with the arrival of other refugee populations.

When Indochinese refugees arrived in 1975, there was a deep sense of hesitation towards the next steps in policy goals and initiatives. There were vocal critics all throughout the US political landscape that spoke out against providing the Indochinese community in the same way that the Cubans had been supported: too much and for too long. Despite many xenophobic and racist attitudes toward Indochinese refugees, Congress passed the Migration and Refugee Assistance Act of 1975, a temporary program designed

to provide states with full federal reimbursement. This led to heightened tensions within Congress on immigration policies in the US. Serving as a reminder to state and local governments that this policy would not continue for much longer or be mimicked for other communities, the House Committee on Appropriations noted that it was not its intent that IRAP “could develop into a permanent federal undertaking similar to the present Cuban program” (Zucker 1983: 175).

In an effort to curb the amount and broad range of assistance that was being given to the Cubans and Vietnamese, the “Soviet and other” refugee assistance program was begun and started a new shifting point within the public-private partnership and the privatization and bureaucratic arrangements. Within this program, the federal government matched funds dollar-for-dollar with the volags through placement grants. These grants were given only for refugees’ immediate needs, including English language training and employment assistance. These forms of assistance, as well as the still withstanding Cuban and Indochinese refugee assistance programs, were being heavily scrutinized for its structure and what was perceived to be too high of funding. Congress at this point was itself growing disillusioned by the current structure and in the 1978 Conference Report on the 1979 appropriations to the Foreign Assistance Act stated, “Ongoing programs bear little relationship to established need and have perpetuated inexplicable inequities in the types and levels of assistance to which individual refugees are entitled.” (Congress 1979: 15; Zucker 1983: 176). Finally, the first major comprehensive resettlement policy was passed with the creation of the Refugee Act of 1980.

Refugee Act of 1980: The Radical Turning Point in Resettlement Policy

The Refugee Act of 1980 was the first major resettlement policy that outlined the federal government's responsibility in resettlement, and not just the admissions process. Rather than merely conceptualizing refugee policies as a factor within development and foreign policy discussions, it was beginning to be viewed as a domestic concern that would be of continued relevance in the coming decades with the increasing numbers of immigrants fleeing war-torn nations, many of which the US was directly involved in. This act codified the Refugee Resettlement System into the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) within the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and carefully defined the term "refugee" to match UNHCR definitions. It standardized all conditions and regulations for all refugees entering the country, loosely defined asylum regulations, and made it so that all states were eligible for full reimbursement or cash and medical assistance for the first three years of the residency in the US. This limit was created as a response to the unlimited period of assistance within the Cuban program, which was eventually downsized considerably. The act itself clearly states its goals as effective resettlement of refugees, and to help refugees achieve economic self-sufficiency as rapidly as possible.

Resettlement Industry in the Post-Cold War Era: Modernization and Social 'Progress'

Another major factor in understanding much of the resettlement industry in the United States and its historical development has been its early welcoming of refugees from western nations, especially from primarily communist countries. In the Cold War era in

particular, the United States was involved in many foreign policy actions that were aimed to bolster the perception of the US in global politics against the Soviet Union and its communist allies. During this time, President Harry S. Truman created the Truman Doctrine aimed at giving aid to Turkey and Greece in combatting communism and Soviet 'imperialism'. The Marshall Plan was also created during this time to aid Western Europe and help it recover economically after the end of World War II. Neoliberal notions surrounding social progress and industrial production in a 'postcolonial' era was key during the creation of these documents. Craig and Porter (2006) discuss the important shift in development from neoliberal emphases on structural adjustment, privatization, and a reduction of the role of the state, to a more current focus of neoliberal thought on "securing the poor" through basic service delivery and institution building. They argue that poverty reduction and 'good governance' are at the center of development. In his 1949 inaugural speech, President Truman outlined the American 'dream' per se in these efforts: "Fourth, we must embark on a bold new program for making the benefits of our scientific advances and industrial progress available for the improvement and growth of underdeveloped areas ... Their poverty is a handicap and a threat both to them and more prosperous areas. For the first time in history, humanity possesses the knowledge and the skill to relieve the suffering of these people ... The old imperialism – exploitation for foreign profit – has no place in our plans ... Greater production is the key to prosperity and peace. And the key to greater production is a wider and more vigorous application of modern scientific and technical knowledge." (Truman [1949] 1964).

As Craig and Porter illustrate, western development and the US in particular, have historically used liberal principles of evolutionary progress through economic production, modernizing for peace as a banner to carry out security measures. While these factors are common to many newly emerging post-colonial states, these key characteristics define US development in the Cold War era when the population of refugees was at an all time high after the war. It was at this time, precisely as Craig and Porter note as central to their text's argument that structural adjustment programs, privatization of industries and labor, and a reduction of the role of the state, were on the rise in the US and in the creation of the resettlement industry. Not only did the structural adjustment programs aid in the economic destabilization of many of these "underdeveloped" nations and henceforth the indirect creation of large-scale displacement and resettlement of refugees to western nations (De Wet 2006), but also upon arriving to these nations such as the US recognize that much of the available labor was in private industries, including the resettlement industry that was the only viable option for the basic delivery of services to them. It is in this crux between the "older" and arguably central pillars of development, and the newer methods of "securing the poor" with basic service delivery, local partnership, and institutional building, that I argue that the US resettlement industry lies.

Later in the text, Craig and Porter discuss this issue in great detail. They make the important connection between neoliberalism and community development, through what they define as 'inclusive neoliberalism'. This emphasizes the space that non-governmental organizations have occupied in 'filling' the gap in the downsizing of the state and

providing many basic delivery services. Within this arrangement between NGOs and the government, these organizations operate without political accountabilities and therefore are able to act as “weak agents” and depoliticize accountability of the government. This is an ironic position for the NGOs to possess, especially when they are privileged as the central means of articulating the ‘voices of the people’ per se. Craig and Porter identify this fundamental gap and define this issue as ‘inclusion delusion’ whereby NGOs provide the idea of something that involves multiple partners, responds to the voices of the poor; however at the end of the day is accountable to no one. They candidly note the fact that the ‘norm’ is for NGOs to go with the flow, which provides many incentives, and that there can be serious consequences for those that do not and challenge government accountability, and refuse to be apolitical. They close with a plea that ‘spin should not be allowed to triumph over substance and practice’.

While concluding the book they make a call to community development practitioners to be more aware of the effects of neoliberalism, in not depoliticizing the political, and in not supporting the fragmentation of services and government accountability. My research works as an answer to this call and the recognition of this gap and the possible unsustainable nature of refugee resettlement work in providing holistic services within the limits and boundaries of inclusive neoliberalism. In possibly looking beyond neoliberalism, there is important work to be done within the refugee resettlement nationally in structuring their work around long term political accountability for their clients. With the lack of adequate funding and assistance, many of these agencies

disproportionately hold responsibility for the integration of refugees, and are largely unable to provide long-term resources to these populations (Brown et al).

2 – Neoliberalism & the Welfare State

Neoliberalism - A Conceptual History

In order to understand the ways that the resettlement structure and its policies function in the American political, economic, and cultural landscape, it is essential to understand the ways that neoliberalism functions in American society. Neoliberalism has been defined in several different ways and in varied contexts. The broadest understanding of neoliberalism is a political movement that prioritizes the private over the public. It now functions as the primary mode of governance and economic affairs in the Western world. Neoliberalism as an economic and political movement, rising significantly in the 1970s, prioritizes free markets, privatization, and deregulation. It also functions to prioritize the ‘individual’ and within that, an individual’s property rights. In David Harvey’s “A Brief History of Neoliberalism,” he defines it as:

Neoliberalism is in the first instance a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets and free trade. The role of the state is to create and preserve an institutional framework appropriate to such practices. The state has to guarantee, for example, the quality and integrity of money. It must also set up those military, defence, police and legal structures and functions required to secure private property rights and to guarantee, by force if need be, the proper functioning of markets. Furthermore, if markets do not exist (in areas such as land, water, education, healthcare, social security, or environmental pollution) then they must be created, by state action if necessary. But beyond these tasks the state

should not venture. State interventions in markets (once created) must be kept to a bare minimum because, according to the theory, the state cannot possibly possess enough information to second-guess market signals (prices) and because powerful interest groups will inevitably distort and bias state interventions (particularly in democracies) for their own benefit (Harvey 2005:2).

Within this view, Harvey does not view neoliberalism as a continuation of liberalism, but as a distinct economic theory from liberal values and ideas. As a continuation of Harvey's definition of neoliberalism, he characterizes neoliberalism as a process of 'political economic practices' instead of a complete political ideology in its own right. He argues that there is a central contradiction of neoliberalism, between the theoretical project and the political project. He argues that the theoretical side of neoliberalism conflicts with itself in practice in that in terms of the theoretical approach, the free market is supposed to reign supreme. In terms of the neoliberal approach in practice however, it becomes a much more complicated set of processes that entails "multiple determinations and not a little chaos and confusion" (2005, 9). Engaging with the neoliberal system as a set of processes and approaches, rather than a complete political system or ideology itself allows one to conceptualize the various ways it plays out in different spheres. While these processes may be complex and vary in the ways in which it is approached in different contexts, its role within the state by and large aims to reduce the role of the federal governments and transfer state services to the private sectors, in terms of non-state actors such as nongovernmental organizations.

Neoliberalism and the Welfare State

When it comes to the role that neoliberalism functions in relation to the welfare system, there is a clear trajectory and transfer of power over to private organizations in carrying out state services. In Edwin Kaseke's "Structural adjustment programmes and the problem of urban poverty: an African perspective," they argue that the trend toward the privatization of human services and state functions is an essential aspect of the spread of neoliberal global policies. Building off of this analysis, Ackerman et al argue in "The criminalization of immigration and the privatization of the immigration detention: implications for justice," that a consequence of this trend along with a the growing federal budget deficit has been for privatization to work as the primary tool for meeting "social obligations toward providing custodial and care oriented services" through the (2013: 6). Social welfare scholars have examined the ways in which the certain policies such as the 1996 welfare reforms work as an institutionalization of neoliberalism in terms of favoring market and work centered ethos. G. Odessa Benson discusses the ways in which these welfare policies parallel resettlement policies in the US around the same time, and reflect the overall trend in institutionalizing neoliberal strategies. She studies the ways in which the Omnibus Act of 1981, the vanguard policy in welfare reform, and the Refugee Act of 1980, the primary federal policy on resettlement, act as the most important federal policies on public assistance and employment today. Studying these parallels, she concludes that there is evidence of four neoliberal elements in the Refugee Act including devolution of authority (the flexibility for states to choose their resettlement strategy: state-administered, public-private partnership, and opt out of resettlement services), performance systems,

privatization, and workfare. The implications of resettlement policies, namely the Refugee Act of 1980, will be discussed at greater length in later sections, however these scholars provide an introduction to the relationship between neoliberalism, welfare policies, and refugee resettlement policies.

By default, neoliberal processes and strategies have downsized the welfare state considerably since the postwar 1970s era and re-distributed income towards the upper classes. This redistribution of wealth to higher income earners has had various negative impacts on lower income earners, many of whom are immigrants and refugees. Mimi Abramovitz (2012) demonstrates that with the downsizing of the welfare state, poverty rates have grown and the inequality gap widening exponentially in the last few decades. In Table 1, Abramovitz demonstrates the increasing poverty rates since 1960. In Figure 1, a statistic originally from the Congressional Budget Office and also used in Sherman & Stone's work, it shows the widening gap between the wealthy '1 percent' and the middle class in America, including federal taxes. These effects have also had major consequences for low and middle-income households of color. The already wide racial disparities have also grown, and in 2009 "White (non-Hispanic) earners comprised 80% of those in the top fifth compared to 5.7% for Blacks, 6.6% for Hispanics (of any race), and 6.3 % for Asians" (Abramovitz 2012: 40). It has also been well noted that while people of color are overrepresented as welfare recipients and workers in the state welfare system, that neoliberalism places a high focus on these groups to be economically self-sufficient

(Kingfisher 2001). By downsizing the role of the state in offering ‘care’ assistance, it by default disproportionately affects these marginalized groups.

Scholars Jeff Maskovsky and Catherine Kingfisher analyze the ways that neoliberalism has been studied within anthropology. They argue that while it has emerged as a one of the most defining actors in the world as a way to analyze ‘cultural and political-economic change’, that is must not be understood as a vague or abstract entity and must be understood within its limits and boundaries. Further, they stress the need to provide concrete accounts for the ways that it interacts with culture, power, and governing practices in local contexts. This research represents an answer to this call to provide a case study of the ways in which federal and state resettlement policies affect local agencies.

Nonprofit Industrial Complex

The Nonprofit Industrial Complex (NPIC) has been recognized by many academics, scholars, and activists generally as “a system of relationships between the state, the owning classes, foundations, and social service & social justice organizations that results in the surveillance, control derailment, everyday management of political movements” (INCITE, “The Revolution Will Not Be Funded Anthology” 2004). Dylan Rodriguez (2004) defined the nonprofit industrial complex as a “set of symbiotic relationships that link together political and financial technologies of state and owning-class proctorship and surveillance over public political intercourse, including and especially emergent progressive and leftist social movements, since about the mid-1970s.”

He called for a critique of the state corporate alliance and its efforts to keep the lid on “what is left of the alleged U.S. Left.”

This concept has been intentionally built upon after the ideas of the “military industrial complex” and the “prison industrial complex” to explain a set of relations that govern the work of private sector organizations in providing what are usually considered public sector goods. Within this exploration of this system of relations, I seek to describe the ways in which the nonprofit industry itself can serve to restructure hegemonic power, rather than resist it. By interrogating the very structures of institutions that are designed by the state, it further questions the ways in which the NPIC acts as a deterrent to social justice work within nonprofits. I will discuss later in the text how refugee resettlement agencies are uniquely complicated within this arrangement.

In 2004, the organization INCITE! Women, Gender Non-Conforming, and Trans People of Color Against Violence, a “national activist organization of radical feminists of color advancing a movement to end violence against women of color and our communities” held a conference titled “The Revolution Will Not Be Funded: Beyond The Non-Profit Industrial Complex.” This conference was the first large-scale conference to interrogate the nonprofit industry itself within the lens of a social justice critique. Over twenty-five leading activists and scholars spoke on this issue, representing a range of backgrounds and fields of work including immigration, gender justice, and prison abolition.

In one of its seminal pieces “In the Shadow of the Shadow State,” reprinted in the January 2015 issue “Navigating Neoliberalism in the Academy, Nonprofits, and Beyond” Ruth Wilson Gilmore traces the NPIC’s history in the US and how this past reflects its current relationship with social justice work. In the opening of her piece, she discusses the civil rights leader Ira Reid and his struggle to navigate organized philanthropy within the African American community liberation struggle in the 1940s. Even seventy years ago, Reid noticed much of the same issues that social justice activists now have realized in the everyday reality of continuing their work: the two obstacles of both dependency and accommodation. During this time, both reforming and radical Black groups were increasingly dependent on foundation money. Both donors and recipients “acted on assumptions about each other and about the possibility for social change which, regardless of intent, reinforce the very structures groups had self-organized to dismantle” (Reid 1944: 266; Gilmore 2009). While this funding did contribute to the logistical work needed to be done within the freedom struggle at this time, it did not win its freedom. It was the work of the people that achieved the goals of the freedom struggle. Gilmore notes how these set of relations function within the present-day US mainstream liberal democracy and its similar use of the word “freedom” in the realm of imperial and economic hegemony.

Further, she notes the ways that the NPIC, similar to both the military and the prison industrial complex have reshaped the national landscape, changed people’s understanding of themselves, and the state’s role within these complexes. In fact, nonprofits have existed since colonial times, in an effort to provide social service delivery

throughout associations that were neither businesses nor governmental. This work was historically tied to religious institutions. Puritans established Harvard College in 1643 in an effort to educate ministers and within this effort, created the first fundraising campaign of its kind (Hammack, 2000). These spaces of course were not tailored towards all poor or ‘needy’ folks, but reserved for white males and who are considered deserving within the inception of the settler colonial project.

Over time, nonprofits developed more and more into the familiar image that we now envision. In the 1800s, no organization existed in today’s idea of a nonprofit, however over the next 100 years, religious institutions represented a majority of the ‘nonprofit’ work. During this time, there was no federal pathway for recognizing nonprofits, and much of this power in passing legal status went into the hands of local governance. States were often encouraged by the federal government to reject offers from nonprofits attempting to achieve legal status. For marginalized communities especially, for those that attempted to challenge hegemonic power structures and establish social justice work through nonprofit status, many were rejected for the sake of maintaining social norms (Samimi 2010). For example, Catholics were prohibited from receiving charters from states and gaining official recognition because of the idea that they would end up being controlled by the pope (Carey, 1987). Because nonprofits were subject to the resources given to them by state and local authorities, power was largely circulated between groups that were approved by local authorities and did not disturb social norms.

In the 20th century, the growth of the nonprofit sector was significantly reduced due to both the creation of the New Deal programs, as well as the social, political, and legal structures in place that inhibited people of color from forming officially recognized institutions. New Deal programs were designed to strengthen government agencies and employ more of the federal workforce, and the establishment of government assistance programs such as the creation of the aid to Families with Dependent Children, and unemployment compensation (Axinn & Stern, 2008). Private welfare agencies did not receive federal funding, and for those that were led by marginalized communities, it was even more difficult to access a funding source large enough to sustain their organization. While the New Deal programs were largely created to strengthen the social and economic core of struggling Americans after the Great Depression, these welfare systems established by the federal government largely excluded the majority of southern black people. Programs such as The Agricultural Adjustment Act ,The Social Security Act, The National Labor Relations Act (Wagner Act), The Federal Housing Act, were largely created to conform to the workforce of southern racists (Bernstein 2001; 85). For Social Security for example, it was designed to create a tax that would fund pension benefits for all workers. Southern oligarchs however, saw this as a threat to their labor force and demanded that agricultural and domestic workers be excluded, which included a majority of black workers in the south. For those that were able to access the political and economic ladder of establishing a nonprofit, religious (and racial to a lesser extent) discrimination in the

north, and legalized segregation via Jim Crow Laws in the south significantly hindered the growth of nonprofits dedicated towards social justice.

After the New Deal programs ended and the devolution of the federal government, the private sectors, consisting of both for profit and nonprofits, held the most responsibility in providing welfare services (Kettl, 2000). This has translated into the creation of grants, contracts, funding regulations, and a series of bureaucratic systems and processes in a complicated network between the federal government, businesses, and nonprofits (Kettl, 1993). Returning to Gilmore's "In the Shadow of the Shadow State," she builds off of Jennifer Wolch's creation of the term "shadow state" to describe the rise of the voluntary sector in providing direct social services that were previously provided by the New Deal Programs between the 1930s-1970s (Wolch 1990). This service void created the formation of nonprofits, which primarily consisted of new groups that lacked experience with advocacy, but were designed to get contracts and had to do business with the state through the work of contracts and grants. Wolch explains the rise of the shadow state to the creation of the New Deal Programs and the expansion of government services, to the equally effective methods to undo the work of these programs at every level - from the local to the federal.

The federal government welcomed these nonprofits because of what they would do for them and the ways in which their policies were structured to disempower nonprofit welfare agencies and limit their political agency. Gilmore argues that unlike the Prison Industrial Complex (PIC) which suppresses dissent, the NPIC manages and controls it by

incorporating it into the state apparatus, by acting as a “shadow state” by providing social services that are supposed to be paid for by the state in tax dollar funding. She also describes the ways in which state actors praised nonprofits under the language of efficiency (meager budgets) and accountability (contracts that could be eliminated if anybody “stepped out of line” or challenged authority). This dynamic between nonprofits and federal agencies resulted in the professionalization and bureaucratization of these agencies. This has caused them to “conform to public rules” financially, which in many ways has become a higher priority than comforting those “abandoned to their care” (Gilmore 2009). Gilmore then goes on to so accurately explain the dilemmas that which most of these agencies face:

They do not want to lose the contracts to provide services because they truly care about clients who otherwise would have nowhere to go; thus they have been sucked into the world of non-profit providers, which, like all worlds, has its own jargon, limits (determined by bid and budget cycles, and legislative trends), and both formal as well as informal hierarchies. And, generally, the issues they are paid to address have been narrowed to program-specific categories and remedies which make staff—who often have a great understanding of the scale and scope of both individual clients’ and the needs of society at large—become in their everyday practice technocrats through imposed specialization. The shadow state, then, is real but without significant political clout, forbidden by law to advocate for systemic change, and bound by public rules and non-profit charters to stick to its mission or get out of business and suffer legal consequences if it strays along the way.

This is the reality of the Non Profit Industrial Complex, refugee resettlement agencies included. Therefore, what is the place of the nonprofit staff worker in challenging the very systematic structures that oppressed these marginalized communities that are receiving this welfare assistance to begin with? What has the goal of the nonprofit welfare agency

become, if its power remains limited and its bureaucratic structures remains high? For those organizations that are able to operate outside of the structures of federal recognition and thus regulations, they too, must face the same pressures to exist within the “shadow of the shadow state,” and in many ways are still economically dependent under these structures. One example of this is the ways in which unofficially recognized grassroots social justice organizations have been pressured to formalize their status by auditors who have decided that the nonprofits that they may receive some funding from have “strayed outside the limits defined by their missions statements” (Gilmore).

Even more critical to understanding the NPIC and its underpinnings, are not just economic dependencies that these agencies face, but Gilmore’s point in that this very complex itself shapes norms within society. Particularly for organizations that are rooted in social justice work, whether they be nonprofits working under federal regulations or grassroots “shadows of the shadow state,” they become “vulnerable to becoming mission impossible” under the very specific funding regulations and structural barriers (Gilmore). Therefore, how far can these organizations get, when the structure that it is placed in is designed not to challenge the very systematic structures that limit the implementation of welfare assistance in the first place?

These structural barriers are not just maintained by federal structures, but private foundation dollars as well that benefit from the NPIC and its divergence from social justice aims (Samimi). On the surface, as an alternative to federal funding, foundations could represent a challenge to government limitations, however these organizations carry their

own set of requirements as well. Grant requirements especially have often been so limiting but essential to an organization's lifespan, that many organizations have felt compelled to change or modify its programs, and sometimes even their mission statement, in order to meet the requirements of a grant application (Samimi). These critiques act not as a demonization of social justice-aimed nonprofits themselves, but as a larger comment on the structure of social service delivery in our nation.

“Refugee Industrial Complex”?

With this understanding of the Non Profit Industrial Complex, this situates the Refugee Resettlement Industry in a unique place. The nine major “volags” or private not for profit resettlement agencies that started off as charitable religious institutions, receive a mix of both federal and private funding. These agencies, with an estimated 390 local chapters are given the primary responsibility in the delivery of services to newly arrived refugees and immigrants. They operate under the provisions of the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) in order to receive federal funding. In 2011, the United States ‘took in’ nearly 70% of the world’s refugee population to be resettled (USCRI). Despite the demographic diversity that USRAP has aimed to reach in the last few decades, the national resettlement policy has not changed or even been amended since 1980. The Refugee Act of 1980 established the Federal Refugee Resettlement System including the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) under the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). These agencies have established the requirements and regulations that refugee service agencies have to meet.

The 1980 Refugee Act states its primary goals of the resettlement program as both “to provide for the effective resettlement of refugees and to assist them to achieve economic self-sufficiency as quickly as possible” (1980; 1). The ORR’s stated objectives are to help refugees in becoming “integrated members of American society” (ORR 2007; 1; Samimi, 2). This rhetoric here is important in understanding the ways in which the Refugee Resettlement industry is structured and thus, implemented. Building on the work of Ruth Gilmore and her work in the previous section, how then can we analyze the Resettlement Industry, from the top at the federal level - from USRAP and its umbrella departments, to the local volags that are responsible for the implementation of these policies aimed at ‘self-sufficiency’ and ‘integrating’ into American society. If we are to understand these local agencies as subject to economic dependencies (via federal contracts and loans, foundation grant requirements, everyday bureaucratic logistics), as well as its very actions that shape ‘norms’ in society at large, does this constitute a ‘Refugee [Resettlement] Industrial Complex’?

It is not a new phenomenon that refugee admissions programs have been used to further foreign policy interests. In Chapter 1, I discussed the United States’ role in intentionally providing refuge to those fleeing communist nations as an effort to discredit communism within international relations. Even before this, many refugees were barred from seeking asylum in the US after World War II, a majority of whom were Jewish refugees fleeing the Holocaust (USHMM). This pattern has also held true in recent decades, particularly after September 11, 2001, in which security issues were heightened

across the board, and Middle Eastern refugees, particularly from Afghanistan and Iraq, were restricted from entering the country. After the terrorist attacks in Paris in November of last year, the House overwhelmingly passed legislation that would overhaul the federal visa waiver program and bar those from Iraq, Syria, Iran and the Sudan, or those who have visited those countries in the last five years, from traveling to the United States without a visa. This bill was overwhelmingly aimed at tightening security measures against Syrian and Iraqi refugees and restricting their entry into the country. Whether or not this bill is to pass through the Senate, the fact that foreign policy concerns have continued to mirror refugee admission policies proof of a much larger power structures that are embedded within the Resettlement Industry.

In the relationship between the United States' foreign policy and refugee admissions program, the economic dependencies that resettlement agencies face under the federal government and foundations, as well as the power dynamics that are restructured in the everyday relationships between those that work at the agencies and their 'clients', one can clearly observe the relationship between neoliberalism and the resettlement industry, much the same way to the Nonprofit, Prison, and Military Industrial Complexes. While the term 'industry' has been more commonly used to refer to these structures, providing some reference to the power dynamics embedded within the processes, the term 'Refugee Industrial Complex' may be more fitting to describe these systems. While refugee resettlement agencies exist within the structures of the NPIC as nonprofits themselves, there is something unique about their position as extensions of federal and foreign policy,

while also maintaining the image of being a private institution that has the capability of making its own decisions separate from the federal government. These agencies are often seen as foot soldiers to the giant umbrella of USRAP and the many organizations that coordinate resettlement at the national level, however volags' very existences depend on the [relatively small based on expectations] federal funding that they receive (HIAS).

3 – How Resettlement Policies and Structures Are Implicated Within Hegemonic Power Structures: Examining the “Self-Sufficiency” Service Model

Governmentality Thought as Lens for Understanding Resettlement Structures and Individual Agencies

Governmentality thought has a range of different scholars and areas of interest that people discuss in relation to various forms of governance. The central figure and founder of this field, embedded in a critique of neoliberal policy and ideology, is Michel Foucault. In a series of lectures from 1977 to 1978 titled “Security, Territory, Population,” he discusses the role of governmentality or what he describes as the “art of government” or the government’s methodologies of designing a population to act in accordance with its policies and systems. Rather than understanding governmentality solely as a hierarchical set of relations that are strictly top-down, in traditionally-conceived negative terms, he argues for a more complex understanding. Instead, the government conducts its activities through what are thought of as benign, benevolent institutions to enact power of a

population that already self-disciplines itself. In contemporary times, and particularly in the NGOization of care assistance as a backlash against the New Deal period and the brief taste of the neoliberal welfare state, the federal government enacts governmentality through multiple sets of institutions that attempt to use every individual as a part of state control. In Foucault's understanding, these bureaucracies manifest through hospitals, schools, and prisons. Through his lens and understanding of the "conduct of conduct" that is governmentality, these set of relations also extend to nonprofit industries and refugee resettlement agencies that lie at the intersections of federal and local power apparatuses.

Governmentality manifests itself as a response to the welfare state, with a firm understanding of paternalistic attitudes and individual responsibility. Its premise is to reduce the size of the government, while still remaining control of the population (Wilson 2008; 189, Dean 1999). For government-supported community service organizations, the state is still able to shape the behavior of citizens in approved ways (Ilcan and Bask 2004; Wilson 189). Building off of much of the work discussed in the previous chapter on the Nonprofit Industrial Complex, the Refugee Resettlement Industry is supported, partially funded, and surveilled by the federal government to enact its policies and deliver services through a contract-based process that limits the scope of their programs and projects. By doing this, the state is therefore able to control aspects of resettlement caseworkers and their ability in providing services that are long-term, community-driven, base-building, culturally-specific. In this way, among many of the funding limitations that NGOs face,

describe the art of governance that the state enacts onto resettlement agencies, whether or not they have a social justice driven model or not.

Wilson (2008) argues for a lens of governmentality in understanding the context of the “oppressive, superficial, fragmented, and severely under-resourced community practice” of social work in Canada. Within this conceptual framework, she analyses the three dominant discourses within social work today, being “experts and evidence,” “vulnerable populations,” and “the community.” As a continuation of the work explored in the other two chapters, she outlines the ways in which neoliberalism is enacted into the macropolitics (or Foucault’s biopolitics) to understand how state hegemony and repression is manifested into social work, social workers, and “clients” as desperate receivers of this gracious and benevolent industry. Despite the geographical differences, there are significant comparisons to be made between analyzing governmentality thought through social work as well as that of the resettlement industry in the United States.

Wilson then goes on to discuss the importance of a discourse in shaping social concerns and the way language makes meaning of and constructs our realities. She notes how certain language such as the moralizing influence of “the community” and the role of community agencies are used to normalize poverty and serve as solutions to the ‘abnormal’ factors such as unemployment that become criminalized if sustained (Wilson 2008: 190; Murray 2004). She then goes a step further to discuss the contradictions that formed her desire to write the article. A governmentality approach led her to realize that it is not enough to merely understand the structures that are forced onto them by the state as social

workers (project-based funding and contracting) and individual anti-oppressive frameworks, while still defending the goals of neoliberal governance. Rather, she argues for an understanding of governmentality thought within social work curriculum before going into the ‘workforce,’ must be tied towards an emancipatory philosophy that is not rooted in self-congratulation and “enlightenment innocence” for merely understanding structural oppressions, but to use this praxis to develop problem-solving techniques based on them.

Governmentality Thought Within the Refugee [Resettlement] Industrial Complex

There are multiple layers of governmentality thought within the Refugee Industrial Complex (RIC) transnationally and domestically to be dissected. The RIC lies at the intersections of the military, prison, and nonprofit complexes. While US hegemony and imperialism lay the foundation for the military industrial complex, the prison industrial complex criminalizes migrants through a complex set of processes between the government, federal prison, and private companies. Many migrants often flee US-induced economic instability in their home countries, but are unable to attain asylum or refugee status due to the fact that economic status is not considered a valid reason for refuge. Those that are unable to achieve status and have already entered the country undocumented are deemed “illegal” and then made profitable through the expansion of public/private prisons, detainment centers, and border control systems. On the other hand, the nonprofit industrial complex then maintains a tight grip on the economic life force, apolitical frameworks and discourse, and lack of political accountability that repress the mass

mobilizations needed to galvanize social change resulting from systematic issues arising from the MIC, PIC, and others. The RIC culminates in the set of power relations within all three of these areas, not in that the US is concerned with the increase in numbers of refugee and immigrant flows to America. While it maintains a ceiling number annually of refugees, it is the larger structures and multiplicities of governance in action within this process that deserve attention. In what ways does the US fuel the expansion of this industry in ways that favor its 'humanitarian,' foreign policy and private sector objectives?

By putting the power of service delivery for newly arrived refugees in the hands of the nine large resettlement agencies, with the requirements of making these refugees "self-sufficient" in 90 days or less, federal resettlement policy limits the long-term and sustainable initiatives needed to ensure refugees have lives that they deem socially and economically viable. The focus on quick employment for self-sufficiency leaves refugees with little time or job training to become acclimated to their new environments and matches them with jobs that are often inappropriate for their skill set (Columbia). This short-term model also tends to ignore the mental and social health factors that many refugees are facing upon arriving to the US and fleeing war and displacement. The effects of trauma, loss, and injury are long-lasting and play a key role in their ability to adapt to challenging new work environments (Columbia).

Stephanie Nawyn analyzes the ways in which the quick employment model within resettlement agencies provide volags with the opportunity structure to reproduce gender and racial/ethnic hierarchies in the job market and within the agencies themselves (2010).

This is not to say that volag staff members themselves intended or desired to restructure these hierarchies, but that the governmentality or “art of governance” that federal policies created mandated so. Using data gathered from 60 interviews with staff workers at refugee NGOs, including volags, mutual aid associations, and ‘support agencies’ aimed at cultural and advocacy initiatives, she compares the extent to which each of these types of refugee NGOs act as extensions of state control and work inadvertently in disempowering refugees. While refugees may immediately express gratitude and satisfaction at attaining employment within the first three months, refugee clients felt more frustrated over time than appreciative of the low-paying and low-skilled jobs that the caseworkers found for them (Nawyn 2010; Gold 1992, 1996; Ong 2003). This is again not to stress traditional notions of individual one-to-one hierarchies of power between caseworkers and refugee clients, but to interrogate the multiplicity of government actors, contracts, and policies surrounding “self-sufficiency” among others that pressure these caseworkers to provide short-term (arguably inadequate) service delivery. In this way, refugee resettlement agencies enact social control not just in terms of government funding, but also welfare services themselves (Nawyn 2010). This analysis builds off of much of the social welfare scholarship that analyzes how government welfare services act as a mode of social control, particular over poor non-white women and those already marginalized within society, and even further so as poor refugee non-white women (Abramovitz, 1996; Hays, 2003; Neubeck & Cazenave, 2001).

It is within these processes of enacting social control that the state views refugees as recipients of aid (Harrell-Bond) and consumers. Envisioning a different structure to the one that remains in most volags today is a difficult endeavor, seeing that this model of server-recipient has remained intact in the last three decades of the Refugee Act of 1980 that established the private NGO resettlement industry. Research shows that resettlement NGOs do more to enact social control over refugee clients than to offer “opportunities for more efficacious agency” (Nawyn 2010; 152). As recipients of aid, refugees are unable to assert their desire to seek jobs that match their skill set and education level, for fear of being deemed “ungrateful,” a characteristic that I have heard often in passing as an intern at a resettlement agency. Despite the fact that the Refugee Act recognizes the “professional refresher training and other re-certification services” needed to seek jobs in line with refugees’ skill background (Halpern), funding remains limited, resulting in medical doctors working as cashiers and professors working as wait staff (Columbia, 12). As ‘recipients of aid,’ refugees are seen as homogenous, undifferentiated masses; stereotyped and labeled by bureaucratic agencies (Harrell-Bond 1997; Zetter).

In her seminal piece, “The Experience of Refugees as Recipients of Aid,” Barbara Harrell-Bond analyzes how assistance acts as a source of debilitating stress for those that have no option but to receive. Her work among others (Indra 988; 1993) focuses on the asymmetrical power relations between privately-sponsored refugees and refugee clients, embedded in the western concept of charity. This is especially evident in the history of faith-based resettlement agencies whose missions often times are to serve the

‘underserved.’ In her section titled ‘When Refugees Were Still ‘People’,’ Harrell-Bond analyzes the extent to which European refugees fleeing communist nations were initially seen as active agents and not helpless recipients of aid, but that over time refugees were expected to conform to the values of their sponsors, and that there was little consideration or concern for the cultures and countries that they came from. Social control was therefore delegated by donor governments to resettlement agencies in providing aid, however the question never asked is “who should be responsible for these decisions” (Harrell-Bond 1997; 10)? What would it look like if these “monopolies of power” were broken, and the “management responsibilities were shared with hosts and refugees” within resettlement agencies (Harrell-Bond 1997; 10)? Is a more symmetrical relationship possible within this current structure? The role of ‘helpers,’ staff workers, and administrators must be further interrogated within the governance of resettlement work.

Case Study: Worcester, MA

Introduction

Ascentria Care Alliance is one of the largest social service organizations for immigrants in New England. It was previously Lutheran Social Services of New England, and is affiliated with the national Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service organization, one of the nine national volag agencies across the country. While it does not solely act as a refugee resettlement agency, and also provides services to the elderly and people with disabilities, a majority of its programs and services are geared towards ‘serving’ refugees,

asylees, and immigrants. In Worcester, MA, the largest resettlement city in Massachusetts and one of the largest in New England, Ascentria has a client center that provides resettlement (in the traditional sense of housing), employment assistance, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes, legal assistance, and other smaller programs.

Since August 2015, I have pursued a year long internship at the Worcester Ascentria Care Alliance office as a Legal Assistant in the Immigration Legal Assistance Program completing 'green card' and citizenship applications with refugees and other non-refugee immigrants that are eligible for services. During my time at the organization, I have learned about many aspects of the resettlement process and have used my academic and activist background as a lens to analyze what I was observing and experiencing. Technically, my experience was primarily within the legal program, separated from the Service for New Americans program (the resettlement department), however working in tight quarters and developing a close working relationship with many of the caseworkers within the department, as well as the significant amount of crossover that result in working with the same populations, has raised many questions. As a function of my studies as well as my political action, I have developed a keen analysis of a variety of inequalities, some tied to neoliberal systems, ideologies and processes, and some tied to older forms of racism, classism, heteronormativity, etc. It was from this development that I began to analyze the ways in which the organization I intern for responds to neoliberal ideologies

and incentives (and those who resist it), and its reproduction of colonialist racial structures (and those who resist it).

Accountability

Ascentria Care Alliance defines its mission as being “called to strengthen communities by empowering people to respond to life’s challenges,” with the goals to “break the cycle of poverty, and build thriving communities where everyone has the chance to achieve their full potential, regardless of background or disadvantage.” This language reflects the dominant discourse within social service organizations (particularly faith-based ones founded as charitable organizations) surrounding empowerment, poverty, and community that must be further scrutinized. Utilizing Wilson’s essay described in the previous section, the stated missions and goals of Ascentria, as well as colloquial discourse used ‘in passing,’ mirrors the “vulnerable populations” and “the community” discourses dominant in social work. How then, would governmentality thought view language surrounding serving, empowering, and strengthening ‘communities’ regardless of their cultural, racial, or class background within the broad-reaching goal of ending poverty?

Based on my participatory observation, I have witnessed the various opportunity structures that serve to reproduce racial/ethnic, gender, class, and immigration enforcement structures. These opportunity structures (Nawyn, 2010) represent both the very reproductions of these forms of oppression that I have witnessed, as well as the opportunities that have been created in the neoliberal and racial foundations of the RIC to create these actions in the past, present, and future. These opportunity structures, I argue,

are most evident in the Legal Department that I have held a core position within. As a Legal Assistant completing ‘green card’ and naturalization applications with refugees primarily, I have seen the ways in which I act as an agent of the neoliberal US immigration system and the enforcement of US foreign policy objectives and ideas surrounding a ‘rightful’ citizen and/or resident, the surveillance and bureaucracies surrounding migrant bodies, and the homogenizing of migrants’ histories. This is evident in a number of different areas, though I will discuss the naturalization and ‘green card’ applications specifically based on my participatory observation.

The naturalization and ‘green card’ application include an extensive set of questions regarding a migrant’s history surrounding violence and criminality. This ranges from questions about traffic violations, prostitution, polygamy, and illegal gambling, to ones about participation in genocide, terrorist activity, any actions in opposition to the US government, Communist Party affiliation, Nazi Party membership, and military service or training. For resettled refugees that have already experienced a thorough vetting and security process prior to entering the nation, completing this application reproduces many of the perceptions that migrants, particularly Muslim migrants, are arguably violent until proven otherwise. Many refugees that I have worked with express disappointment, despair, anger, and disrespect when I ask them these questions as I am required to do in my position. Some shake their heads and laugh, noting the ways in which these questions reflect common perceptions of their communities in the media. These opportunity structures to reproduce neoliberal US immigration policies and border systems are created

in both of these applications; however are most evident in the naturalization application. Of particular relevance are the questions regarding crimes of “moral turpitude” as detailed above, renunciation of foreign titles and nobilities, as well as allegiance to and support of the United States, including the potential to bear arms.

The opportunity structures within these applications and other legal assistance applications reflect the dominant discourses and systems embedded in US immigration policies that ascribe ideas and duties of a rightful citizen and immigrant to the state. The Legal Department within Ascentria and other immigration legal assistance programs around the state, provide vital services that impact the lived realities of migrants that must navigate local, state, and national borders and policing. However, this experience has brought to the forefront the importance of making active steps to combat these oppressive discourses and dynamics within this work, if possible. In legal settings in the US that are predominantly white, middle to upper class, highly educated, it is ever critical to understand the ways in which these structures could be reproduced.

This was especially evident in the racial composition of Ascentria’s legal department that is, besides myself and other interns, entirely white, middle to upper-middle-class, highly educated, and all women. Many of these women came from suburbs outside of New England in other areas of the US, and only one of which was an immigrant herself. I often heard homogenizing perceptions of refugees and other immigrants based on their nationality and background; re-inscribing common stereotypes that are dominant in white societies. For instance, Somali refugees were considered the most aggressive or

‘difficult to work with’ many times due to many client’s persistent questions, whereas Bhutanese refugees were considered easiest to work with, often described as a community of ‘sweet’ or kind people. These perceptions reflect the dominant stereotypes that black people (compounded by their African and Muslim backgrounds) are ‘naturally’ volatile, aggressive, and reactive, whereas Asian communities are subdued and passive. While the legal department may not technically represent a common component of the resettlement industry and RIC, it represents a joint agent (that exists within many resettlement agencies) that work alongside resettlement caseworkers and are considered the ‘next step’ process after resettlement into obtaining legal status after a certain period of time of demonstrating successful legal physical presence as a refugee. Both the legal and resettlement departments fall under the Services for New Americans Program of Ascentria.

The resettlement department of Ascentria includes a group of caseworkers and employees that offer resettlement (housing) assistance, employment services, case management and getting registered with government assistance, and ESL programs, among other smaller programs. Many resettlement programs, from what I have observed and inquired from my coworkers within this department and others in the field, represent a more diverse workforce. This factor is likely a result of the language abilities necessary to do this work and as a coworker has stated, fails to reflect the administration of resettlement agencies locally and nationally. In other words, while many of the caseworkers were also immigrants and/or refugees, they rarely represent the executive or administrative positions and the opportunities to ‘climb the ladder’ and grow in their career. I have also observed

the opportunity structures created to re-inscribe oppressive dynamics surrounding US immigration policies and legal statuses within communities (between caseworker and clients of the same or similar background) because the caseworker has gone through the process, in many times of ‘becoming’ an American and being resettled themselves.

Productivity

Arguably most importantly, it is within both the legal and resettlement departments (primarily the latter), that I have heard and observed the frustrations and concerns of the neoliberal resettlement policies. Protecting the privacy and security of these people, I will say that a common thread in what I had colloquially and ‘in passing’ was a general resentment with the current government-mandated programs and quotas. This includes low-funding, incredibly high quotas to meet within three months for their clients, overworking and exhaustive working conditions, grant writing, bureaucratization, competition with other agencies, and a need for a change to the larger national refugee policy. With IRB approval, I attempted to interview my coworkers within the resettlement department about their thoughts the bureaucracies and other effects of the neoliberal resettlement system (without these explicit terms or descriptors). Consequentially, largely due to time and work expectations addressed above, many were not able to meet. Some of them also worked two or three jobs to support their families that were also newcomers themselves, and have expressed their struggles in getting by and the extreme difficulty and exhaustion necessary within this work. Moving forward in further research, it is vital that direct participation and interviews be made by caseworkers themselves.

Marketization

A major characteristic that I have recognized during my time at the organization has been the creation of market-driven policies within the organization. According to the Ascentria's most recent 2014 annual fiscal report, the administrative and executive leadership have designed a "corporate" strategy that aims to open up new sources of revenue not funded by the government in which "strategic partnerships and social enterprise play a key role in filling that gap" (11). This reflects a larger pattern with the US non-profit sector to develop more for-profit models including commercial revenue generation, contract competition, the influence of new and emerging donors, and social entrepreneurship (Eikenberry and Kluver 2004; 1). Corporation-like market-driven incentives and policies are a significant shift in direction from the charitable/philanthropic structure that reflected faith-based nonprofits for decades. Now, Ascentria along with many other nonprofit organizations, continue to hire administrative hires from the business sector, and adding in new job titles of Vice Presidents, Co-Presidents and the like. These roles have largely replaced lower-level administrative positions, particularly of those that were most engaged with 'the community', and had more experience with immigrant populations specifically, rather than say businesses.

Some of these patterns of marketization that I have observed during my time at Ascentria has been related to grant funding, bureaucratic process related to reporting, fees and oversight costs for clients, among others (some of which that has been repeated in other sections). Grant writing has become a major process within Ascentria and

resettlement agencies broadly. Rather than program funding existing as an integral part to the foundation and sustainability of various programs from an administrative point of view, programs have to apply and compete for programs to do this work at all. Despite the fact that Ascentria argues that it has designed a “client-centered” model, caseworkers are often so busy or stretched for time and resources in order to comply with federal reporting requirements, as well as that of private donors. For instance, in both the resettlement and legal department, we must spend long periods of time logging in various types of information about our clients into excel spreadsheets be able to report to foundation donors to either sustain our current grants or apply for new ones. This detracts from the (potentially not incredibly rushed) valuable time that could be meant meeting with clients.

Another market-driven policy has been in the fees and costs that are asked of clients, at least in the legal department. Despite having a client-centered model, clients are asked to pay application fees that can be incredibly high for many of our clients that are unemployed, have large families, and/or are living on relatively low government assistance. We are told that this is because we have an incredibly low amount of funding within our agency, and that it is not based on our choice but our access to large grants. This lies in contrast to the total operating revenue in 2014 alone that reached slightly under \$58 million dollars. Where is this money from the federal government, private donors, and in-kind-gifts going exactly?

Within my position, this has reflected a difficult position at the intersections of both immigration enforcement (one could argue a lower-level immigration officer, in a sense),

and appealing to the neoliberalization and market-driven policies that govern our daily work. The many hours spent submitting database entries, and grant reports that view people as numbers to be collected and written into statistics for fiscal year highlights, detracts from the hours that could be used for many other things related to our client-centered model. This also relates to the high expectations that many staff members have alluded to within their work, compounded by low funding and not enough hours. These market-driven policies further reflect Ascentria's name change from Lutheran Social Services of New England to what they bluntly state was a vital component to their new corporate strategy to "open doors for new partnerships and expand our funding opportunities with foundations, corporate sponsors and donors" (Ascentria Website: FAQ). What do these market-based policies and developments mean moving forward and the effects that this will have on this agency in particular, and the hundreds of other volag local chapters that are likely under similar pressure to bring in 'new' revenue? Where is this trend leading us to and is this new direction truly one that will reach a 'client-centered' model, or one that many critics of nonprofit marketization, argue inhibits democracy and a strong civil society (Eikenberry and Kluver 2004)?

Gaps & Further Research

One of the largest gaps in my research is the reliance on participatory observation to analyze my internship at Ascentria Care Alliance. Having not had the opportunity to formally interview any of my coworkers leaves a major gap in both contextualizing the secondary literature within my paper, not carrying my own biases of observation into these

findings, and summarizing these experiences and not attributing them to a person's exact words and testimonies. This leaves a problematic place site within this discussion, however will likely provide a general understanding of the ways in which neoliberal dynamics function within everyday realities and relationships between service providers and clients. This is an area that must be built upon in further research.

4 – Steps Moving forward: Recommendations for National and Local Policy and Actions to Design An Alternative Resettlement Structure

Conclusion → (Recommendations)

How does the Resettlement Industry's structure and implementation, across the 390 chapters nationally, work to uphold US hegemony and inhibit migrant justice work? Why does migrant justice work transnationally and nationally, exist degrees apart from the work of refugee resettlement agencies, when they are facing many of the same issues that result from global displacement, war, globalization, and development? What ways does the 'Refugee Industrial Complex' work as a seemingly benign, apolitical, and humanitarian tool as an extension for US foreign policy, faith-based philanthropy embedded in centuries of white saviorism and assimilationist ideologies, and neoliberal concepts surrounding self-sufficiency and 'picking yourself up by the bootstraps.' What is the future of US resettlement work, either at the policy level, or in terms of coordinating with the growing grassroots movements dedicated towards social justice? Do resettlement agencies have the

ability to become social justice oriented themselves, or is the very structure of these agencies designed systematically to inhibit structural change, merely seeing refugees as recipients of aid and accidental byproducts of war, or are they agents themselves? Where then, does the work of the Refugees Welcome Movement internationally and nationally, continue to build, unite, and resist, alongside groups such as Black Lives Matter, No Mas Muertes, Dreamers, and the Palestine Solidarity Movement, outside officially recognized institutions? Are we prepared to do the work of dismantling the very structures that have created mass displacement, often times in the hands of US hegemony, or have we become too concerned with the next grant deadline to see our ‘client’ as an active participant within their our journey, and destination(s)? What would this look like?

While there are many levels of the resettlement industry that must be reformed, transformed, or completely re-done depending on one’s political ideologies, I will outline a list of changes that should be made at the federal and local levels. Based on my analysis of neoliberalism and its effects as a structural detriment to the resettlement of refugees in the U.S., I stress the need for an entirely new process at both the national and local levels, critically engaging power relations in all its forms. This includes interrogating and challenging the United States’ foreign policy initiatives and its effects on the mass displacement of people around the world to its shores and their second and third class social and economic status once they migrate here, built off of this country’s institutional subordination of black and brown people. In understanding the Refugee Industrial Complex through the lens of governmentality thought shows us that there are a complex

array of actors and systems that combine the United States' foreign policy, 'humanitarian,' and domestic objectives designed to inhibit the holistic and long-term work and cooperation needed to make sure refugees and immigrants lead sustainable lives rooted in justice, religious freedom, mutual respect, cultural exchange and preservation, among others as they identify.

While I stress the need for the strengthening of existing grassroots organizations working on migrant justice and refugee rights and the creation of new ones, I recognize the vitality of existing federal, state, and local structures embedded within neoliberal governance and resettlement policy and understand the importance of reforming these systems for the short-term. The following recommendations meant in reforming these structures lies in the importance of providing more adequate and holistic services to refugees and immigrants, as well as better working conditions for staff workers at these agencies. For the purposes of length and time, I will not include the large-scale criticisms of foreign policy and imperialism within this context, but stress the need for continued advocacy and pressure from transnational and national migrant justice groups in challenging these larger structures in order to address the root causes of forced displacement, imperialism, Western hegemony, and political suppression.

National Level

At the national level, there are several large scale policy changes and actions that must be taken to ensure that volag agencies and state governments are able to efficiently

and adequately provide direct services. Most of these policy changes and actions will come about from pressure from grassroots organizing and potential partnerships with migrant justice organizations. Using the research that Anastasia Brown and Todd Scriber have undergone in the essay “Unfulfilled Promises, Future Possibilities: The Refugee Resettlement System in the United States,” I echo much of their arguments for reforming the current industry and the outdated nature of the Refugee Act of 1980 that remains today. Their primary arguments rely on the need for adequate funding and management, capacities provided for refugees that pursue secondary migration, and increased and more effective information sharing between the federal, state, and local levels. While it will not be covered in-depth in this analysis, it is of crucial importance to also call for the transformation of immigration policy in the U.S. as a whole, the end to immigration raids and detention centers through the continued collaboration between I.C.E. and law enforcement, and the brutal policing of the U.S./Mexico Border. I will briefly outline and re-state Brown and Scribner’s recommendations to changing the current resettlement system while understanding the oppressive nature of immigration and resettlement policies as a whole.

First and foremost, the current policy must be transformed from one that solely focuses on the importance of early employment in achieving self-sufficiency. This policy transformation is one that will likely be carried out by pressure from newcomers centers through persistent organizing and promoting of alternative policies. The notion of self-sufficiency in and of itself must be interrogated and challenged, exposing the neoliberal

fascination on individualism. A more collective approach, understanding the interdependent relationship that can exist between refugees, the communities in which they live, and volag agencies. This structure as outlined in previous sections, limits the ability of refugees to seek jobs that match their skill set and education, while simultaneously improving English language services and job certification training to ensure long-term sustainability.

Further, these programs, including the State Department-funded Reception and Placement (R&P) Program and the ORR-funded transitional assistance programs, must be given much higher funding that matches the expectations and objectives of volag agencies. Studies have shown that this failure to provide appropriate funding and resources, as well as long-term planning, was expressed as one of the primary concerns of staff workers and their continued frustrations of not being able to provide adequate services to their clients based on the availability of resources (Nawyn 2006, 54). In 2008, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services (LIRS) underwent a cost analysis of the refugee resettlement services required by the State Department based on their contracts within the R&P program. the study found that the federal funding came to 39 percent of the total cost accrued during this period; the rest that was covered by in-kind donations, volunteer hours, and direct contribution by LIRS affiliate agencies (Brown and Scribner 111; LIRS 2008, 6). This requires the matching of the federal budget requests for the resettlement program with the President's stated admission ceiling. This is notably a reflection of domestic political debates and attitudes about incoming refugees, however regardless of the current

political debates, these factors must be stressed until action is taken to provide better services and the ability of volag agencies to do their jobs in a sustainable manner; with adequate resources and realistic expectations for staff workers.

Information sharing between the various departments, agencies, refugees, and ‘host’ communities is also of critical concern (Brown and Scriber 115). This is a transformation that would likely come about through regularly scheduled municipality-wide meetings between elected officials, resettlement agencies, faith-based organizations, real estate agencies, and migrant justice organizations, similar to how it is implemented in Worcester, MA. It is important for ‘receiving’ communities to better be able to provide resources and services for specific refugee populations upon their arrival as well as educating their own populations in order to have the most preparation and coordination for all parties. Along with heightened coordination and communication, information must be shared in a much more timely manner that takes predictions into account in order for receiving agencies and communities to be prepared. The current system, in which ORR funding for grants and contracts is given based on the amount of refugees that have settled in each state in the previous 36 months, fails to account for communities that receive large amounts of recent arrivals, including those resulting from secondary migration (Brown and Scriber 115). Future arrival projections must be made by the State Department and then shared with ORR and the volag agencies. The current ‘guessing game’ that local agencies have to rely on is entirely inadequate for staff members in being prepared for the coming year and the specific communities that come, which only furthers the lack of culturally

specific services and education for staff members and receiving communities. This coordination could also assist in matching specific refugee communities and receiving communities, despite the fact that structural conditions must be addressed in the long-term that make certain communities hostile to refugees. There must also be much greater attention paid to collecting data on secondary migration and the knowledge that refugees, like people of any legal status, do not remain static and often migrate to other areas for economic, social, or other reasons.

Local Level: Within the Nonprofit System

Volags

There is a lot of work that volag agencies can do to improve the overall functioning of their organizations and the ways in which administrators and staff workers approach their work. Despite the amount to which volags are immersed in the NPIC, and the various issues that come along with it to inhibit political accountability and economic dependencies with larger corporations and the federal government, there is still important work that can be done. It remains an important question the extent to which holistic work based off of social justice ideals and praxis can be done within the nonprofit industry, and the fundamental structure of the RIC and its ties to the state. However, incorporating training, activities, resources, and partnerships rooted in social justice is key to the continued direct service work that volags provide, despite the structural barriers that may exist. I recognize that not everyone has the ability to commit to the labor to building

grassroots organizations and the many times low funding that comes with it until a base is built.

Staff members must incorporate a social justice oriented model that would involve trainings surrounding anti-oppression and privilege workshops with administrators and staff members, teach-ins regarding the cultures of specific refugee and immigrant populations, mandatory quotas within hiring practices to encourage staff and administrators of color and of immigrant backgrounds to apply. It is also vital for volags to continue to partner with MAAs (mutual assistance associations), social justice organizations, and key agencies/departments (health facilities, schools, religious institutions) involved in the local community in which it resides. Where possible, it is important for volags to partner with community leaders of the refugee and immigrant populations that already reside in the area and partner with them to educate the ‘host’ community on the incoming populations or those that already live there. If certain staff members do not feel comfortable directly participating in SJ advocacy within their programs for fear of government oversight, they can make smaller, indirect efforts to educate themselves and their peers. For instance, though someone may not feel comfortable advocating for a specific cause while in the workplace, though they may sign or share a petition for example, or be willing to bring in a speaker from an advocacy organization. By making it more accessible and having resource materials about migrant justice advocacy organizations within their workplaces, this may prompt workers to discuss these issues more and become involved outside of the workplace.

MAAs

Mutual assistance associations (MAAs) are usually known as ethnic-based organizations that represent particular immigrant populations, and whose staff members are often from a specific immigrant population themselves. While they are not volags, they are affiliated with them and are immersed in the NPIC and RIC, despite the fact that they do not have the same ties to the federal government and large corporations. As another result of neoliberal processes, MAAs were created as a way to devolve responsibility for resettlement from the volags themselves. They tend to remain small and lack many of the political and economic stature (and institutional power dynamics) that volags carry, however they also often provide a broader amount of social services that are more culturally-appropriate (Nawyn 2006; 153). Due to competition with volags, MAAs remain largely limited in the amount of work they can provide in terms of funding and quality of services based on the education levels of many of their staff members. Despite the fact that many of their staff members come from the immigrant backgrounds that they are assisting, many do not understand the legal and political jargon that the overwhelmingly educated staff members of volags do and therefore end up falling short in obtaining large grants, filing successful permanent resident and citizenship applications, etc. These organizations can play a larger role within resettlement work by attaining a wider funding base in order to employ workers that come from many of the volag agencies that understand the means to obtaining these services in the competitive funding pool within the nonprofit world.

MAAs could also improve by incorporating a social justice model utilizing culturally specific methods to educate and challenge one another in the services they provide. They also carry the capacity to become more politically and economically independent than volags, giving them the freedom to become more involved in grassroots movement building in the area they reside.

There are also the organizations that Stephanie Nawyn defines as support agencies. These nonprofits provide assistance to refugees, but are not contracted to provide resettlement resources. This may include direct service work surrounding clothing, transportation, or furnishing items, as well as cultural events and ‘development’ into American society. Many of their improvements could benefit from much of the same recommendations listed above, despite the unique stance that they take as being separated from the resettlement industry specifically.

Local Level: Grassroots Social Justice “Newcomer” Organizations

“The person who says it cannot be done should not interrupt the person doing it” (Trans activist Leslie Feinberg, 1998, p. 61, quoting a Chinese proverb; Mananzala and Spade 2008; 53).

Grassroots social justice organizations can act as the largest form of resistance to the Refugee Industrial Complex. Acting as a distinct polity from the federal government and the large corporation donor base, they have the ability to do political work that engages and challenges the very structures that suppress refugee and immigrant populations. In

building a foundation rooted in social justice theories and praxes, these organizations challenge themselves internally to replicate many of the hierarchies and power dynamics at the root of the RIC. “The Nonprofit Industrial Complex and Trans Resistance” by Rickke Mananzala and Dean Spade acts a fundamental piece in addressing the ways in which marginalized communities have become swallowed into mainstream neoliberal politics and the ways in which it can be transformed. Mananzala and Spade describe how trans politics has been incorporated into the NPIC and then resisted and forming a successful grassroots social justice based that is able to provide short-term and long-term work through the creation of the Sylvia Rivera Law Project (SRLP).

SRLP originally formed as a nonprofit organization created to provide legal assistance to trans people in the New York area, outside of the frameworks of charity that treated trans people as political agents themselves. This work was founded as a nonprofit social justice organization out of the small funding from a college fellowship of a white trans student, and grew into a large collective that dropped its 501 © 3 status in order to broaden its political activism. In the words of Mananzala and Spade, SRLP’s model can act as an “entry point for imagining the institutionalization of trans resistance outside of the limited frameworks provided by gay and lesbian nonprofits,” much the same way that social justice “newcomer” centers can form outside of the confines of the Refugee Resettlement Industry. Despite their very different topics, SRLP sets an important example of the type of work that grassroots social justice organizations can engage in outside of the NPIC.

SRLP is rooted in an anti-oppression framework against transphobic violence, anti-racism, classism, ableism, and imperialism. It initially began as a fellowship affiliated through a much larger organization that carried a typical hierarchical structure, traditional pay scale, an administration that was entirely white, with deeply embedded internal dynamics of oppression (Mananzala and Spade 2008; 64). The original SRLP core base of staff members and steering committee researched the work of successful grassroots social justice collectives across the country, primarily headed by women of color, and reached out to these women before drafting an internal structure. They then designed their structure based on the Four Pillars of Social Justice Infrastructure created by the Miami Workers Center (2004). These pillars include the Pillar of Policy, the Pillar of Consciousness, the Pillar of Service, and the Pillar of Power. The Pillar of Policy is about work that changes policies and institutions using legislative and institutional strategies, with concrete gains and goals for moving forward. The Pillar of Consciousness aims at transforming political paradigms and shifting public opinion through independent media advocacy and public education. The Pillar of Service work to serve oppressed people and advance their survival through direct service work. The Pillar of Power aims at creating an independent community that has autonomous power through a powerful base in quantity and depth and capacity of grassroots leadership (quality). Having proved effective by members of SRLP, Miami Workers Center, among other grassroots organizations, this could prove as a highly effective method for social change in the creation of a social justice-based newcomer center for immigrants and refugees.

In combating internal dynamics of oppression, SRLP has created a racial justice initiative that is also applicable to many other organizations. Within this initiative, they have created an infrastructure and set of processes aimed at a transformative justice model that is aimed at facing systematic and individual racism among members, and establishing a white caucus and people of color caucus that meets on an ongoing basis. This is important to the work of multi-racial organizations, including that of a grassroots SJ newcomer center. These centers must involve community members that represent the immigrants and refugees they will be working with, specifically people that are immigrants and/or refugees themselves. Staff members that do not represent the immigrant populations, particularly white members, must especially must internalize and practice the education that they have gained from the anti-oppression trainings and caucus meetings. This is one of the most critical components to establishing newcomers centers that are engaged in combatting oppression that is replicated in wider areas of society, specifically in the US immigration system.

These centers ideally would involve the participation of staff members that have experience in grassroots organizing around migrant justice nationally and/or globally. Grassroots organizations such as DREAMers, Migrant Justice/Justicia Migrante, National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights, No More Deaths/No Mas Muertes, Border Network for Human Rights, Canada and Europe-based No One Is Illegal, and Refugees Welcome, among others, are examples of organizations that challenge systematic inequality within their mission, programs, and services. When it is not possible to have

experienced members from similar organizations, it is vital for staff persons learn from and collaborate with them. These grassroots organizations rely primarily on grassroots fundraising with a large donor base of community members, though some do receive foundation funding within the premises that it does not change their program missions. The funding within these newcomers centers may remain low for quite some time and they may only be able to provide direct service work for a limited number of families.

No One Is Illegal was formed as a “no-border” grassroots organization in response to deportations and detentions in Canada (Shantz, 2005) . Since they were created, they have formed a tight network with other social justice organizations including indigenous, Palestine solidarity, and environmental community associations, as well as labor unions. One of the few campaign that NOII has created is the “Group of Five” initiative to assist migrants that are currently undocumented but are seeking asylum. The Group of Five represents a group of five activists, lawyers, and community organizers meet a certain income requirement to directly help one person at a time via legal assistance, housing, food, signing up for government assistance, and other processes of getting settled for usually a year to a year and a half. This initiative is carried out in each major city that NOII is represented, a total of six. Though this is a smaller scale process, it shows that there are opportunities for ‘everyday people’ committed to assisting migrants outside of the structure of the federal government.

NOII Canada also has two other major campaigns that newcomers centers in the US critical of the RIC could model. The organization’s second major campaign is in

establishing sanctuary cities across Canada. A sanctuary city is a city that has possesses jurisdiction to protect undocumented immigrants from deportation by refusing to comply with ICE detainers and enforcement policies. After ten years of campaigning, NOII, with the assistance of other migrant assistance organizations, were able to succeed in establishing Vancouver a sanctuary city in 2013, and Toronto in 2015. This represents the large-scale transformation in policy that is possible from the pressure, organizing, and mobilizing from grassroots organizations. In the US, there are over 300 sanctuary jurisdictions, either as cities, counties, and/or state entities (Center for Immigration Studies, 2016). This is a significant issue for migrant justice movements in the US that RIC-critical newcomers centers could become involved in within the many areas of the US where sanctuary jurisdictions are not present.

The third initiative that NOII Canada has carried out is a campaign to end indefinite immigration detention. In Canada, the detention period is unlimited. In the US, some of the initiatives that are currently being pushed for by immigrant justice organizations include ending indefinite detention for those who are unable to return to their countries of origin, right to review of detention and options for release, creating alternatives to detention, and improving the conditions of detention, among many others. These are campaigns that are directly critical of US immigration enforcement policies that impede the rights of undocumented migrants. This is another example of work that grassroots SJ-modeled newcomers centers can include within their potential advocacy and direct service work.

Building a consistent basis and network of SJ-oriented grassroots newcomers centers throughout the United States, in connection with other migrant justice organizations nationally and transnationally would provide a major challenge to the current RIC and obsolete federal resettlement policies. These organizations can provide direct service work as well as putting pressure on volags, state, and national structures to change their policies and/or programs that challenge hegemonic structures within their work at the structural level, as well as within their agencies and individual staff members. Despite these valuable efforts, these proposed newcomers centers must always centralize placing pressure on the federal level to transform the current resettlement and immigration policies at the center of their work, and US foreign policy that influences these decisions. This work could be implemented through direct action work and community mobilizing. This could be among the organizations' long-term strategies, while understanding the importance of providing short-term direct service work as well that recognizes the importance of combatting neoliberalism and other forms of hegemony within their processes.

These recommendations intend to be further built upon by outside researchers and practitioners in the near future. A full scope of these potential opportunity structures require participatory engagement by larger stakeholders, immigrant populations themselves, and the involvement of others that are directly involved in this work.

Conclusion

Within the current tense political climate surrounding displacement, forced migration, and refugees in the United States, it is critical to interrogate the policies that refugees must navigate upon and during entering the country. In order to understand the United States resettlement policy that has been in effect since 1980, it is important to understand the role that neoliberal governance influences its establishment, and its effects in implementation. This analysis of neoliberal governance, primarily the privatization of welfare services and the public-private partnership between the government and resettlement agencies, provides a framework to understand the issues that employees and clients of these agencies face. Some of these issues faced by both employees and clients of these agencies include limited funding, bureaucracy, and opportunity structures that reproduce racial/ethnic, gender, and class hierarchies.

With this understanding of state structures and governmentality thought as a lens to analyze the RRI, the term Refugee [Resettlement] Industrial Complex was created to understand the ways that neoliberal governance within the RRI functions to inhibit resettlement work focused on critical social justice pedagogy as well as direct services. This research concludes with a set of recommendations for those aiming to provide direct services within a social justice framework (directed at challenging structural barriers in government policy and within agencies themselves) either within the non profit resettlement structure or in the creation of grassroots newcomers centers without nonprofit status. It also outlines a list of policy changes that should be made to improve the current structure, with the understanding that this will likely result from grassroots organizing

pressure from below. These analyses are meant to contribute to the extensive literature within the field of refugee resettlement policy and migrant justice work nationally as a means of expanding current and future discussions and the possibilities of creating alternative structures.

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