Voluntary Organizations and Refugees

The Effect of Organizational Effort on U.S. Refugee Admissions and Policy

By Megan Panning
The Problem

- I hypothesize that a higher density of refugee organizations will lead to more Congressional hearings, refugee admissions, and refugees & asylees granted permanent residence.

- Past scholarship suggests that Refugee organizations are effective, but this research finds no evidence of this.
History of U.S. Refugee Policy

- Presidential Directive of 12/22/45
- Displaced Persons Act of 6/25/48
- Refugee Relief Act of 8/7/53
- Refugee-Escapee Act of 9/11/57
- Fair Share Refugee Act of 7/14/1960
- Summary: Chaotic and Disorganized Policy
Current U.S. Refugee Policy

- Definitions: refugee, asylee
  - Refugee: someone out of the country trying to get in
  - Asylee: someone in the country trying to stay in

- The process of deciding admissions:
  - State Department → President → Congress → INS
The Role of Organizations

- Iron triangle
- Three Views
- Methods of Influence
- Effectiveness
Data & Methods

- Organizations
  - Gale: Associations Unlimited

- Refugee/Asylee Statistics
  - Immigration and U.S. Foreign Policy (Tucker)
  - Statistical Yearbook of the INS (years 1996 & 2001)

- Congressional Hearings
  - “Immigration & Refugee Issues” (Policy Agendas data)
Findings…
Refugees & Asylees Granted Residence vs. Immigrants Granted Residence, 1946-2001

Number of Immigrants

- Immigrants admitted for permanent residence
- Refugees & asylees granted lawful permanent resident status by fiscal year

Refugees & Asylees Granted Residency vs. Congressional Hearings (1946-1999)

- Number of Refugees/Asylees
- Number of Hearings

Refugees & Asylees granted lawful permanent resident status by fiscal year
Immigration & Refugee Issues (congressional hearings data)
Conclusion

- No evidence that organizations make a difference in determining total number of refugee admissions.

- Possible reasons:
  - Chaotic nature of deciding U.S. Refugee Policy
  - Organizations as competitors rather than allies
  - Divided focus of many organizations
Potential Problems

- Congressional Hearings measure combines Immigration and Refugee Issues.
- Organization data based only on those that are in existence today.
- Changing definition of “Refugee” over the time period examined.
Bibliography


