



**Welcome Home: influence of family hosting to refugee
integration and implication to social work practice**



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Abstract

In hosting countries, refugee integration has been treated as the main goal of the refugee policy and the expected outcome for refugee settlement. It matters to both refugee groups and established population. Currently, the surging refugee issues have caused European countries enormous pressure. It also challenges European governments' capacity of managing major public emergencies. However, during the process, the government management deficiencies have been exposed by the mismanagement of refugee settlement and integration actions. In order to support refugee groups and make up for governments' deficiencies mentioned above, in Europe, local families have been organized to host refugees in their residences, which has been considered as a bold step forward and an effective way to help refugees integrate into the new society by living with locals. Social work, a profession that always works with refugee group at the frontline, clearly has much to offer in refugee settlement and integration service. This study takes France as the target country, researches by means of field observation and interview with refugees, local hosting families and relevant social work practitioners, and attempts to assess the effect of family hosting on refugee integration. According to the analysis of integration influences from family hosting, combined with the local social work practice, this study also comes up with suggestions for the future social work practice on improving refugee settlement and integration in hosting society, especially in Europe.

Introduction

Our world is facing an unprecedented crisis about displacement. According to the latest report from United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (hereinafter referred to as UNHCR), until the end of 2015, 65.3 million people had been forced to flee from their home worldwide, among whom 21.3 million were refugees (UNHCR, 2016). In Europe, the number of the first-time asylum seekers reached almost 1.26 million in 2015, and EU member states reacted to this large quantity by using different strategies in accordance with refugee or subsidiary protection policies (EU, 2016).

However, those European reactions to refugees have been broadly regarded as inefficient actions for the lack of humanitarian consideration and accountability. In France, the demolition of Calais jungle camp has left a large number of asylum seekers sleeping rough and losing contact; in Greece, because of the failure of refugee camp winterization program, thousands of refugees slept in temporary camps without any heating system in the freezing winter (The Guardian, 2016). The negative government reaction to refugee settlement has created a mood of resentment against refugees and anti-refugee movements are sparking fires in Europe. In Germany has appeared an anti-refugee group called Pegida, under whose organizing, tens of thousands of people demonstrated against immigration influx in Germany (Independent, 2016). Such similar refugee encounters can also be found in other European countries. It's exactly on account of these that European countries are now facing ever-increasing critiques from all over the world about attitudes and actions to refugee humanitarian issues.

Clearly, to the recent refugee settlement and integration issues, European government interventions are not sufficient for coping with the challenges.

Nevertheless, social work, as a profession that is always working with refugee groups at the frontline, still haven't lost her faith in searching for new solutions to refugee issues. Therefore, how to compensate the governmental deficiencies to protect refugees and promise them a bright future has become the major issue to refugee social work practice in Europe.

Speaking of the refugee issues, two crucial concepts have always been emphasized by policy makers and practitioners, namely, refugee settlement and integration.

Normally, the grant of asylum and resettlement doesn't necessarily mean a proper settlement for refugees in the hosting society. The settlement process is time-consuming and individualized. As for refugee settlement, it is widely considered as a two-way process that not only involves the adaptation of refugees to a new environment, but also the acceptance of a wider community or their willingness to accommodate the refugees. During the process, "A 'spirit of hospitality', where refugees are made to feel welcome into a community, underpins successful refugee settlement programs" (Refugee Council of Australia).

The other crucial concept, refugee integration, has been adopted as a stated goal of refugee policy and an expected outcome for refugee-related projects (European Commission 2004; Scottish Executive 2006; Frattini 2006; HMG 2007; Welsh Assembly Government 2006; USEU 2007; Ager and Strang, 2008, 167). In Europe, it is illustrated as "a long-term two-way process of change, that relates both to the conditions for and the actual participation of refugees in all aspects of life of the country of durable asylum as well as to refugees' own sense of belonging and membership of European societies" (ECRE, 1999, 4; Ager and Strang, 2008, 177).

In December 2016, UNHCR launched a paper presentation to European Union (hereinafter referred to EU) to ask for a “far-reaching reform” of its global engagement with refugees, as well as asylum systems. In this advocacy, calling for a great investment of integration actions among EU member states for refugees has been emphasized, namely, housing, employment and language training. Also, four suggestions have been offered by UNHCR for the better refugee help, and one of them is about integrating refugees in the EU communities (UNHCR, 2016).

Thus, a new pro-refugee settlement solution proposed by civil society is taking place in Europe. In a nutshell, this pro-refugee settlement solution is a family hosting program that aims to encourage local families to accommodate refugees with their spare rooms. During this hosting process, refugees are accommodated by local families in their residences; hosting families are expected to help refugees to get to know the local culture and customs, to learn the local language and to get access to local welfare system and job market. Meanwhile, both hosting families and refugees are expected to get to know each other and their cultural backgrounds to create the mutual understanding by living together. The influence of the new refugee settlement and integration solution is expanding rapidly throughout the whole European continent, and has attracted more and more followers.

In addition, the emergence of this family hosting for refugees also quickly caught the public's attention. Some news agencies have started to follow its pilot projects and given them extensive coverage. Even UNHCR has promoted it as a classic case to relieve recently chaotic European refugee management (UNHCR, 2015). According to these reports, family hosting for refugees is illustrated as a new solution for not only refugee settlement, but also refugee integration in the hosting society.

As is demonstrated by earlier studies, refugees' living together with local population could have more impacts than the stated policy goals (Masso 2009; Strang and Ager, 2010). However, when armed with this new solution of family hosting for refugees, social workers must fathom into how exactly the family hosting settlement can influence refugees' integration in the hosting society; furthermore, whether social work practice can learn from it and achieve any implications to improve its future practice to refugee issues. This is exactly what this study is curious about too.

Chapter 1: Social work, refugee settlement, refugee integration, and family hosting for refugee

In this chapter, a few key concepts and theories related to social work practice with refugees, refugee settlement and integration, as well as the current practice on refugee settlement and integration will be addressed to help us construct an essential knowledge framework for the further analysis and discussion on the topic of family hosting to refugee integration.

Social work with refugee

Due to the increasing global refugee issues, the growing demand of welfare support for refugee groups has created a direct need for social work services (Parker, 2000, 61). As a group carrying huge trauma from the previous persecution or other vulnerable experiences, refugees, as told by evidence, are very dependent on the appropriateness of the humanitarian service response in hosting society, which can offer them the greatest potential for healing (Davis and Lambert 1995; Drumm, Pittman and Perry, 2004,69). This situation has articulated the necessity and importance of professional social work intervention for refugee issues.

As a profession focusing on helping people overcome problems they face and improving human dignity, social work has a long history as the service provider for refugees (Canda and Phaobtong 1992; Shepherd 1987; Bromley 1987; Drachman and Ryan 1990; Ryan 1992; Drumm, Pittman and Perry, 2004, 70). Throughout the social work service process, cultural belief systems and psychosocial adjustment and adaptation, mental health services, acculturation processes, resettlement policies have been identified as the key working issues with refugee groups (Bemak *et al.* 1996; Parker, 2000, 70). Having a

better understanding of those issues by social workers determines whether the provided social supports and formulated care plans are effective (Parker, 2000, 70).

As for now, non-governmental organizations, inter-governmental organizations and local authorities are playing vital roles in providing social work service to refugee groups. Also, during the service providing process, “developing a holistic view of the problem coupled with empirically or theoretically driven interventions” (Drumm, Pittman and Perry, 2004, 70) has been employed as the main strategy. Furthermore, during the social work intervention process, the importance of anti-racist and anti-oppressive perspectives has been addressed as the central concern (Parker, 2000, 71).

However, working with refugee groups, social work also faces crucial challenges. First of all, discrimination, stigma and disadvantage are rife when we are dealing with refugee issues within a hosting society (Solomos and Beck, 1996; Gordon, 1992; Parker, 2000, 63), especially the hostility expressed towards refugee groups (Parker, 2000, 70), which prompt social work interventions to develop comprehensive solutions involving multi-stakeholders but not only refugee group itself. Secondly, since many refugee issues have been misled by the inappropriate political perspective (Drumm, Pittman and Perry, 2004, 69), the asylum-seeking process sometimes does not trigger an automatic response from local statutory humanitarian services (Fell and Fell, 2013, 1325). And this situation directly weakens social work service coverage for refugee groups. Therefore, social workers might be more proactive to outreach refugees instead of passively waiting for them to seek for help.

As one of the most important but controversial transitional shelters for refugees, refugee camps provide vital social work services for refugee groups in many countries. Although we are always questioning the negative influences

of isolation and non-humanitarian treatment from placing refugees in camps (Damme, 1995), there still is not enough evidence to demand an end to this practice due to the few alternative models for caring for masses of displaced people (Drumm, Pittman and Perry, 2004, 68).

Because of the little research existing on empirically validated models of fashion treatment and intervention for refugee issues, relevant social work theories are strongly needed as guidance (Drumm, Pittman and Perry, 2004, 70).

Ecosystem perspective, or what we call ecological system theory, is an important social work theory focusing on human relationships within our social environment system (Germain 1991; Drumm, Pittman and Perry, 2004, 70). Since the “person-in-environment” concept has dominated social work practice nearly a century (Mattaini and Meyer, 2002), as expected, the ecosystem perspective that focuses on the interaction between individual and environment has been favored by social work practitioners. Starting from the ecological perspective, life’s difficulties of individual may arise from the environment locations rather than the personal pathology (Drumm, Pittman and Perry, 2004, 70-71). It has been treated as a conceptual lens that “adds to understanding of the various ways a client system may adapt to a changing environment in order to cope, survive, and compete for needed resources” (Sheafor, Horejsi and Horejsi, 2000, 91).

Ecosystem perspective is a way to help social workers comprehend each case within its interconnected and multilayered reality to avoid oversimplification and reductionism for social work interventions (Mattaini and Meyer, 2002). Families, groups and communities related to each individual are normally emphasized by social workers when they apply ecosystem perspective on relevant cases, and the method of “ecomap” presenting crucial elements and

dynamic relationships within personal embedded ecosystem is largely used by social workers for the case analysis and intervention planning (Mattaini and Meyer, 2002).

As a significant branch of ecological system theory, Bronfenbrenner's ecological perspective has been largely applied by social workers worldwide, especially in the field of human development (Rosa and Tudge, 2013). It presents a theoretical framework for social workers to analyze different relationships and relevant influences from different levels of personal context (Cala and Soriano, 2014, 50). In his ecological perspective, four distinctive levels from personal context plus a time-scale dimension have been emphasized: microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem and Chronosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The microsystem contains the roles, relationships and activity patterns developed by a person directly from their environment, such as family and school (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 22). The mesosystem is constructed by two or more microsystems that the person is actively involved with (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 25). The exosystem is the environment setting in which does not involve the person actively but still reminds influence (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 25). The macrosystem is the relationship that "both in form and content of the lower order systems (micro, meso and exo) that exist or may exist at the sub-culture level or the culture as a whole, together with any belief system or ideology that supports these correlations" (Cala and Soriano, 2014, 50). At last, the chronosystem is "the influence on the person's development of changes (and continuities) over time in the environments in which the person is living" (Bronfenbrenner, 1986b, 724). By understanding these systems within refugee's context, social work researchers and practitioners could come up with specific intervention points in planning effective refugee services (Drumm, Pittman and Perry, 2004, 81).

However, ecosystem perspective is not omnipotent. It is actually not a practice

model which could provide direct guidance to social workers regarding what to do in a case. Rather, it is a way to ensure that practitioners “pay attention to the multiple interacting elements that are present in a case, particularly in assessment” (Mattaini and Meyer, 2002).

Also, in practice, due to the fact that environment has been rather seen as an intractable system and difficult to affect, the tendency of avoiding environmental interventions with ecosystem perspective in favor of improving client’s situation fundamentally apart from the environment has also been perceived (Kemp et al., 1997; Mattaini and Meyer, 2002).

Since it is a significant theory for social work, ecological system theory has also been treated as an important theoretical guidance for social work practice with refugee groups given its holistic perspective with comprehensive solutions, especially for social work service in refugee camps as we mentioned previously (Drumm, Pittman and Perry, 2004, 70). In this research, understanding ecological system theory can help us comprehend the refugee integration domain adopted as the main theoretical guiding for the data collection and analysis, which will be introduced in the following part, with a holistic perspective on the chosen topic.

Based on the understanding that refugee groups have experienced different kinds of temporary or permanent loss (families, friends, home, etc.), coupled with “varying degrees of security and independence for dependence and the inability to control and plan for the future” and possibly “physical brutality, psychological torture or the stress of discrimination and poverty, and the health of many will have been adversely affected by previous living conditions or the search for refuge”, a proper consideration of applying theories relating to loss and bereavement for direct social work practice to refugee groups has been regarded as appropriate (Lyons and Stathopoulos, 2001, 61). Under this

guidance, social work counseling to assist refugee groups to overcome their negative emotions has been taken by frontline social workers as an important working method (Van der Veer, 1998; Lyons and Stathopoulos, 2001, 61).

In addition to those theories, migration settlement process (Sherraden and Martin, 1994; Lyons and Stathopoulos, 2001, 61) and cultural diversity theory (Lyons and Stathopoulos, 2001, 61) have also been noted as crucial theories for social work practice with refugees. Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning that, as a popular perspective for social workers working with refugees, social policies and actions--especially affirmative and rights-based policies and actions, guided by multiculturalism in cultural diversity perspective do not always work very well, but have been proved with the possibility to enlarge the disparities between ethnic majority and minorities in hosting society to increase the conflicts (British Politics and Policy at LSE, 2017).

Notwithstanding the fact that social workers have already realized that the intervention to refugee issues should be a consecutive, long-term and multifaceted process, most of the previously relevant social work studies are mainly focusing on the direct interventions to refugee groups, while not paying enough attention to refugee groups' participation in policymaking and advocacy fields. This situation could be a mirror that can reflect the reality to us about the lack of political participation of social work in policymaking for refugee issues. Meanwhile, we can also boldly assume that, as a profession mainly carrying a humanitarian perspective on problem solving process, the participatory absence of social work for policymaking makes a crucial contribution to the current non-humanitarian national refugee policies in most countries. Thus, increasing social work practice at the political participation level aiming to enhance the humanitarian perspective on policymaking becomes a significant challenge to social work practitioners as well.

Refugee settlement

Refugee settlement is the subsequent process after refugee resettlement. Refugee resettlement transfers refugees from the state in which they have sought protection to a third state and brings about them legal status and durable international protections (EU, 2016). After that, refugee settlement process is kicking off. In recent years, what constitutes refugee settlement (such as income support and housing) and the length of time needed for refugees to feel “settled” in the hosting community have aroused heated discussion. In general, it is understood by a combination of tangible and less tangible factors (Refugee Council of Australia, 2010).

Tangible factors, such as, income support, housing, employment, education, health care and family reunion are located at the essential position. Sense of safety and security, sense of self worth, sense of dignity, sense of control over one’s life, resolving guilt and processing grief about the loss of self and country are considered as the major less tangible factors to refugee settlement (Refugee Council of Australia, 2010).

To build up all the factors for refugee settlement, refugees’ participation and the wider community’s adaptation to accommodate refugees are both crucial for a successful intervention (UNHCR, 2001).

During the refugee settlement intervention, developing links between refugees and host communities plays a significant role in constructing successful settlement, and both volunteers and professional workers are important to support the process (UNHCR, 2001).

Furthermore, a successful refugee settlement is not always the same to

everyone due to the different individual understanding and needs, and it takes time to reach the expectations (Department of Education, 2017).

Although housing is one of the critical tangible factors for refugee settlement, a house is not equal to a “home”, the difference between a house and a home is the difference between a place to stay and a place to live. Only providing a shelter without safety, security and stability cannot be called a good refugee settlement (Dutch Refugee Council/ECRE, 2001, 5; Ager and Strang, 2008, 172). Nevertheless, in Europe, the access to a safe and decent housing for refugees challenges governments’ reputations under the large scale of negative news coverage about the indecent and un-humanitarian refugee accommodation treatment.

Researchers and policy makers are also highly concerned by segregated refugee accommodation for settlement. In Sweden, researchers found segregation in housing caused the stigmatization of vulnerability for refugees. As a countermeasure, the Swedish government created new guiding principles for a new urban policy aiming at abolishing social and ethnic segregations (Valenta and Bunar, 2010).

We are concerned about refugee settlement issues due to the need for refugee integration. There is a very natural linkage between refugee settlement and refugee integration: refugee settlement contributes significantly to the refugee integration; at the same time, refugee integration is the major target outcome for refugee settlement policy and practice.

Refugee integration

Refugee integration is a long-term and two-way process. It is about changes

adopted by both refugee and hosting society. It has been described as “a process which prevents or counteracts the social marginalization of refugees, by removing legal, cultural and language obstacles and ensuring that refugees are empowered to make positive decisions on their future and benefit fully from available opportunities as per their abilities and aspirations” (Ager and Strang, 2008: 180).

As a process with reciprocal nature, refugee integration demands on both refugee and hosting society’s efforts to accomplish the process: to refugee, a willing to adapt new institutions; to hosting society, preparedness to adopt individual lifestyle (Strang and Ager, 2010: 600).

Since the future character of the immigrating ethnic groups largely depends on what the state does in the early stages of migration (Castles, Miller and Ammendola, 2005, 541), we can also find the effectiveness of integration for refugees is also influenced by experiences upon arrival in a new country (Strang and Ager, 2010, 595). Therefore, starting refugee integration process as soon as possible once the refugees arrive remains significant to the future integration.

From the real life in hosting countries, we can notice that language acquisition, education, employment and being respected by the law (refugee friendly legislation) are crucial for refugees to build up the strong connections with hosting society (The Wall Street Journal, 2015).

About the details for refugee integration, Ager and Strange conceptualized refugee integration into four domains each with several policy indicators (Ager and Strang, 2004). Thus, “the domain 'Means and Markers' contains employment, housing, education and health. The domain 'Social Connections', which draws on the work of Putnam (1993) and his operationalization of the

social capital concept, consists of social bridges with members of other communities, social bonds within a refugee's own community, and social links with the institutions of the host society (Putnam, 2000). The domain 'Facilitators' includes language and cultural knowledge, and safety and stability. Finally, the domain 'Foundation' consists of the indicator 'rights and citizenship' (Ager and Strang, 2004a; Valenta and Bunar, 2010).

The four indicators for the domain “Means and Markers” are defined within the framework in recognition of the importance of attainment in these areas; not only to demonstrate progress towards integration, but also to support achievement in other areas” (Home Office, 2004).

Under this domain, firstly, employment has been consistently influencing many refugee issues, such as, economic independence promoting, self-esteem restoring, and self-reliance encouraging. (Africa Educational Trust, 1998; Bloch, 1999; Tomlinson and Egan, 2002; Ager and Strang, 2008, 170) In this regard, a family hosting project in France has proved its significance to help refugees find jobs with the assistance from the adoptive families (Sunday Express, 2016). Secondly, family hosting project has precisely met the definition of an appropriate housing for refugees developed with a range of indicators of physical size, quality and facilities of housing, along with the financial security of tenancies and so on (Ager and Strang, 2008, 171).

In the domain of “Social Connection”, “social bridges” with hosting society members can enhance refugees’ feeling of secure and social resources, meanwhile, they also improve mutual understanding between refugees and hosting society (Ager and Strang, 2008: 180); “social bounds” emerge as a critical priority to maintain refugees’ own customs and religions through consecutive contacting or living with their own ethnic groups (Duke et al., 1999, 119; Ager and Strang, 2008, 178) and even create a comfortable environment,

which could avoid the risk of depression (Beiser, 1993, 221; Ager and Strang, 2008, 178); “Social links” are the connections between refugees and relevant government services, which provide the legal and institutional supporting for the further integration (Home Office, 2004).

Within this domain, family-hosting activity has shown its influence on enhancing “social bridges” and “social links” to contribute to refugees’ integration process. The “social bridge” between refugees and local population will be established at the very beginning when they meet with each other. Meanwhile, as an example to “social link”, a video taken by an organization called Singa in France told us, host family also helps refugees to get access to government services by providing local language translation and communication help (Singa, 2016).

As for the Domain “Facilitators”, “language and cultural knowledge” are able to improve refugees’ communication and competence in hosting society; yet, “safety and stability” provide refugee the sense of continuity and permanence (Home Office, 2004).

Related to this domain, hosting families are always playing the role in helping refugees to study local language and to know local culture during the hosting period (PRI, 2016). At the same time, they also provide refugees a safe and stable environment by providing stable accommodation and daily support (PRI, 2016).

At last, speaking of the domain “Foundation”, acquisition of equal rights by establishing citizenship in hosting country has been regarded as the key element for a complete integration by refugee groups (Strang and Ager, 2010).

Refugee settlement and integration in France¹

France has started its official refugee resettlement program cooperating with UNHCR only since 2008, and it only promises 100 dossier submissions per year in terms of refugee resettlement within its borders under this agreement (UNHCR, 2016). Nevertheless, French government also has its ad hoc humanitarian admission programme (HAP) for additional numbers of refugee taking-in consideration depending on each year's situation. For example, in 2015, additional 561 Syrian refugees were granted asylum status to arrive in France under the HAP (UNHCR, 2016). In addition to that, under the structure of European Union, France also has its refugee resettlement quotas. According to the EU Turkey agreement in March 2016, France has committed to resettle up to 6,000 Syrian refugees out of Turkey (UNHCR, 2016). According to the latest report from European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE), in 2016, France had received 85,244 asylum applicants. Among them, 18,555 had been granted refugee status and 10,585 had been issued subsidiary protection (ECRE, 2017).

In France, once a person has been granted refugee status, he or she will be entitled to a ten-year residency card with access to social benefits. Also, refugees can acquire French nationality as soon as possible once they meet due requirements, which include not being convicted in court, good knowledge of the French language, history, culture and society, and adhering to the fundamental principles and values of the French Republic (UNHCR, 2016).

Once refugees are granted status and arrive in France, they will be greeted by an IOM (International organization for Migration) officer that escorts them to

¹ All of the following French refugee settlement and integration reviews have been summarized from the *French Country Chapter* in *2016 UNHCR Refugee Resettlement Handbook* and *French Country Report* from the Asylum Information Database (AIDA) managed by European Council on Refugees and Exiles' (ECRE).

meet with an OFII (Office Français de l'Immigration et de l'Intégration) officer to make sure the suitable reception plan and accommodation schemes. Reception plans and accommodations are mainly managed by nongovernmental organizations financed by the French government or EU funding. Besides, refugees can also choose to rent private home whose lease will be signed by them upon their receiving of social benefits (UNHCR, 2016).

The institutional accommodations for refugees have been reported as facing several difficulties, for example, lacking of facilities for disabilities, insufficient rooms for increasing number of refugees (ECRE, 2017).

During the settlement process, social assistance for health and education, as well as financial assistance for food, have been provided for refugees. All the medical and hospital expenses are covered by the French welfare system as the same conditions as French citizens. A reception and integration contract (CI) is offered by OFII to refugees to provide “a civic training on French institutions and values of the Republic as well as language training sanctioned by a diploma” (UNHCR, 2016). Moreover, upon the transfer of refugee status, French government also provides a skill assessment for refugees to prepare their future job seeking.

Employment can largely influence self-esteem restoring and self-reliance of refugees (Africa Educational Trust, 1998; Bloch, 1999; Tomlinson and Egan, 2002; Ager and Strang, 2008, 170), and thus is the key for refugees' integration in France. Refugees will be accompanied by the public employment service called “Pôle Emploi”; meanwhile, they can receive a minimum income to ensure their daily life during the job seeking (UNHCR, 2016).

Living together with their own ethnic group can increase the “social bounds” for refugees in hosting society and finally reach a better social integration (Duke et

al., 1999, 119; Ager and Strang, 2008, 178), at the heart of which lies family reunification. In France, family reunification could be requested by refugee's spouse and children. However, the application is rather strict with certain obligatory criteria. For instance, the marriage should be taken place prior to the refugee's agreement to resettle in France and the children should be under the age of 19 (UNHCR, 2016).

Family hosting and refugee integration

Using family hosting to improve refugees' settlement situation and enhance refugee integration is not a new phenomenon in Europe. However, it hasn't attracted public attention until the tremendous refugee influx and management crisis on refugee issues.

In the UK, a "hosting" action towards to refugees and asylum seekers has been derived from the British "Refugee Welcome" movement. It is now organized by different charities, NGOs, and grassroots initiatives and aims to "seeks out and coordinate people who are willing to offer shelter to destitute asylum seekers within their own homes" (Aljazeera, 2016). So far, thousands of nights' shelters have been provided for refugees and asylum seekers who are in need across the whole UK, and participants have expressed the gaining of mutually enriching experiences throughout the hosting process (Aljazeera, 2016).

Given German refugees' historical experience of being sheltered and aided during the Second World War, Germany has shown a great sympathy to asylum seeking populations during refugee influx since 2015 (Bloomberg View, 2015). Under this background, Germans also began to host refugees and asylum seekers despite the huge cultural and religious differences between

them (PRI, 2016). Nowadays, media coverage has praised Germany as one of the most successful countries in the world to use family hosting to relieve refugee settlement and integration crisis (UNHCR, 2016).

JRS France, Samu Social and Singa are the most well-known agencies implementing families hosting program to help refugee groups in France. However, they differ from each other in terms of family hosting engagement or the length of time, etc.

In 2016, an official family-hosting program incorporating a few pro-migrant organizations advocated by the French socialist housing minister Emmanuelle Cosse was launched. It has been called a “social experiment” to “welcome refugees in a humane and dignified manner and to help them build a new life in France” (Express, 2016). About participating in this program, refugees without any income will not be charged with any rent but those who have certain revenue will be expected to contribute a small amount to household bills or expenses (Express, 2016). In this program, French government plays a major role in fund providing and policy supporting.

Besides the countries mentioned above, Netherland and Denmark are also in the list. At present, due to its outstanding social feedbacks of family hosting about the influence to refugee integration and humanitarian solidarity, it is getting more and more popular and accepted by refugee receiving countries worldwide.

Chapter 2: Methodology

An abductive methodology has been adopted by this research. It starts from building up data collection tools and analysis structure by using existing refugee settlement and integration concepts. By using these tools to collect and analyze data taken from the field on the chosen topic, it therefore triggers the discussion and recommendation for the future social work practice and theory improvement in the field of refugee settlement and integration.

Research objective

Starting from the individual spontaneous behavior to the organized social action to help refugees, family hosting has demonstrated an increasing influence on refugee settlement and integration in Europe. However, it is still a relatively new method for dealing with refugee issues. There are plenty of news reports but few academic researches about this model. Thus, the first objective of this research is filling the blank for the research field of family hosting for refugee settlement and integration in Europe.

Then, this research has been designed and conducted during the time when European society is facing ever-increasing refugee issues. It is a problem-based research that attempts to determine the connections between new refugee settlement solution and refugee integration in the hosting society, then provides insights for the future effective solutions to refugee settlement and integration.

This study also could help the frontline social workers improve their understanding about the connections between refugee settlement and refugee integration, so that they could have the insight to improve the frontline practice

and relevant policy making for the future durable and effective solutions to refugee issues, especially in refugee settlement and integration.

Research question

Two major research questions have been addressed with sub-questions in this study:

1. What are the influences to refugee integration from the family hosting activities?
 - a) What is family hosting for refugees and how well does it work?
 - b) What are the influences brought from families hosting for refugees?
 - c) How could these influences contribute to refugee integration in hosting society?

2. What are the implications to the future social work practice for better refugee integration in Europe?
 - a) Where is the present social work practice setting on refugee settlement and integration agenda, and how does it work?
 - b) According to the research result about the influences from the family hosting to the refugee integration, what are the implications for the future social work practice to improve refugee settlement and integration?

Conceptual framework

Refugee integration domain with 10 specific indicators developed by British Home Office (Ager and Strang, 2008) is employed for the conceptual framework. It serves as the data collection guidance and analysis structure to identify the connections between family hosting and refugee integration. Apart from that, different social work theories closely related to refugee settlement and integration, for instance, human behavior and social environment, have

been applied throughout the whole research to help us better understand the chosen topic.

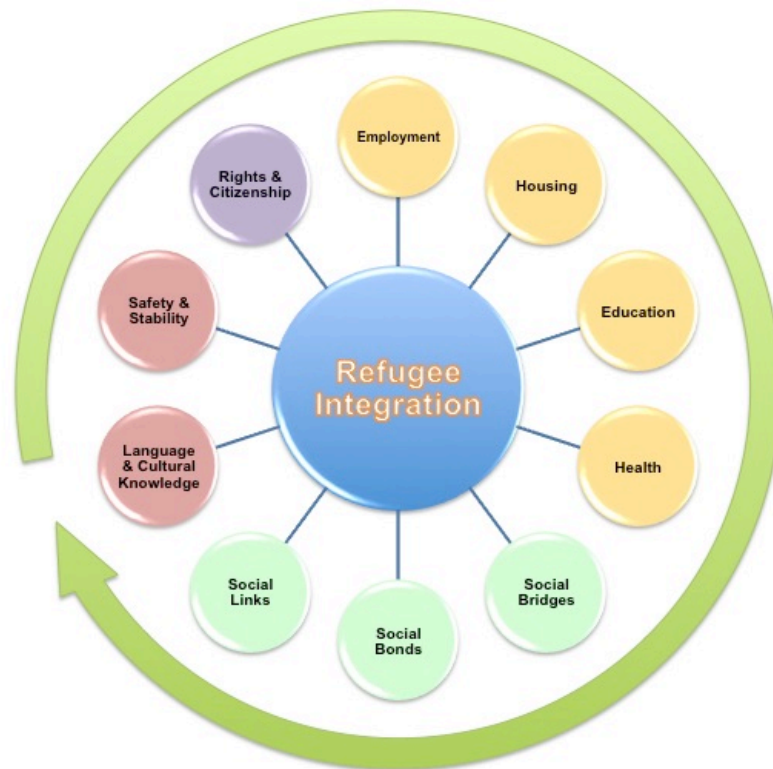


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework (for data collection and analysis)

Target refugee group for this research

Article L622-1 from French immigration law states that anyone who “facilitates or attempts to facilitate the illegal entry, movement or residence of a foreigner in France shall be punished by imprisonment for five years and a fine of €30,000 ” (Aljazeera, 2017). In other words, in France, only people who have been granted with refugee status or subsidiary protection and who are in the refugee status pending period could receive aid legally. Therefore, organized family hosting only can be provided to the refugees or the asylum seekers possessing a legal document. To comply with this regulation, only the refugees or the asylum seekers who own the legal documents are chosen as

interviewees in this research. Moreover, this research will also only focus on the adult asylum-seeking group with an age over 18 years old, because the underage asylum-seeking group is obligatory to be taken care of by the French government according to French legislation without facing the same settlement issues as other asylum-seeking groups (Ministère de l'Immigration, de l'Intégration, de l'Identité nationale et du Développement solidaire, 2010).

Data collection and analyzing strategy

Through the data collection from the field and secondary analysis from literature review and relevant documents (mainly as news reports), we could reach the answer for the pre-setting research question about family hosting's influence on refugee integration. Here follows the discussion on specific refugee settlement and integration issues and practical implications for the future social work theory building and practice lifting on refugee settlement and integration.

Based on the idea of “in researching a social process it is essential to seek to understand that process from the perspectives of the key actors” (Strang and Ager, 2010, 601), this research has included comprehensive perspectives from all stakeholders in family hosting programs, especially for interview targets arrangement, namely, refugees, host families, and social workers.

In order to have a quasi “insider” style observation for contextual data collection (ethnography observation) and approach different interviewees more easily for comprehensive and reliable data, I joined one refugee service organization in Paris as a volunteer to help them organize refugee service activities. Through the participation, I got more opportunities to meet refugees and social workers. Meanwhile, the relationship that we have built during this process gave me an advantage to invite refugees and social workers to get to

know my research and to participate in my interviews. This volunteer work lasted from March 2017 to June 2017.

Purposeful sampling has been applied in the beginning of this research to approach refugees for individual interviews. Most of the refugees I have met were from the activities organized by my volunteer service organization in Paris. Later on, thanks to the help from the social network built up by myself during my volunteer work in the refugee service organization, snowball method for sampling has been employed to reach more interviewees for this research. The samples include refugees who have participated or are participating in family hosting programs, refugees who have never participated in any family hosting program, social workers working on the family hosting program, and hosting families.

This research has been mainly conducted in Paris, France. Simultaneously, in order to reach different voices for a comprehensive understanding from other regions, some of the data were collected in Marseille, France. To be more specific, twelve interviews were carried out in Paris region, and three from Marseille. A few refugee service organizations working on family hosting programs also have been involved by this research.

All the data has been collected in the form of qualitative research from the field. The contextual data collection is mainly from the relevant voluntary works and activities, and the interviews with different stakeholders have been designed as semi-structured style.

Fifteen semi-structured interviews have been conducted, including six with refugees (or asylum seekers) with experiences in family hosting program, two refugees (or asylum seeker) without experiences, three social workers working on the family hosting program, and four hosting families.

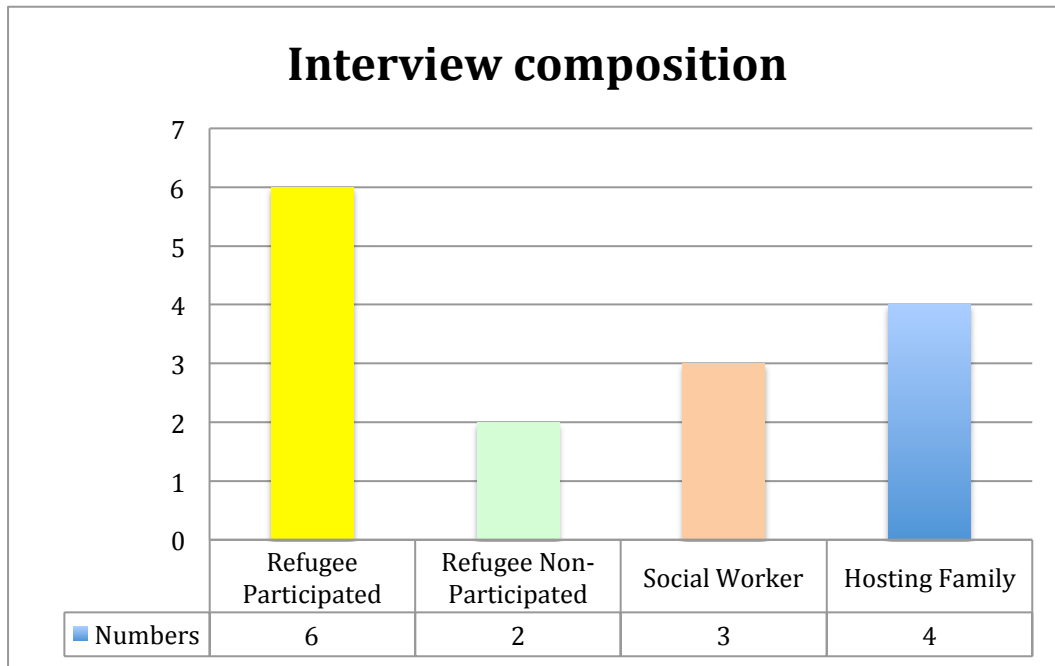


Figure 2: Interview composition

About the semi-structured interview, each interviewee group has its own interview outline. For the refugees (or asylum seekers) with experiences in family hosting program and hosting families, the interview outlines are mainly guided by the refugee integration domains developed by the British Home Office (Ager and Stang, 2008) to identify the connections between family hosting activity and refugee integration. The questions, for instance, “Does the host family help you to improve your language skills? How?” and “Have you ever introduced him/her any French culture or custom?” have been asked to refugees and hosting families respectively. For the refugees (or asylum seekers) without experiences in family hosting programs, the purpose of the interview is to determine their attitudes towards family hosting program. Questions like “How do you think about family hosting program for refugees?” and “Do you want to participate in this program in the future? Why?” have been asked. For social workers, the interview is designed to get to know their professional perspectives on the family hosting program to refugee integration

and the family hosting program in practice. During the interviews, the social workers had been asked to introduce their different style family hosting programs, how do they organize it, why do they choose different strategies, what kind of difficulty they have encountered during the program implementation and so on. More information about interview outlines are in the appendix.

Fourteen interviews out of fifteen were conducted by face-to-face; one interview was finished by email questionnaire. Among the fifteen interviews, twelve interviews (eight refugees, two hosting families, two social workers) were conducted in English language, and three interviews (two hosting families and one social worker) were carried out in French with English interpretation. About the interviews with hosting families, two interviews were carried out with couples, and another two were only finished with one member from each family.

All the interviews had been recorded for the purpose of further analysis. Interview consent form had been introduced and signed before each interview started.

Ethical consideration

In this study, relevant ethical issues involved in the whole research process have always been the cores. Firstly, confidentiality for interviewees has been attached much importance. All the documents with personal information were anonymous with special code for protecting personal privacy, including interview recordings, transcripts and key informant registration forms. Secondly, the observations and interviews were conducted under the reached consent. Interview consent form was introduced and signed before each interview. Thirdly, due to the importance of the personal experience, customs

and religious background, before the contacting and meeting with interviewees, researcher was always equipped with relevant social, cultural and religious knowledge to ensure a respectful treatment to the interviewees during the whole contacting process.

Research limitation

A few research limitations have been addressed in this research. Firstly, the whole research process, from design to writing, only costs five months, which restricts the quality of the contextual data collection from the field, in terms of the insufficient observation and participation with refugee groups to have a better understanding of their lives, especially their lives influenced by the family hosting activities. Secondly, since only fifteen interviews have been carried out by this research, the relatively small number of the sampling constrains the representation and the reliability of this research. Thirdly, language has been noticed as a significant barrier to get access to a better data from the interviews. Because the interviewees' English levels are uneven, which made it hard to make myself understood and made me confused by their answers as well. To address this, adopting an interpreter who is able to speak the mother tongue of the interviewees could be a much better way. Last but not least, only one female refugee had been found to receive the interview for this research, the research result might risk to be over "masculine" without enough representation for female refugees on the chosen topic. In the future, gender consideration for sampling should be emphasized.

Conclusion

This research has developed an ambitious data collection design involving all the stakeholders of family hosting. By using the refugee integration domain developed by the British Home Office, coupled with the collected data, this

research could reach a comprehensive examination for the new refugee settlement solution about its work mechanism and influence to refugee integration. Also, it could help us come up with implications to lift the future social work practice and theory building on refugee settlement and integration issues. During the research, a strong ethical consideration with relevant solutions has been emphasized to protect the participants throughout the whole process. However, it also faces a few challenges, such as the limited time for fieldwork and data collection, which is exactly the same limitation to make this study more reliable and representative.

Chapter 3: Data analysis for family hosting and refugee integration

In this chapter, data collected from the field by contextual observation and interview will be presented and analyzed in accordance with the pre-set conceptual framework on the chosen topic.

Interviewee profile

The interviews of this research have been conducted with four different kinds of groups, namely, refugee (or asylum seeker) with experience of participating in the family hosting program, refugee (or asylum seeker) without experience of participating in any family hosting program, hosting family and social worker. Before the analysis commences, we will first introduce the chosen samples.

Refugee (or asylum seeker)

Eight refugees have been involved with this research for semi-structured interviews respectively. Among them, six refugees (or asylum seekers) have participated or are participating in family hosting programs, but not for the rest two. In terms of religious background, three of them are buddhists, two are muslims, two are atheists and one is christian.

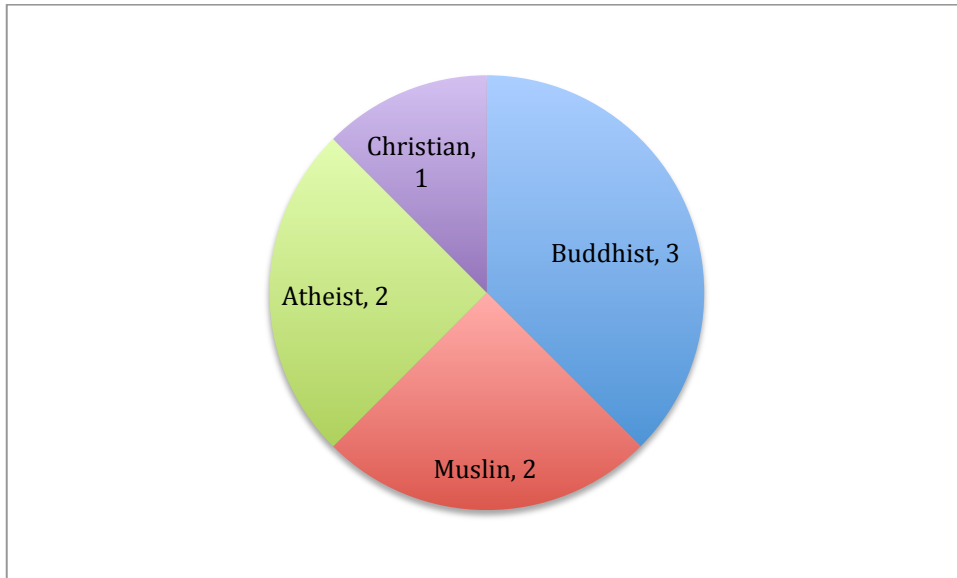


Figure 3: Religious backgrounds of the interviewees (refugees)

About their origins, three refugees are from Syria, another three of them are Tibetans. One Bangladeshi and one Zimbabwean compose the rest.

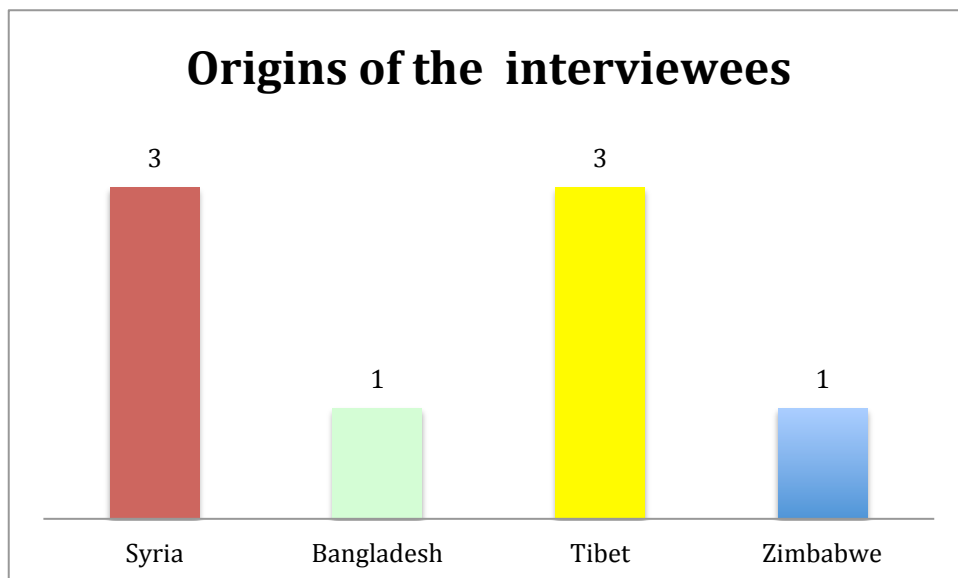


Figure 4: Origins of the interviewees (refugees)

As for gender, seven refugees are male, and only one interviewee in this category is female.

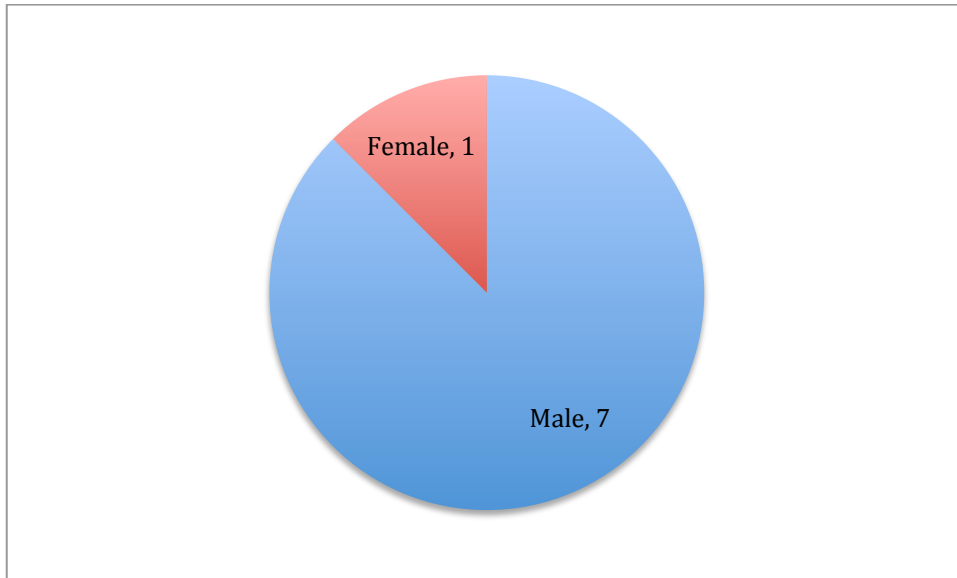


Figure 5: Gender composition of the interviewees (refugees)

Among the eight, five interviewees have been accepted by the French government as refugees with legal documents to stay in France. The rest of the three are in the refugee status pending period, waiting for their final feedbacks from the government for their refugee status requests.

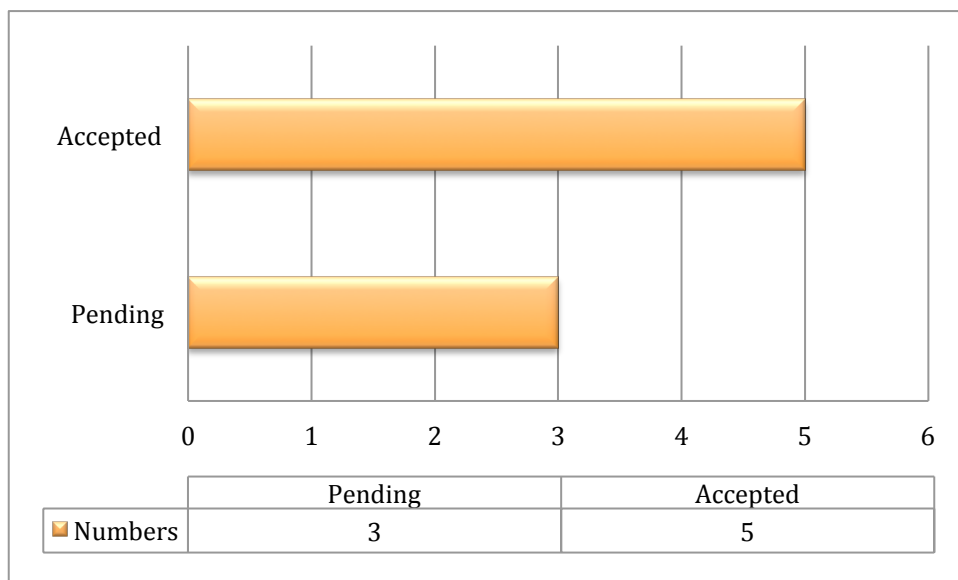


Figure 6: Refugee status of the interviewees

About the age, only one out of the eight interviewees is over 30 years old, and all the rest are between 20 and 30 years old.

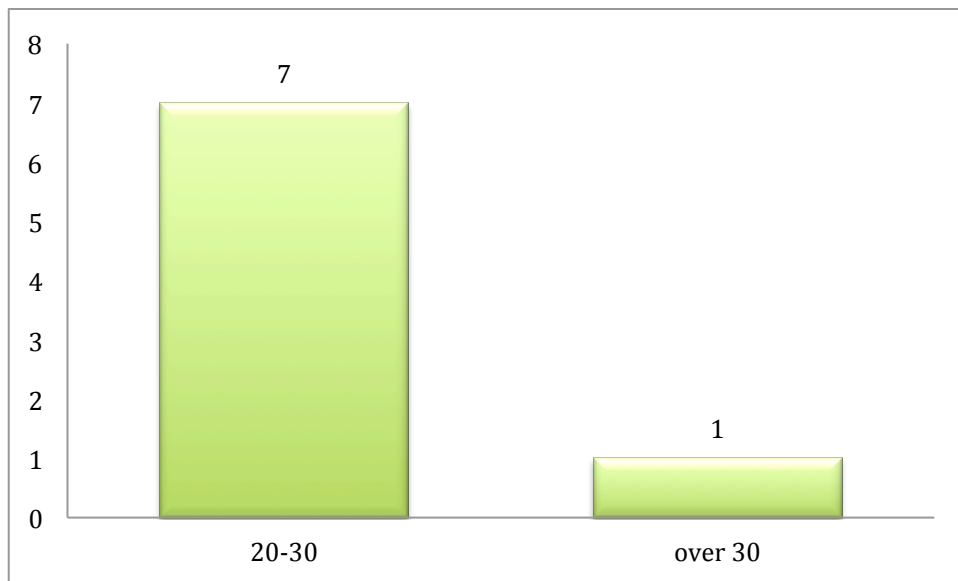


Figure 7: Age groups of the interviewees (refugees)

Among the six refugees with experience of participating in family hosting programs, five of them said they lived in houses. One interviewee told me that he was hosted by a family living on a big boat. None of them is hosted by a family that lives in the apartment.

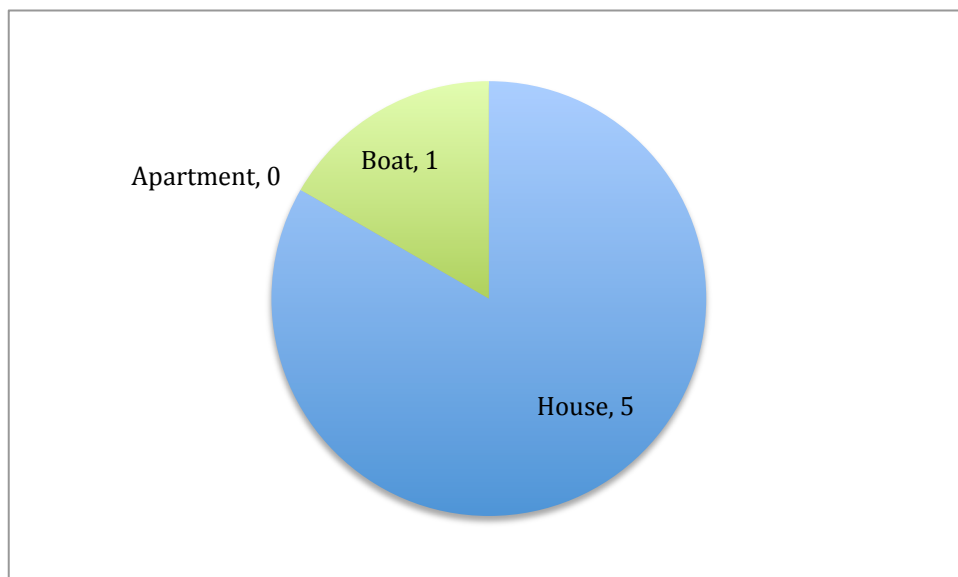


Figure 8: Hosting family accommodation types

Hosting family

Four families have been interviewed by this research. Three of them are from the Marseille region and one is from the Paris region. All of the four interviewed families live in detached houses that are spatial enough for sharing. Three out of the four families' owners live with their children, and only one hosting family lives alone as a retired couple.

The age of the four hosts are distributed equally in four different age groups. When the interview is carried out with couples, their average age has been considered as the age of the host. To some extent, it shows that the family participants for the refugee-hosting program bears a broad span of age.

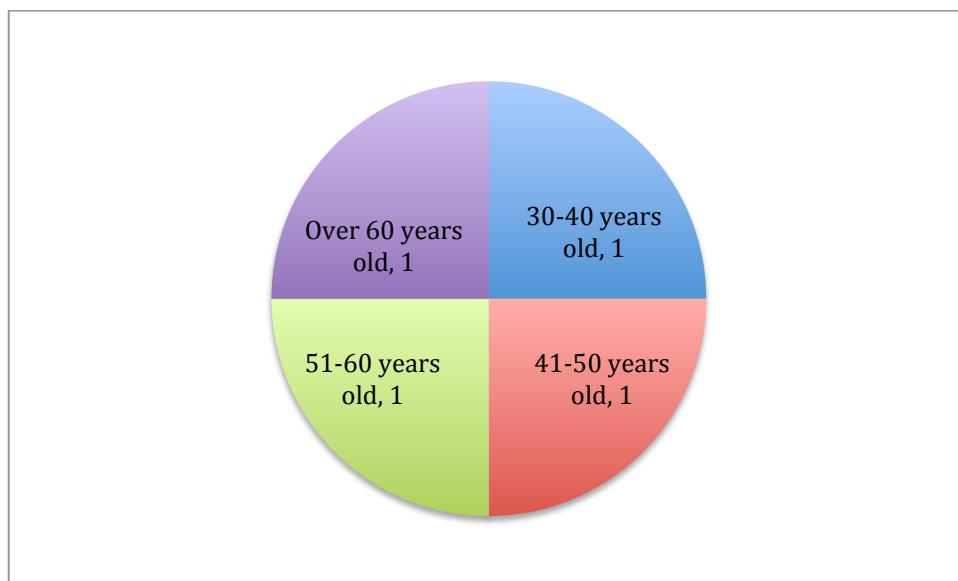


Figure 9: Age of the host

Furthermore, among the four families, three families are Catholic families; only one family is an atheist family.

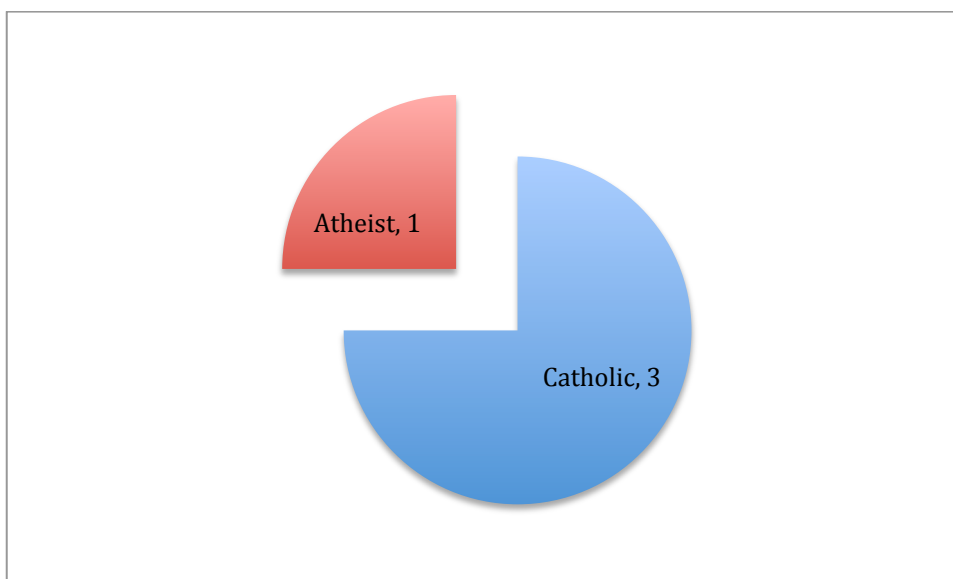


Figure 10: Hosting families' religions in this research

Social worker

Three social workers have been interviewed by this research, and they are from two different kinds of organizations: one organization with government background and one with religious background. Two of the workers are project managers, and another one is a project assistant. All of them work in the Paris region.

Family hosting programs involved in this research

Two different kinds of family hosting programs have been involved in this research, aiming to explore the professional perspective and current practice on the chosen topic. They are anonymously named as program A and program B in this research. All the information of this part is summarized from the interviews mentioned above.

Program A is organized by an agency with government background and funded by a renowned charity foundation in France. It came out since 2015

during the refugee influx. Since a large number of the asylum-seeking groups were living in an undignified camp environment and some of them were even sleeping rough on the street, coupled with the strong willing of giving help to refugees by the local French people, the program was founded to explore the possibility and working mechanism to help refugee groups by associating with civil society, more specifically, how to use family hosting to help refugee groups. In this program, different professionals have been involved to provide comprehensive assistance to refugees and hosting families to deal with their daily difficulties when they are participating in family hosting programs, namely, psychologists, social workers, social advocates, and administrative officers. Among them, the psychologist and the social worker play major roles in the program implementation. For more details, psychologist provides regular consultations (at least once for every two months) to hosting families and refugees to deal with their emotional requests and mental issues. Social workers provide daily supports to refugees and families during the cohabitation process, for instance, matching family and refugee, introducing refugee to hosting family, following up each case from beginning to end, and helping refugees to search for jobs. This program only opens to the refugees and the people granted with subsidiary protections over 18 years old in France. All the refugees hosted by this program are referred by social workers from other refugee receiving organizations, like CADA and CHU (emergency shelter). The Family hosting program organized by program A is considered as a long-term family hosting program, and the cohabitation ranges from three months to one year for each case. Also, the hosting contract is renewable when each case ends with further hosting request. Besides the hosting, program A, together with other partner organizations, also organizes other social activities for refugees and hosting families, such as, sport events and music concerts, to provide a further comprehensive refugee settlement and integration support. However, program A doesn't have professional tools to evaluate the program but only assesses the work in line with the tools provided

by its sponsor. Moreover, the project manager expressed that the biggest challenge they have encountered is the lack of exposure rate of the program to the mass public in France. Due to this challenge, they could not get enough local families to respond to the numerous refugee requests for hosting.

Program B is organized by an international religious charity organization. It started its family hosting program in 2009, a few years before the refugee influx. It used to be a very small-scaled hosting program for refugees and asylum seekers only organized in the Paris region. Nevertheless, by the end of 2016, it has become active throughout the whole France with 1,351 hosting families, 582 refugees and asylum seekers, and 265 volunteers participating in the program according to the data collected from the interviewed officer. The program initiated the idea of helping asylum seekers who are waiting for their legal papers to have a safe place to sleep over. This program offers short-term family hosting to refugees and asylum seekers possessing legal documents in France above 18 years old. The same as program A, all the refugees and asylum seekers participating in this hosting program are ought to be referred and endorsed by other refugee receiving organizations to ensure participating security for hosting families. In this program, each of the hosting lasts from four to six weeks. After that, refugee or the asylum seeker can request for a new term or not. As long as the refugee or the asylum seeker has the legal document to stay in France, their hosting request could be responded, however, the duration could be changed for nothing longer. During the hosting period, especially weekdays, the refugee or the asylum seeker is not allowed to stay at home alone when the hosts are not at home. Providing the hosted refugees or asylum seekers with daily breakfast and at least one dinner each week, as well as an individual room, is obligatory for the hosting families. Apart from those rules, the program also introduces very detailed suggestions and regulations to hosted refugees or asylum seekers and hosting families before they sign the hosting contract, like, how to live together with respects. Besides

a few full-time social workers, this program also involves large amounts of volunteers called “mentors” to assist in the program implementation. Mentors are located at the central place to coordinate information and services. Social workers from this program have expressed that the setting of “mentors” can improve the working efficiency and reduce their management stress when they need human resource supporting. Furthermore, for a better integration, this organization also organizes abundant other activities for refugees, hosting families and volunteers, such as, yoga class, theater training and monthly gala. Rapid growth of the participants (including refugees and asylum seekers, volunteers, hosting families) in recent years has become a crucial challenge to this program run by a small team of only three full time social workers. Meanwhile, the lack of the public exposure also troubles the organizers for a better program development in the future.

Although sharing many similarities, the two programs differ from each other on the aspects of duration, target group, working mechanism, service delivery, and so on.

Among them, the most distinctive difference we could identify from the interviews, is the professional attitude towards the hosting duration. In this regard, the social workers from the two different organizations provided us different insights.

“Long-term hosting is good for refugees. It provides them a stable environment and sense of safety. It is better for their integration.” (Social work A)

From program A, the social worker thought long-term hosting is better for refugee’s integration due to the stable living environment, which could provide them with opportunities to gain a sense of safety and stability. Similarly, earlier

researches also found that access to the stable and secured housing has critical influence on strengthening refugees' sense of security and belonging, and eventually contributes to their better independence (Phillips, 2006, 539). Meanwhile, a stable living environment has positive influences on refugees' social connection enhancing and accessing to public services (Ager and Strang, 2008: 184).

However, social workers from the program B believed that short-term hosting could bring refugees more than the mere settlement but better integration. They listed the advantages as following.

"Someone said the integration, you know when it starts, but you don't know when to end. For asylum seekers, we don't want they only just settle down in one family, it keeps them in dynamic and (the ability of) adaptation...The main objective is (to train the) autonomy for asylum seeker and refugees (so they could be more independent)...Also, staying with one family too long may make asylum seekers feel they need to give something back to the family (for their help), that is stressful, we don't want they to feel that. (4 to 6 weeks living with one local family) it is long enough to create real relationship already (for their integration)...(through this) they could have so many different social relationships to rely on in their future." (Social worker B)

As she has listed, since refugee integration is an ongoing process, this kind of short-term hosting could keep refugees dynamic. During the process, their personal autonomy and independence will be stimulated for their future integration challenges in the hosting society. Meanwhile, according to her explanation, asking for too much help is a stressful process for some refugees.

However, short-term hosting, with relatively less help from the hosting families, brings relief to refugees. In addition to that, the frequent changes of hosting families can also broaden refugees' social connections and provide them more opportunities for future development.

In addition to relieving the stress for refugees, reducing the pressure for hosting families by short-term hosting has also been mentioned.

“The good point for our family hosting program here is that it is light enough to host a refugee or asylum seeker here. Hosting families engage themselves to hosting refugees only 4 to 6 weeks. After that, refugees will change families to live. So, they know this from the beginning, when to start and when to end.... We don't want the families to get too close to the asylum seekers, because after that, it is so difficult to deal with those emotions when they need to be apart (from each other).” (Social work B)

By getting to know when to start and when to end the hosting for refugees, families could be more flexible to manage their own life. Also, since refugees will probably not live together with the hosting families forever, short-term hosting is an easier way for families to deal with their emotional reactions when the refugee finishes the cohabitation and leaves.

From the perspective of the hosting families, some interviews have also echoed this point of view.

“I think the short-term hosting is good for us, not very stressful.” (Hosting family C)

“But we also need some time to be only with our families (after this hosting for refugees)...maybe a few months later, we can start another host, not immediately to host another refugee after we finish this one.” (Hosting family A)

Family C was doing a short-term hosting and voiced that short-term hosting made them less stressful. As a family hosting a refugee for a long term, after I asked them if they would host another refugee once they finished the current one, family A gave me a negative answer, because they needed some space and time for themselves. Clearly, stress has been expressed from the long-term hosting.

In social work practice, to identify which method is better for clients directly contributes to the service outcomes. Therefore, choosing either long-term or short-term hosting as the provided intervention becomes a crucial question to social workers.

Family hosting’s influence on refugee integration

About refugee integration

As is previously mentioned, refugee integration is a controversial concept. It is understood differently in different context with different emphasis (Ager and Strang, 2008: 177). For instance, from the perspective of European Council, refugee integration is described as “a long-term two-way process of change, that relates both to the conditions for and the actual participation of refugees in all aspects of life of the country of durable asylum as well as to refugees' own sense of belonging and membership of European societies” (ECRE, 1999b, 4; Ager and Strang, 2008, 177). By this definition, two-way process with mutual

changes has been emphasized. However, in the UK, the understanding of refugee integration has been reflected as “the process that takes place when refugees are empowered to achieve their full potential as members of British society, to contribute to the community, and become fully able to exercise the rights and responsibilities that they share with other residents” (Home Office, 2005; Strang and Ager, 2008, 175), in which the empowerment of the refugees and the refugees’ contribution to the hosting society have been largely emphasized.

Therefore, “How do you understand refugee integration” has been asked to the both refugees and hosting families to determine the concept.

“It’s the way that they try to become a French, so the integrate is, they know the culture, they know the language, they can get employed and get mixed with all the French people but not (only) stay in their community.” (Hosting family A)

“Integration for me, is coming to France, to be welcomed, and settle down somewhere, then work, and have the same rights as other (French) people.” (Hosting family B)

“Adapting to different life style, getting to know the different culture, laws.” (Hosting family C)

From the hosting families’ perspective, refugees’ adaptation to the French society with its culture, language and life style has been expected. In the meantime, the way they told me about refugees should be welcomed by French society with equal treatment and respect has echoed the “two-way process”.

In addition to that, from the refugee side, integration has been described as follows:

“Integration is adaptation. You have to adapt yourself with the new society because you didn’t have those values (before). It is a question about identity as well.” (Refugee H)

“Integration is adapting with the society, with the new country, like its culture and language. It’s (about) how they live, understanding how these people live (here). To try to live together (with them). It is how we can live (with them), how can we adopt with this system, with this society, be able to live in this society, be accepted by this society.” (Refugee E)

“Personally, I don’t mind learn new things here. I have my own things (culture, etc.) from my own society, I can make a collaboration between those two (original and hosting society) ... Maybe it is hard for very religious people to change themselves, but to me, I am not very religious, I didn’t find really problems for integration here, but sure, it is hard.” (Refugee A)

From the above interviews with refugees, the definition of the refugee integration has been largely highlighted as their own adaptation to the new society in line with its life style, culture, language and values, as well as the expectations to be accepted by the hosting society. Also, integration is about learning new things while they could maintain their own culture and customs. Religion could be a barrier to integration, but it is not necessary and the

situation varies from person to person.

Moreover, in the interviews, refugees seldom expected the hosting society to provide them a better integration environment. On the contrary, a kind of utilitarian idea has been identified from one interview:

“About integration, it is like forget where are you from, what you have in your own culture and start a new life here. And if you are so productive to this society, you are welcome, this is integration to me.” (Refugee A)

During the interview, the refugee expressed that his understanding of the integration was built on the premise that he could make a contribution to the hosting society; otherwise, he wouldn't be welcomed by the hosting society, let alone integrate himself into it. However, his idea about the integration in the hosting society, somehow could remind us of a predominant social phenomenon: our society is filled with the neoliberal standards about productiveness and efficiency, but is lack of due humanitarian consideration to vulnerable groups, not to mention those people who just fled from life-threatening situations. We cannot deny that if we take this situation as a proper integration, our society would seem to be too snobbish. Thus, it has raised our concern about how social workers, as a profession armed with the humanitarian perspectives, could cast more influence on relevant policies and actions to reshape our so-called humanitarian interventions to be more “humanitarian”.

Furthermore, also from this interview, the way he described as “forget where are you from, what you have in your own culture and start a new life” actually has echoed not “integration” in this research but “assimilation”. Professor Stephen Castles has defined the latter as a process that “countries of

immigration could deal with difference by requiring immigrants to give up their distinctive languages, religions and customs and to assimilate as individuals into the national culture” (LSE, 2007). According to this definition, assimilation emphasizes only on one-way change. However, from the international context, sometimes, we recognized that 'integration' might be synonymous with 'assimilation' (McPherson, 2010; Strang and Ager, 2010). For instance in the US immigration policy, some of the old attempts towards to the immigrants (Alba and Nee, 2003; Kivisto, 2005) now are seeking re-asserting assimilation “as a means by which ethnic groups both maintain distinctive identities and commit to the civic goals of the state” (Strang and Ager, 2010), which is exactly the “integration” in this research. By all means, we are not here to argue about the definitions between “integration” and “assimilation”, but only presenting the idea of promoting two-way process for integration is much more effective and humane to both migrant groups, especially for refugees and asylum seekers, and hosting society (Strang and Ager, 2010).

Generally speaking, refugee integration has been treated as the main goal of the refugee policy and the targeted outcome for the refugee settlement (Strang and Ager, 2008). It involves with a very wide range from the culture to the self-identity. Keeping the integration process dynamic and making it happen in both refugee and hosting society have been proven to be effective (European Council on Refugees and Exiles, 1999). Also, refugee integration is a process that should start upon refugees' arrival in the hosting society (Strang and Ager, 2010, 595) and is “shaped considerably by the intentions and aspirations of refugees themselves, whatever their formal status in the country where they seek refuge” (Strang and Ager, 2010, 595).

Refugee integration domain with 10 detailed indicators

As introduced previously, refugee integration domain conceptualized by the

British Home Office (Ager and Strang, 2008) has ten comprehensive indicators covering refugees' daily life under four domains. Due to its broad coverage for the refugee integration fields, this research has utilized it as the data collection guidance and analysis structure to determine the family hosting's influence on refugee integration. Data collected from the contextual observation and the interviews with refugees and hosting families will be presented for the analysis on the chose topic in the next part.

Means and markers

As the highlighted key areas of activities in the public arena, employment, housing, education and health have been summarized into the refugee integration domain as "means and markers", with an emphasis traced back to the 1951 Geneva Convention with its specification of social rights for refugees, in terms of such issues like employment, welfare, education and housing (UN, 1951; Ager and Strang, 2008).

Employment

Employment has been perhaps the most researched area for the integration related topic (Castles et al., 2002). From the previous study in Sweden and Norway, it has been identified as the major pillar to stimulate refugee integration (Valenta and Bunar, 2010). It has also been determined as a crucial factor that could influence many relevant issues, such as promoting economic independence, planning for the future, meeting members of the host society, restoring self-esteem and encouraging self-reliance (Tomlinson and Egan, 2002). From this research, we have noticed that family hosting very often functions as a bridge for refugees to reach employment.

"They gave me some suggestions about (finding a job here

in France). If I learn plumber, electrician, they told me those are also good works (here). If you do some training here, after that you can easily find work.” (Refugee B)

“They helped me for finding a job (on) Internet. And now I find a job in a supermarket. They helped me for making a CV, and posted on Internet.” (Refugee E)

“She doesn’t have refugee identity papers yet, normally she could not work legally here in France. She used to work illegally, but later we helped her to find some other jobs to do that people could pay her with a special cheque, which is legal here in France.” (Hosting family B)

Two major ways provided by the hosting families to help refugees on their employment have been identified from the above interviews: vocational suggestions and assistance providing, and direct job introducing. Since refugees haven’t come to the hosting society long enough to understand well its job market, coupled with the significant obstacles, such as language and cultural difference, refugees are facing a crucial challenge in terms of finding a job. Things like writing CV with the local language and looking for a proper vocational training seem to be not very complicated to the local population but are relatively difficult to those new comers. Difficulty to get access to the regular job market might not only hinder their future economic independence, restoring self-esteem and self-reliance (Tomlinson and Egan, 2002), but also increase the possibility for them to be exploited and slaved by the illegal labor market.

However, by living with the local families, job opportunities increase, while risks of stepping into illegal job market decreases.

Moreover, except the interviews, news from a French website shows that, in an organization working on the family hosting program in France, 44 % of the refugees from their service group could find a job thanks to their hosting families (Express, 2016).

Housing

Apart from employment, housing has also been treated as a significant element to build up refugee integration in the hosting society (Valenta and Bunar, 2010), as there is evidence that “the sooner that personal space is restored as safe and friendly toward the resumption of normal activities of daily living, the better” (Herman, 1992, Drumm, Pittman and Perry, 2004, 83). Starting from a refugee settlement solution to cope with the housing shortage, family hosting has been determined in this research playing a vital role in providing satisfied accommodations to refugees.

“I was very satisfied with this room, it is like my own world (in the room). I have a big reading table, big shelf used for books and dictionary, kitchen area, and big shower (room)... do I need more? It is more than enough for me.” (Refugee F)

“We provide her and her children a flat, like a studio. They have their own kitchen and toilet.” (Hosting family B)

The conclusion from a previous study about housing shows special effects on “refugees' overall physical and emotional well being, as well as on their ability to feel 'at home'” (Glover *et al.*, 2001; Dutch Refugee Council/ECRE, 2001) has also been proven by this research. Through the interviews, participating in the family hosting program has been told not only can provide housing for

refugees, but also a decent housing condition with the high satisfaction and compressive supporting provided by the cohabitating families.

Education

As a means to provide people skills and competences “in support of subsequent employment” and enable them “to become more constructive and active members of society” (Ager and Strang, 2008, 172), clearly, education is able to play a crucial role in the refugees’ successful integration. Both to refugee children and their parents, school becomes an important venue for them to contact the local members and build up their social networks to underpin the further integration (Ager and Strang, 2008, 172). This research has found that family hosting is highly influential on refugees' education.

“They helped me for having relation (with the school). For example, I am studying architecture (now in Paris), (before that) they helped me for communicating (with the university). For either making a folder (CV), because when I arrived here, I didn't speak French, I didn't know how to entry the architecture university here. They give me the relations with the architect (school), they helped me to entry (into) this university. Now I am in the first year of school of Architecture in Paris. It is a study of five years, three years for Bachelor (degree), Two years for Master (degree).” (Refugee E)

“We have a group of friends who are supporting helping refugees as well. With their help, the two children (refugees) are all going to schools. The older child is going to high school, the younger child will go to secondary school. Also, each of the child now has their own activities. The boy is

doing rugby and the girl is doing dance lessons. My friends also help to drive them to their activities.” (Hosting family B)

From the above interviews, we can easily find that the hosting families not only could help refugees get access to the education system, but also provide necessary support to ensure their education opportunities, for example, driving them to the school. Nevertheless, this situation is largely dependent on the hosting families' social networks and economic strength, and some refugees also expressed that their hosting families couldn't help them with any education opportunities.

Meanwhile, informal education is also detected in family hosting, which has also been regarded as a critical education content to support refugee's integration.

“One of the people that we hosted in my house almost set my house on fire because he didn't know how to use the gas. There is a lot of things that they didn't know when they came to France, like how to cook with our tools, how to use washing machine. So we also teach them those life skills at home. Also, we teach them how to take the bus, how to go to the city and so on.” (Hosting family C)

Obviously, the gaps of different lifestyles and cultures could hinder the refugees' way to further integration in the hosting society. However, by living with the local population, new life skills and knowledge could be gained by refugees from daily interactions with their hosting families. Therefore, family hosting has also been proven from this research to play a crucial role in providing informal education to refugee groups.

Health

Health condition has been widely considered as a vital resource for active engagement in the new society for refugee groups (Ager and Strang, 2008, 172). Hence, if we can find out the positive impact the family hosting has on refugees' health condition, family hosting could be proven to stimulate refugees' integration process in one more dimension.

“Before, as I said, I was in the hospital waiting room, I cannot even sleep (because) I was sleeping in the chair. I had a backache problem (at that time). (After) I came (to) this family, I could sleep properly, I can cook. It improved my healthy condition of course.” (Refugee F)

“When I slept outside, I used to get cold or headache. But now I am very good. (If I am sick) Family helps me to get medicine.” (Refugee D)

Interviews explained that before refugees participated in family hosting programs, due to the terrible living condition, such as, sleeping rough on the street or in the poorly equipped shelter, refugees more or less suffered from poor health conditions. But after they came to live with the local families with decent and well-equipped accommodations, their health conditions, at least physical health conditions, had got significant improvements.

As is mentioned previously, all the refugees or the asylum seekers here in France with legal document are entitled to get access to the public medical system when they need it. Thus, most of the refugees and the asylum seekers who are living with the local families don't really need much health assistance from the hosting families. However, hosting families are still very generous to

provide health suggestions and assistance to them when necessary:

“Although they have the state basic medical insurance, we provide them health suggestions and assistance very often. And you know that I am a doctor.” (Hosting family B)

Apart from the physical health, family hosting's influence in refugee's mental health has also been noticed from one interview.

“(Before I participated in this family hosting program) even I was living with my relatives, it was not comfortable. We were with his wife and two children in a 35 square meters room. I cannot stay at home (all the time), only went back for sleeping. After I lived together with the family, I felt more comfortable and happy, then I can do more things than before.” (Refugee E)

Since the previous accommodation was overcrowded and uncomfortable, although the refugee was living with his relatives, he didn't really feel happy but depressed. After he left the previous one and lived with a local family, the better living environment improved his mental health condition, which could eventually enable him to “do more things” to improve his life in the hosting society, and ultimately contribute to his better integration in the future. This situation also echoes the idea that only when the refugees' fundamental needs are met, for instance a stable housing, the future development towards to a better integration could be more effective (Bernier 1992).

Although family hosting can provide health support to refugees, it is also constrained by the health condition of the hosted refugees, especially for those who have serious traumatic experiences.

*“Like lack of supporting for professional trauma consultant.
Too much traumas make them hard to integrate with the
families here.” (Social worker B)*

Bearing serious traumatic experiences, some refugees suffer serious stress disorders, which impedes their daily communication and cohabitation with the hosting families. To tackle this problem, it's quite important for social work practitioners to provide assistance like traumatic consultation to refugees.

Conclusion

Employment, housing, education and health have been widely acknowledged by different scholars as key aspects of integrating refugees into the new society (Ager and Strang, 2008, 172). In the meantime, regarded as the basic supporting for refugee groups, fulfilling of these four indicators could provide them more spaces for the future better integration as well (Drumm, Pittman and Perry, 2004, 69). To some extent, evidences from this research have shown us that family-hosting programs could constantly improve the four aspects respectively for refugees' future better integration in the hosting society.

Social connections

Initiated as an idea that “insertion” of one group amidst another, coupled with the guiding principle as a “two-way” process with mutual understanding and adaptation, social connections seen to be the key to driving refugee integration process to the practical and local level (Ager and Strang, 2008, 177).

The indicators of the social connection parting from the refugee integration

domain (Home Office, 2008) have been referenced from Putnam's social capital theory, which formulated three distinctive forms of social connections: social bridges (with other communities), social bonds (with family and co-ethnic, co-national, co-religious or other forms of group), and social links (with the structures of the state) (Putnam, 2000; Ager and Strang, 2008: 178).

Social bridges

Ager and Strang have noticed that if a refugee had experienced close relationship in their own culture, the refugee will probably feel alienated and depressed when he found himself isolated and lack of a strong local community support (2008, 183). However, social bridges may release this pressure by guiding refugees to stay within a strong community with comprehensive supports. From the interviews, social bridges brought by family hosting have been found as following.

"When our families and friends are at home, we don't exclude him. We ask him if you want to participate in our families and friends (for the activities). For example, when we have a birthday (party) with families and friends, he can join us as well." (Hosting family A)

"I know everyone of their family. I have been their village in east France where is their hometown, to meet their grandparents." (Refugee E)

The above interviews have told us, hosting families always function as a bridge between refugees and members of the hosting society, for instance, their family members, friends or neighbors. In this way, refugees could build up their own social networks with the local population for their further integration

needs.

In addition to that, evidences have also shown us the social bridges brought by family hosting could benefit refugee groups in several aspects for their further integrations, namely, feeling to be recognized and accepted, building up language skills and local knowledge, increasing mutual understanding, extending social capital for a better development, and fighting against segregation.

“They introduce me to their families and neighbor. I have a French friend, they introduce (him to me). It is very helpful and (I feel) happy” (Refugee C)

“Of course (I feel happy), I didn’t know any people, so, as many people (for me) to know (after they introduced them to me), it is a good feeling (to me).” (Refugee F)

From the remarks, the feeling of “happy” and “good” was emphasized by the refugees who had been introduced to the local populations. Obviously, in this context, the feeling can be understood as being recognized and accepted by the hosting society with friendly attitudes. Accordingly, a previous study has confirmed this point: the daily-based friendly encounters between refugees and other non-refugee groups in the hosting society is greatly valued to make refugees feel more secure and accepted, which could significantly encourage them to integrate into the new society (Ager and Strang, 2008: 180). Vice versa, as it is a “two-way” process, this friendly encounter also can improve non-refugee groups’ impression on refugee groups, thereupon increase their possibility to accept refugees as the part of their society (Ager and Strang, 2008: 180). “Conversely, perceived unfriendliness undermined other successful aspects of integration” (Ager and Strang, 2008: 180).

“They introduce their families (to me), and friends also. I met them before...It is very good, because we can share about their culture and everything. Also we can (have) conversation with them (to) improve my French language. They also give you some suggestions if I have some problem.” (Refugee A)

A research finding shows that when the surrounding environment is not very friendly, refugees normally would be unconfident to build up their language skills and local knowledge. Instead, “they grow increasingly fearful and isolated” (Threadgold and Court, 2005; Strang and Ager, 2010, 598). However, social bridges provided by hosting families could offer refugees a positive experience to build up their confidences.

We can also find that building up the social bridge between the refugee and the local population is a way to provide them the possibility for their further communication. As the above interview mentioned, they could stay together to share their different cultures or other experiences. Furthermore, through the process, this kind of communication could provide the refugees and local communities an opportunity to improve mutual understanding and eliminate prejudice against each other.

“They (refugees) used to have a very negative images for France, the west (countries) in general that we are little bit like monsters (to refugees). (After the hosting) and they (refugees) were surprised to discover that my family is just a normal family like anyone else. Also about christianism, because often they are Muslims, so they thought christianism is not good. But in the end, they realized that our values are

very close, so they changed (their original ideas).” (Hosting family C)

Echoing that, Ager and Strang found the same influence from building up the communication between refugees and local communities: “To have people come... come together have something going... for the community so people can meet and not be strangers. Because if I see you on the streets, because I have not spoken to you I will judge you according to the way you look..., but if you sit down and talk to people, and deal with them you understand them better (Refugee, Pollokshaws) (2008, 180).

This research has also found the evidence that social bridges provided by the hosting family could directly bring refugees social capitals to reach a better development, such as opportunities for education and employment.

“They don’t have the rights to work (when refugees are waiting for their identity papers), We asked some friends of us who have the big gardens to let them (refugees) to help them (her friends) for some garden works, like cleaning. Sometimes they got paid, sometimes they got something exchange for their working in the garden.” (Hosting family C)

“Especially they can put you in a relation with someone in the architect school, they are friends. (So I can get this education opportunity here)” (Refugee E)

It’s also supported by a previous study in the UK about refugee integration that bridging capital may significantly “facilitate employment opportunities” (Ager and Strang, 2008: 180).

In a nutshell, all the evidences above can ultimately make contributions to helping refugees get rid of the social segregation by bridging them to the local population and resources.

However, this situation is also mainly dependent on hosting families' social networks. Like this case, this refugee really appreciated that his host could introduce him to some of his friends to extend his social network, but:

“It is good to have communication with other French people, but all of them are old people, because they are the friends of my host, my host family is old.” (Refugee H)

Therefore, when the hosting families only have a very limited social network, how to satisfy refugees' demand for a broad social contact is worth consideration.

Social bonds

Social bonds have been defined as the relationships with the ethnic or “like-ethnic” group (Hale, 2000; Strang and Ager, 2008). “They provide a 'voice for refugees', contact points for isolated individuals, expertise in dealing with refugee issues and flexible and sensitive responses to the needs of their target populations. They also provide cultural and social activities which offer refugees the chance to maintain their own customs and religion, talk in their own language, celebrate their traditions and exchange news from their home country” (Duke *et al.* 1999, 119).

Social bonds play a large part in refugees' feeling of being “settled” in the hosting society (Ager and Strang, 2008, 183). Yet, lack of it may cause refugees higher risk of suffering from the depression compared with those who

have the access to this resource (Beiser, 1993, 221).

Back to this research, during the interviews with refugees and hosting families, topics related to the social bonds have often been mentioned with their daily activities. Also, the proofs of the positive influence on strengthening refugees' social bonds from the family hosting have been verified.

“Sometimes I take my Tibetan friends home, they are welcome (by my host)! It is good” (Refugee C)

*“Yes, we support him to spend time with his friends.”
(Hosting family A)*

One of the most important ways to maintain the social bonds for refugees is helping them to stay close to their own ethnic groups, so that they could speak their own language and practice their customs and religions, which in more or less supported by families in this research. In order to do this, they sometimes open the door to the friends of the refugees; sometimes provide supports to help refugees reach their friends or families. Moreover, since being close to the family members manifests significance to constitute the bonding relationships for refugee groups (Strang and Ager, 2010, 596), providing them the necessary help to maintain their family relationships appears to be pretty critical for their better integrations.

“Also, we encourage her to call her own Mother who is still living in her original country.” (Hosting family B)

*“We provide a flat for her and her two kids to live together.”
(Hosting family B)*

So, when the refugee's Mom was not with her, the hosting family encouraged her to keep communicating with her Mom; meanwhile, the flat offered by the hosting family provided the possibility for the refugee and her two kids to live together. Just as the cases above, whether in this way or the other, this is exactly how family hosting could help refugees to maintain their social bonds.

The effectiveness of social bonds in integration lies in the acceptance for refugees to practice their own customs and religions, to promote their sense of safety and stability. The living environment of hosting families has also been identified to promote bonding, as it fosters an alike environment to let refugees feel accepted and settled.

"I have different food habit, so they paid fully respect to it, like what I can eat they were very careful. They always prepare what I can eat, (they) would never give me any food (that is) contradictory to my habit." (Refugee F)

"They were very interested in my culture. They asked me a lot of questions (about my culture). It made me feel good and proud of my culture." (Refugee E)

"I always pray to god (Buddhism religion) everyday in my own room, they (Christian religion) are ok with it... I feel very comfortable with their attitude (towards my religion, cultural and custom)" (Refugee C)

"I was very touched by one refugee. Because before he came to my family, he was very scared, he thought living with us would not allow him to have his own religion. But for me, I think it is very important for him to have his own

religion.” (Hosting family C)

“I think it is very important to them to practice their own religions, because that is the only thing left from their original country, like pray 5 times a day for them is very important. Sometimes, we have to wait for refugees to finish their pray first then we could start to eat. We were surprised in the beginning, but later it is ok to us, no problem” (Hosting family C)

From the above interviews, open-mindedness of the hosting families contributes to forming a relaxed atmosphere for refugees either on their different cultural performances or the religious practices. Refugees then are able to obtain the space and opportunity to reach a better integration strengthened by gaining the feeling of being accepted and settled in the hosting community. A former study from Ager and Strang has also supported this idea: “the daily-based friendly encounters between refugees and other non-refugee groups in the hosting society is greatly valued to make refugees feel more secure and accepted, which could significantly make contribution to their positive attitudes towards integration in the new society” (Ager and Strang, 2008: 180). Meanwhile, as time goes by, the hosted refugees will develop another kind of bonding relationship with the hosting families--a bonding relationship beyond their own ethnic group or like-ethnic group.

In addition to that, to those refugees living with the families of different customs and religions, the attitudes and practices of how to live together with respect has been told by a hosting family, which could be a useful practice guidance.

“We are ok (that he practice his religion and culture), but it depends what he is doing. For example, if he wants to pray

inside the living room, we may ask him to do it in his own room. We think that diversity is very important, everyone can practice his own culture and religion when they are together.”
(Hosting family A)

As an important social capital, which has been treated as a “source of emotional support, self esteem and confidence” (Losi and Strang 2008; Spicer 2008; Vrečer, 2010; Strang and Ager, 2010, 598), evidences from this research have proven that social bonds could be significantly stimulated by the family hosting activities.

Social links

Social links have been referred as the connection between the individuals and the state structures, for instance, getting access to the social services (Ager and Strang, 2008, 181). In terms of refugee integration supporting, social links function critically as the way to help refugee groups equip public resources.

During this research, we have been informed by the social workers that most of the family hosting programs also provide refugee legal aids, which could help them to deal with their legal papers and get access to the public services, such as, education and medical treatment. However, hosting families have also shown their intentions to help refugees to get access to the public services if it is necessary.

“The family they are very helpful, they try to help us whatever they can, any problem, like for (dealing) the paper work (with government)” (Refugee B)

“Yes, very often. There is a lot refugee papers from the

government. Because they are all in French, we need to explain to them what are the documents and how to deal with it.” (Hosting family A)

“We helped her to deal with her children’s school papers. We go to school with her for the children’s meeting with teachers.” (Hosting family B)

Because the government papers are all in French, coupled with the situation that most of the refugees here lack French language skills, hosting families then have spent a large part of the time to offer translation help to the refugee groups to explain what are the documents and how to deal with them. Also, if it is necessary, they provide direct help by visiting public agencies to help refugees deal with relevant errands.

Conclusion

By living together with local families, refugee groups are able to reach different kinds of social connections to lift their integration in the hosting society. Those connections, namely, social bridges, social bonds, and social links, are playing important roles in bridging refugees to the hosting society members, providing space and opportunity for refugees to practice their own customs and religions and getting access to the public services respectively to promote their integration.

Facilitators

Facilitators in the refugee integration domain refer to the elements that could remove barriers towards refugee integration (Ager and Strang, 2008). These

barriers can be categorized into two: language and cultural knowledge, and safety and security.

Language and cultural knowledge

Being able to speak the major language from the hosting society has been consistently identified as the key capacity for the migrant groups to achieve the social interaction, economic integration and full participation in the hosting society (Home Office, 2006; Ager and Strang, 2008, 182), and there is no exception to refugees as well.

During our interviews with refugees and hosting families, the function of language education demonstrated by the family hosting has been addressed from this research.

“My host family knows how to speak English, but they insist to talk with me in French to help me to improve my French language.” (Refugee D)

“They encourage me when I speak (French).” (Refugee E)

From the above expressions, the hosting families are playing a central role in helping the hosted refugees improve their language skills in their daily lives: whether fostering a new language speaking environment, or inspiring them to keep practicing it.

Simultaneously, different teaching methods for refugees to improve their language skills provided by the hosting families have also been identified.

“Sit together (with the family) to watch French Movies to

teach me French, like watch French Cartoon movie”
(Refugee B)

“The lady used to draw picture and explain (it to me) what is it, what does it call in French. Almost every evening, (we) have our own class together to improve my French, because that time I didn’t know any single word in French.” (Refugee C)

“They explain everything into a very simple way (to help me to understand French words)...Everyday they (play French) radio until we sleep. For (practice the French language) listening and speaking.” (Refugee C)

Apart from language skills, the “broader cultural knowledge” which includes “both refugees’ knowledge of national and local procedures, customs and facilities and, though to a lesser extent, non-refugees’ knowledge of the circumstances and culture of refugees” has also a high value enabling the refugee integration processes and outcomes (Ager and Strang, 2008, 182).

Family hosting provides a living environment that highly influences their local cultural knowledge in the hosting society. Nevertheless, a previous study from the ECRE has demonstrated a failure case for achieving local cultural knowledge from a refugee who lives in an institutional accommodation.

“I think it is some kind of a joke. They call them integration houses and I have never met an Austrian inside the house except the staff. So what do they mean by integration? Integration between ourselves? I am sorry that I did not have the chance to learn anything about Austrian culture during

my stay in that integration house. All I have learned is the language but nothing about the culture, not even about the eating culture of Austria.” (ECRE, 1999a, 28Ager and Strang, 2008: 182)

It's not hard to see that the lack of the contact with local population actually is the main barrier for refugees to approach the local cultural knowledge, which subsequently jeopardizes the refugee integration process. However, compared to that, family hosting seems to own more potential to make this up than institutional refugee settlement solutions.

*“When you are looking at their life, living together with them, that's how you are learning (the French culture and lifestyle).”
(Refugee E)*

*“We talked a lot about French customs and education. Especially when it comes to educating boys and girls. For us (French people), we educate our daughters and sons in the same way. But, for her family, it is very different, boys and girls are doing different thing. It is a little bit complicated. We talked about it (education). But, they can also see (it in my family). For example, my husband is doing the washing (at home), and he also helps with our children in our house. The boys and men can also participate in the life, not only girls.”
(Hosting family B)*

“We try to explain the life in general in France, for example, the election, the political system... Sometimes, we watch education program with our children, cartoons, we also ask them to join us. (The children's educational TV program) is

also an angle (of the French life and culture).” (Hosting family A)

By living with the local families, refugees can experience local culture directly from their daily lives. From the distinctive life style to the different social system, families have paved a new path for those new comers to understand the local cultures.

At the meantime, family hosting also can provide a channel for local population to understand refugees’ culture and life styles, so that it could ultimately promote the mutual understanding between them for a better integration in the future.

“When we (are) gathering for lunch or dinner, we talk about my culture, they tell me about their culture to me, about Christmas and new year, and traditional food.” (Refugee C)

“He teaches us his language, a very few words.” (Hosting family A)

“She shared a lot of her families, culture and history. We learned a little bit her cooking as well.” (Hosting family B)

“We learn a lot about Islam religion (from the refugees).” (Hosting family C)

Generally speaking, family hosting has been proven with significant influence on them. It can not only provide a platform for those language and cultural learning activities, but also supply consecutive motivations for both refugee and hosting family to get to know each other for a better integration.

Social work practitioners working on the family hosting programs might organize some activities in the future for the hosting families to come together and share their unique ideas and experiences on it, so that we could offer more alternatives to hosting families as references to help hosted refugees on the aspects of the language and cultural knowledge improvement in family hosting programs.

Safety and stability

Echoing back to the definition of refugee integration, it is not only a concept focusing on the physical supporting, but also an idea about creating the sense of belonging and identity to refugees (ECRE, 1999b, 4; Ager and Strang, 2008, 177).

However, from Maslow's hierarchy of need (Maslow, 1954), only when people have fulfilled certain basic needs, such as physical need for food and water, they could then move "up" to meet more complex needs to achieve a better life, for instance, sense of belonging and self-esteem. In his theory, "safety" ranks as the second primary need for human development, which is in front of the needs for "love and belonging", "self-esteem", and "self-actualization". Thus, according to this theory, in order to fulfill refugee integration with strong sense of belonging to the hosting community, to satisfy the refugees' need for safety and stability bears the utmost importance.

Meanwhile, due to the emerging emphasis from both the refugee and non-refugee groups, safety and stability have also been raised concern as an important policy indicator for refugee integration more than ever in the refugee integration domain concept from Ager and Strang (2008, 183).

In terms of this aspect, some interviews from this research have revealed that before the refugees' participation in the family hosting program, they used to live in a very unstable and unsafe environment.

“One day they sent me to a hospital to stay there. I was living in the hospital and got sick. I was the only woman there and I was scared. I didn’t talk with them (other refugees)” (Refugee F)

“When we came to France, we slept outside.” (Refugee B)

“Before I participated in this (family hosting) program, I was living with a cousin of my Father in Paris. But the situation is not very good. They lived in the small house. I couldn’t stay at his home too long time.” (Refugee E)

Either sleeping rough on the street, or living in the shelter without sufficient living supplies or spaces, the senses of scare and instability became the only things that refugees could acquire from their living environment. Meanwhile, this situation could also lead them to the further serious health issues, either mentally or physically, which could make their lives in the hosting society even worse.

However, by participating in the family hosting program, evidences from this research have pointed out that the personal safety and stability for refugees has been significantly ameliorated.

“I feel very safe and stable (to live together with them) ”
(Refugee B)

“In foreign country, they help me to stay with their family, I am happy and feeling safe...The family is so caring, it makes me feel like home.” (Refugee D)

*“Just being with a family can give you a sense of safety.”
(Refugee E)*

During the interviews, we can easily notice that, the sense of safety and stability achieved from the family hosting programs by the refugees is not only expressed by their words, but also shown on their faces with sincere smiles. By living with the local families, refugees are offered a decent dwelling with daily cares from the hosts, which have effectively satisfied refugees' demand for safety and stability in the settlement process. Moreover, the atmosphere of “home” also makes a vital contribution to elevating the sense of safety and stability to refugees.

To measure the time-scaled stability that could be provided by the family hosting program, we have added one more question to the hosting families: “How long do you plan to provide the accommodation to the refugee”.

*“We can provide the host to him as long as he wants.”
(Hosting family A)*

“We will provide her the host as long as we can.” (Hosting family B)

As what they said, as long as the refugees need a place to stay, they are welcomed by the hosts. And this situation exactly indicates that the “stability” provided by the family hosting is rather enduring and secured.

Conclusion

As the crucial facilitators to remove the integration barriers for refugees, language and cultural knowledge, and safety and stability are both achievable through participating in family hosting programs.

Foundation

We have to admit that being a legislative citizen with equal right as other citizens is not the ultimate solution for refugee integration, especially for those ethnic minorities. About this idea, the encounters of the African immigrants and their descendants in the United States can explain it very well: they have been in the States for ages and entitled with citizenship and equal rights, but are still facing serious social isolation and discrimination. However, in terms of legal protection, social welfare and some other relevant aspects which are directly related to the refugees' daily life, to be granted with the citizenship and equal rights can play a central role in improving their life qualities in the hosting society. By doing so, refugees' integration will go further for sure.

Rights and citizenship

Starting from the legal rights, Strang and Ager have summarized that refugee rights could include human dignity, equality, freedom of cultural choice, justice, security and independence (Strang and Ager, 2008, 175). As we have analyzed in the previous part about social links, hosting families could directly bridge refugees to public service and welfare system.

“I tried to go to the local deputy to work on her refugee papers... It is very complicated.” (Hosting family B)

Since the living environment offered by the family hosting programs has been verified as friendly, respectful and helpful, also with the functions, like providing a safe space and freedom for refugees to practice their own cultures and religions, family hosting could also make straightforwardly contribution to maintaining and guaranteeing refugees' rights in the hosting society.

In terms of obtaining the citizenship for refugee, family hosting does not seem to have a direct effect on it. However, the conditions for a refugee to become a French citizen include "not being convicted in court, good knowledge of the French language, history, culture and society, and adhering to the fundamental principles and values of the French Republic" (UNHCR, 2016). Thus, to the refugees, all the progresses that they can make by participating in the family hosting program, such as, language skills and local cultural knowledge, could absolutely raise their future possibility to achieve the citizenship in the hosting society in line with those obligatory criteria.

Furthermore, hosting families have also explicated their subjective willingness to support refugees to achieve the citizenship for a better integration.

"We support her to become a French citizen if she will have this opportunity in the future." (Hosting family B)

"I would support them to become a French citizen if them want. But there is a huge gap between French culture and their own cultures." (Hosting family C)

Evidences above have shown us, the hosting families are more than supportive for refugees to achieve their further integration in the hosting society. They know that the process is very difficult owing to the existing huge cultural gap between them and refugee groups or other administrative barriers.

Notwithstanding, they will always keep the faith and never give up a try.

Relevance graph

In this research, in order to detect the relationship between family hosting and refugee integration, based on the adopted theoretical conceptual framework-refugee integration domain (Strang and Ager, 2008), I have set up interview outlines with multiple questions to the refugees and the hosting families. For example, such questions based on the theme of the education relevance between family hosting and refugee integration have been asked to the refugees and the hosting families respectively, “Does family hosting help you get any education opportunity or improve your life skill?” and “Have you tried to help him/her get any education opportunity?”. Every time when they responded me with “yes” on each different topic, I marked it as one score under this topic. Eventually, after I finished all the interviews with the refugees and the hosting families, I also achieved a small bunch of numbers, which could give us another way to understand “how exactly family hosting influences refugee integration”. Thus, as a complement to the previous thematic qualitative analysis, a series of statistical graphs that can display the relevance between family hosting and refugee integration have also been made as following.

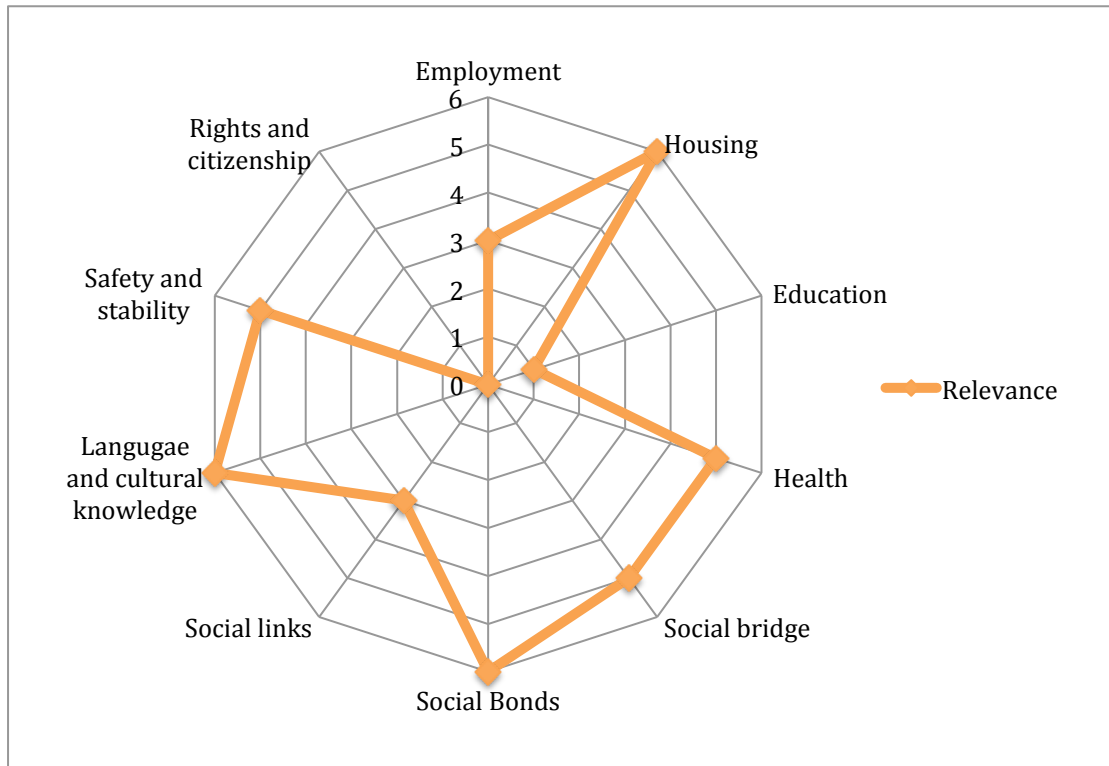


Figure 11: Relevance of Family Hosting to Refugee Integration
(Refugee Perspective, six refugees interviewed)

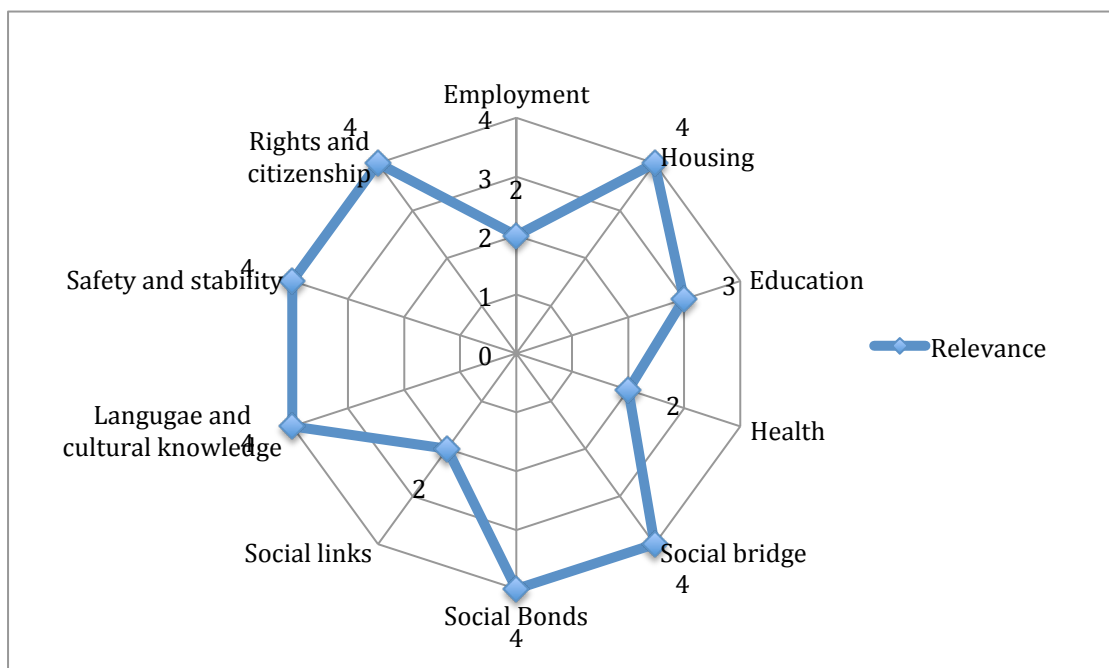


Figure 12: Relevance of Family Hosting to Refugee Integration
(Hosting Family Perspective, four hosting families interviewed)

Figure 11 has shown us the relevance between family hosting and refugee integration from the refugees' feedbacks. Since a total of six refugees with experiences of participating in family hosting programs have been interviewed, the topic with six scores represents that family hosting are greatly influential, while zero means not influential at all. The same interpretation could be applied on the Figure 12.

From the refugees' perspective (figure 11), participating in the family hosting program can absolutely benefit them with grasping language and cultural knowledge and achieving better housing condition and social bonds, since all the three subjects have been given six scores. Besides, safety and stability, social bridges, and health are the three subjects effected critically from the family hosting program with five scores for each. Employment and social links have achieved three scores respectively, indicating equal impact from the family hosting program. The lowest performances, in terms of the relevance between the family hosting and the refugee integration from the refugees' perspective, are education and rights and citizenship: they are only granted with one score and zero score respectively.

Also, let's look at the relevance graph from the hosting families' perspective (figure 12). All the four families have demonstrated the very positive influences from their hosting to the refugees' integration with full score (four scores) on the topics of rights and citizenship, safety and stability, language and cultural knowledge, social bonds, social bridges, and housing. Besides, education ranks as the second with three scores. Employment, social links and health are respectively given two scores, which are the lowest rankings in the hosting families' perspective in terms of the impact from the family hosting to the refugee integration. From this relevance graph, it is also interesting to notice that, none of the topics is scored as zero. Compared to the perspective from the refugees, it looks like, the hosting families are much more optimistic than

the refugees on the influences brought by their hosting.

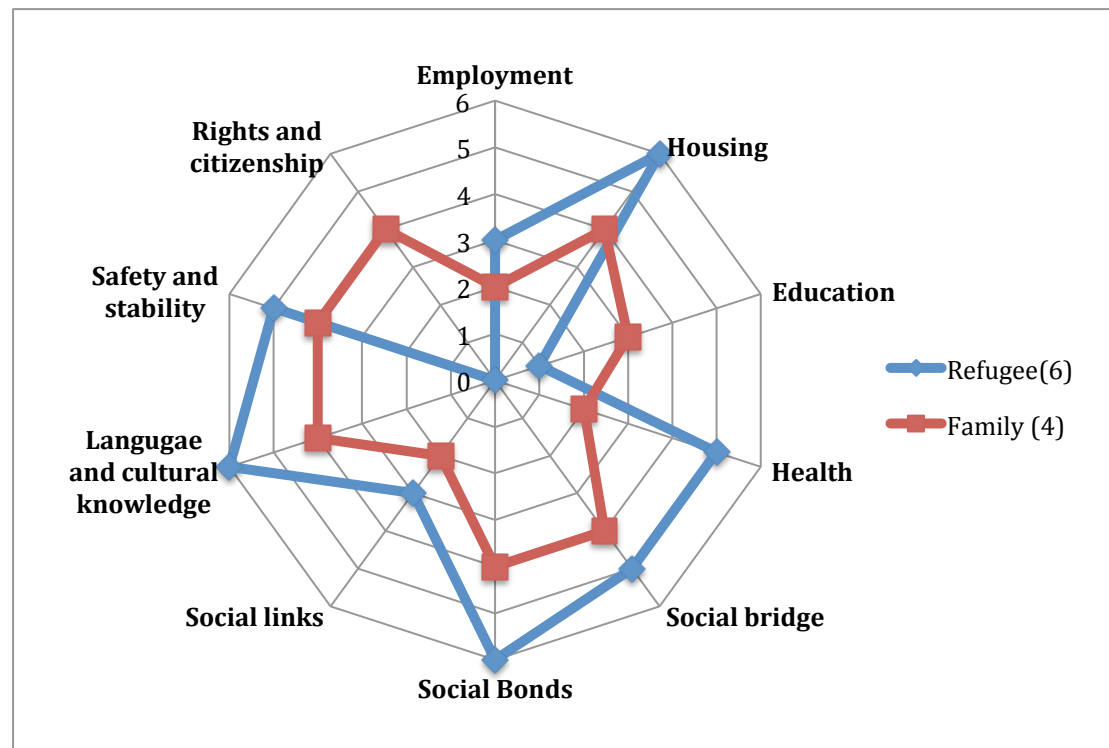


Figure 13: Relevance of Family Hosting to Refugee Integration
(Combined perspective from both refugees and hosting families)

However, when you put the two different relevance graphs with different perspectives together, a new relevance graph (figure 13) can also present us with some useful information on the chosen topic. Obviously, from the comparative perspective, so many topics are presenting the same trends. It means whether from the perspective of the refugees or the hosting families, family hosting programs can surely cast impacts on those topics, but just the matter of how many impacts it could give. They are safety and stability, language and cultural knowledge, social links, social bonds, social bridges, housing and employment. Meanwhile, three topics have shown different trends in this research: health, education and rights and citizenship.

About the health. Coinciding with the previous analysis, most refugees thought

that they had achieved a better health condition both physically and mentally by moving into a safe and comfortable living environment. However, since some families only treated the health condition as physical health, coupled with the situation that they have been told, the public sectors can provide enough physical health assistance to the refugees, so that they don't need to do it on purpose for them, only half of the families thought they could bring directly health improvement to the refugees during the interviews.

Speaking of the education, in this research, different interpretations about education by different groups caused the different trends. The reason why three out of the four families thought they could bring the education to the refugees is that they understand education into two ways: formal and informal. Formal education is the education that refugees could achieve from the education agencies, such as schools or training center. Informal education is the education for life skills and common knowledge. Thus, families thought, except helping the refugees to reach different formal educations, by living with the refugees, they could also give them daily influences to lift their life skills and common knowledge, for instance, how to use the kitchen stuffs and laundry, how to take public transportation. Nevertheless, to most refugees, they only take the education as formal education. That is why, when the families could not help them to go to schools, they thought the families were not helpful to improve their educations.

The rights and citizenship have become a very controversial topic within the 10 indicators in this research: all the refugees thought that the families couldn't help them to achieve it, but all the families thought they were helpful to them about it. However, echoing previous analysis, this situation is also caused by different interpretations on this topic. Refugees thought rights and citizenship are determined only by the government. Although families can help them a lot, they could not have decisive influence on helping them to achieve the rights

and citizenship. Yet, to the families, on the one hand, they have expressed their positive attitudes towards helping refugees to achieve their legal rights and citizenship, as long as refugees need the help. Meanwhile, some of the families had even directly taken actions to bridge them to the public services for requesting it; on the other hand, they thought that, to the refugees, the influences got from the hosting process, such as, language skill and cultural knowledge improvement, can ultimately contribute to acquiring the further rights and citizenship for refugees.

However, since this research is a qualitative research with very limited numbers of the interviewees, this part of the “quasi-quantitative” analysis does not seem to be solid and persuasive enough on the chosen topic. Notwithstanding, I am just doing this pilot part to present my idea that we can also use a quantitative research method to fathom into the relationship between family hosting and refugee integration, if we have the opportunity in the future to conduct a further study on it with sizable samples.

Influences to the hosting families by hosting refugee

As hosting families interviewed by this research had also expressed their gains from the refugee hosting practices, the idea that refugee integration is a reciprocal process (Strang and Ager, 2010), which could not only ameliorate refugees’ lives but also benefit the local families, has been verified again.

Under the question for the hosting families, “Have you achieved anything in hosting refugees”, two major functions of the family hosting program to the local families have been identified from this research: educating the family members and improving the relationship among family members.

Functioning as an educational tool

Families have detailed illustrations about what kinds of education the refugee hosting has brought to their family members.

“We achieved openness (to new culture) in this hosting process.” (Hosting family B)

“It opened my family’s heart, and make us be sensitive to refugee crisis now.” (Hosting family C)

“It is a big thing to teenagers in my family, it really open them to something that they didn’t know before, it is a very big step for children going into adults life to be open to this.” (Hosting family C)

Achieving the sense of openness to the new thing or new social phenomenon, which is unknown to the family members previously, has been largely emphasized by the interviewed hosting families. Especially for those teenagers who are facing a very special life stage transferring to the adulthood, achieving this kind of openness has been attached great importance regarded to be critical by their parents.

Based on the openness, a more specific education demanded by the parents for their children against prejudice towards refugees has also been highlighted.

“My children are in high school, they were starting to hear and repeat jokes that is a little bit racist. They heard those things from the media or in the school. My husband and me are a little bit scared what my children are starting to think.”

So I wanted to open their mind about what is Islam, to have their own opinion about what refugee is, and not to think what they heard is true.” (Hosting family C)

The parents thought that living together with the refugees could offer a better understanding about them. Then, it could provide further space for their children to eliminate the prejudices against refugees or other ethnic groups. An earlier study, about the social capital and trust built between the local population and migrant groups while they are living together could significantly make contribution to erasing the discrimination against migrant group in the hosting society, has actually undergirded this idea (Masso, 2009, 266).

Meanwhile, to those families with young children, living together with refugees could also help their young children to improve their social skills, such as communication and spirit of sharing.

“Yes, I notice that our son is maybe asking himself about sharing things (with others). You know that children don’t like to share, like eating things by himself. (After the hosting) he starts to think differently more about that.” (Hosting family A)

“Now it is easier for my children to build up relationship with some they don’t know. They can play games with someone else. My children know how to share things with others as well, like one time one of my child shred the gum with refugee.” (Hosting family C)

Lastly, this kind of cohabitation, with refugees from different cultural and language backgrounds, could also help hosting families to achieve new

knowledge in terms of culture and languages.

“For my children, now they can speak better English, and they know more about Muslim religion.” (Hosting family C)

“We’ve had a very international life (with the hosted refugees) and (like) living in six different countries. We are, thus, interested in foreign cultures and history, respectfully, ask them to share with us what they’re proud of.” (Hosting family D)

Improving relationships among the family members

Apart from functioning as an educational tool to the hosting families, hosting refugees has also been proven to be positive in maintaining the family relationships among family members.

“It was a period of time in my family that my children were fighting with each other a lot. I feel like that it is good for them to experience this (hosting refugees) to help them stay together without fighting.” (Hosting family C)

“Our children are proud of us, because they think we are doing the right thing, good for others.” (Hosting family B)

By hosting refugees, children in the family might feel more respectful to their parents, since they are doing good things to help others. In the mean time, setting up a common family goal, for instance, helping refugees could make the family members stay together closely to dilute the family conflicts.

Issues identified from family hosting for refugees

As a reciprocal solution to deal with refugee integration issue, family hosting has shown us the positive influences to both refugee groups and local population from this research. However, an interview, with a refugee who is planning to leave the family hosting program, has also unveiled a few critical issues that other refugees may encounter while participating in the hosting program.

Independence

“I should control this, not they control me, you know! I should ask them for help (if I need), but not they ask me (to do anything). For example, they asked a guy to help me to check my CV and give me suggestions for looking for job. To me, one time is enough, but they asked this guy to call me every week. I am an engineer. I can do things by myself. I can search for job by myself. He confused me sometimes. I don't like this kind of help, it is too much.” (Refugee H)

“One time she cleaned my room. I was planning to clean my room in the weekend after I finish my job. She cleaned all! Oh my god! I can clean my room!” (Refugee H)

“I don't want to rely on them, I want to be independent...I don't have freedom.” (Refugee H)

As we mentioned previously, family hosting plays a crucial role in helping refugees deal with their daily issues about employment, education and so on.

Nevertheless, the above interview demonstrated another situation: when the refugee thinks that he is able to work on his own issues, the overwhelming caring provided by the hosting family, such as cleaning his room even though he could do it by himself, or providing the help that he does not really need, actually restricts his independency or is even regarded as violation of his personal freedom. Obviously, this situation cannot contribute to refugee integration, but only jeopardize it by regressing the refugee's independence.

To social worker practitioners working on family hosting programs, this kind of feedback from the participant actually is identical to one major social work professional mission: social work is not just to help people, but help people to help themselves (HKU, 2017). As the main idea to implement the family-hosting program for refugees, providing them with a better living environment to strengthen their resilience for integrating into the new society bears the brunt. If the hosting cannot reinforce their independence to help themselves adapt the new society, but only increasing their dependence on others, this help seems to be a failure.

To avoid this problem, the interviewed refugee had actually provided us a very easy solution from his expression: "I should ask them for help (if I need), but not they ask me (to do anything)". That is to say, when we are participating in family hosting programs, hosting families might provide more spaces for refugees to deal with their own issues by their own ways. Besides, families also could provide the chance for refugees to ask for help if they need, instead of offering them the help that the families think is needed by refugees.

Privacy

Beyond the independence, the privacy issue during the cohabitation has also been mentioned as a concern by the refugee.

“In my heart, I don’t like people entering my room. But sometimes, she entered my room to take something, because the room was her daughter’s room, there are something belonged to her daughter. She told me before she went into my room, but I still don’t like it. It is my privacy.”
(Refugee H)

“They asked me everything about the contract about my job. But I don’t want to tell them, it is my privacy.” (Refugee H)

As fundamental rights for people to “seclude themselves, or information about themselves, and thereby express themselves selectively” (Manu, 2007), privacy functions crucially to give us a space to be ourselves without judgment, allow us to think freely without discrimination, and it “is an important element of giving us control over who knows what about us” (Privacyinternational.org, 2017). It increases our sense of security by enabling us to “create barriers and manage boundaries to protect ourselves from unwarranted interference in our lives, which allows us to negotiate who we are and how we want to interact with the world around us” (Privacyinternational.org, 2017). In this regard, there is no exception to refugees in terms of respecting their privacy as a basic human right.

From the above case, the refugee had expressed his feeling of personal space being invaded by the hosting family, which infringed his privacy. From his talk, although this kind of “invasion” is understandable to him, it still made him feel uncomfortable anyway. Obviously, this situation becomes a huge barrier between him and his hosting family, which could cripple the relationship between them, and then finally damage the hosting program and the refugee’s integration process.

In order to avoid this problem, before the start of the cohabitation, social worker practitioners might introduce some relevant training to both families and refugees about how to respect each other's privacy. However, as we mentioned earlier, some agencies working on family hosting programs have already noticed this problem and made efforts to cope with it by informing the families beforehand of "don't ask questions to refugees about their private life unless they want to tell you by themselves", and so on.

Conclusion

For people who used to face a traumatic experience, living environment has been proven as crucial in determining outcomes for a better settlement and integration for refugees in the hosting society (Drumm, Pittman and Perry, 2004,69). The civil society of the hosting country should be able to play a critical role in stimulating the integration process for migrant groups (Zapata-Barrero, 2003; Masso, 2009, 252). In Europe, family hosting has been created as a significant new method to improve refugee settlement and integration by involving local population.

Evidence from this research has shown us the comprehensive influences from the family hosting program to the refugee integration promotion in the hosting society, which ranges from physical living environment ameliorating to mental health improving; from the health condition elevating to the social capital lifting, etc.

Family hosting for refugee is a reciprocal process. Not only refugees can achieve a lot during the process to lift their settlement situation and integration quality, hosting families can also acquire educational benefits and improve

family members' relationship from it.

Nevertheless, family hosting is not perfect. The untackled problems of how to improve the independence of refugees and protect their privacy during the cohabitation process have arisen from this research. It is left for the social worker practitioners to figure out an optimized mode of family hosting for both refugees and hosting families.

Chapter 4: Discussion and recommendation

As an emerging solution to refugee settlement and integration, family hosting has been proven to be influential in multiple aspects. However, during the research process, a few critical issues closely related to the hosting program implementation and relevant refugee integration concepts have raised concerns. Thus, this chapter will elaborate on these issues in light of relevant practice principles and theoretical concepts. Meanwhile, recommendations will also be presented for informing social work practice on the chosen topic.

Providing family hosting to ameliorate refugee settlement and integration: who, when and how

Who

First of all, the criteria of a suitable refugee participant in family hosting is worth consideration. Throughout the whole research process, a strong sense that not every refugee fits in family hosting program comes to my mind. In the interviews, some refugees were eager to find a hosting family to end their drifting life, some chose not to, others considered quitting the program. Similarities could be found in a Germany-based family hosting program *Flüchtlinge Willkommen*, that family hosting program is not a one-for-all solution for all the refugee groups (BuzzFeed News, 2015). Culture difference obviously influences the decision-making of refugees' application for family hosting programs. From different cultural backgrounds, some refugees appear easily to live with others, but some do not (BuzzFeed News, 2015). And then, social capitals and language skills possessed by the refugees play another significant role. Back to my interviews, most of the refugees who wanted to participate in family hosting were new comers who had stayed in France for

less than one year, with very limited social resources and language skills to survive on their own. Nevertheless, those refugees who could speak much better French and handle more social capitals, for instance, having a fulltime job with a sufficient income, expressed that it's not necessary to live with a local family to facilitate their integration process in the hosting society since they have already had the ability to get involved with the new community by themselves. On the contrary, living with the local family might hinder their self-reliance and independence, which eventually jeopardizes their successful integration.

Thus, understanding family hosting as an effective way to improve refugee settlement and integration does not mean all the refugees should participate in it. It is very much dependent on the refugee's personal situation, such as cultural background and possession of social capitals.

When

After who, we need to figure out when we should provide family hosting for refugee groups for their best. Firstly, duration short or long in the hosting society, a stable living environment is always one of the most critical factors for refugees to establish their overall physical and emotional well being, as well as the ability to feel 'at home' in hosting society (Glover et al. 2001; Dutch Refugee Council/ECRE 2001; Ager and Strang, 2008, 171). Besides, the future integration of the refugees is, to a great extent, dependent on the influences from the early settlement stage (Castles, Miller and Ammendola, 2005, 541). Therefore, starting refugee integration process, for instance, providing stable residences as soon as possible once refugees arrive remains significant to the future integration (Strang and Ager, 2010, 595). Moreover, as we have noticed, due to insufficient life skills and social capitals, most of the newly coming refugees are actually living a fragile and indecent life.

Factors above taken into consideration, the answer should be as early as possible once refugees arrive in the hosting country. On the one hand, as a settlement solution, family hosting could provide refugees a better living environment to foster their sense of safety and belonging in the very beginning, so that their integration progress could take off as soon as possible. On the other hand, daily support from the hosting families could help refugees acquire adequate social capitals and life skills, to increase their resilience to handle the future integration challenges in the hosting society.

How

Speaking of implementation, first of all we shall pay attention to some practical issues to ensure the smoothness of hosting process and fulfillment of goals. These issues include providing PTSD counseling to refugees who need to overcome the traumatic experience alongside the hosting process and upgrading program evaluation tools. Meanwhile, another critical aspect lies in the time duration for refugee hosting, which has undergone great deliberation in this research. As a group of people who used to experience tremendous traumas from the previous persecution, refugees surely value their opportunity to seize a stable and safe place to resettle. However, whether to organize the key settlement solution of family hosting in a long term or short term, has been fiercely discussed by different family hosting organizers.

From our previous analysis, some social workers thought long-term hosting is better for refugees because it could provide a much stabler living environment to promote refugees' sense of safety and stability. The similar idea has also been proven by other researches. Access to a stable accommodation could significantly lift refugees' sense of belonging and security, and then stimulate their independence for the future integration (Phillips, 2006, 539). Furthermore,

a stable living environment could also cast positive impacts on enhancing refugees' access to social connection and public services (Ager and Strang, 2008: 184). Notwithstanding, as a complement to those benefits, participating in long-term hosting has also been verified as a stressful process to both refugees and hosting families by this research.

On the contrary, another group of social workers thought short-term hosting might benefit refugees more than long-term hosting does. They explained that staying dynamic by regularly changing hosting families could significantly improve refugees' independence and autonomy to face the upcoming challenges in the hosting society. Meanwhile, being hosted by different families is also a good way for refugees to achieve a broader social network. In addition to that, short-term hosting could manifestly decrease the stresses for both refugees and hosting families during cohabitation process. Relief of such stress might accelerate refugees' integration by offering them a relatively easy-going environment. Simultaneously, hosting families are freed from an uncertain schedule and are provided with more alternatives: they know the beginning and ending of hosting refugees; once they finish one hosting, they have the free choice to keep hosting another refugee or not. This is actually a way to sustain family hosting programs by lowering the threshold of participation for local families. Without doubt, short-term hosting is also easier for families and refugees to deal with their parting emotions when the cohabitation ends than long-term hosting. In spite of all mentioned above, short-term accommodation has been confirmed with the risk of increasing instability for refugee settlement and integration (Ager and Strang, 2008: 184).

Neither short-term nor long-term hosting is perfect. To social workers, knowledge of the pros and cons of both hosting pattern matters, but more importantly, they have to know how to apply them in practice. Meanwhile, we also need to pay attention to refugees' needs since this is a program to

promote their well-being. To answer this question, we may draw lessons from the social work research about childcare in foster families. Since long-term or short-term foster care solves childcare issues differently, social workers would like to keep both as options for different cases. All the decisions about sending child to long-term or short-term foster care are made according to the situation of each child (Boddy, 2013). However, in order to benefit the fostered children most, both long-term and short-term placement should be made with a long-term view beyond the time-scale aiming to “providing a high-quality experience of ‘upbringing’ throughout the child’s stay” (Boddy, 2013).

Therefore, in social work practice, since long-term and short-term hosting are both proven to be helpful to refugees’ settlement and integration, and refugees’ demands for dwellings are heterogeneous, family hosting program might be designed into both long-term and short-term styles to serve different refugees in accordance with their individual needs. In the mean time, we need to think beyond the hosting duration and treat refugee integration as a long-term process that aims to create opportunities for refugees to enhance their integration in family hosting programs to the utmost.

It is worth mentioning that during these above processes for determining who, when and how, the social work value of “help people to help themselves” and the principle of “self determination” for service client should always be the heart and soul of service providing and delivering.

Theoretical improvement on the refugee integration domain framework

About social bonds

In this research, the concept of the social bonds adopted from the refugee integration domain are illustrated by Ager and Strang as the “connections within a community defined by, for example, ethnic, national or religious identity” (Home Office, 2004), which has been largely emphasized as the relationship between refugees and their ethnic or “like-ethnic” groups (Hale, 2000; Strang and Ager, 2008). It is understood as a critical source for refugees’ sense of belonging and stability (Strang and Ager, 2008). However, during the data analysis, we have noticed that, the alike bonding relationship can also be fostered between refugees and French hosting families, which is beyond the existing definition which confines to their ethnic or “like-ethnic” groups.

Several proposals are made by this research based on the fact that family hosting could also provide bonding relationship to improve refugee integration. First, offer alternative solutions for refugees to achieve sense of belonging and stability other than those ones only with their ethnic or “like-ethnic” groups. Second, to avoid the risk of creating ethnic segregation caused by mis-implementation of the ethnic caring policies for refugee group, such as in the case of Sweden, providing concentrated style refugee accommodation, which was regarded as a good settlement solution, has been testified contributing to the refugee segregation and stigmatization of vulnerability (Valenta and Bunar, 2010). Third, as for policy-making, consider providing more opportunities for refugees and local populations to build close relationships and get to know each other for a better integration and against ethnic segregation.

Universally acknowledged as an international political issue, refugee issue is always dominated by government agencies, while civil society’s participation on it used to be very limited. However, since we started to face the unprecedented refugee crisis, coupled with the government deficiency to manage it, civil society has been increasingly active in refugee affairs. Under

this context, we might understand why the existing social bonds concept from the refugee integration domain lacks the perspective beyond the refugees' ethnic groups. The reason is that when the concept was put forward, there was not enough civil participation to take into account for the refugee integration analysis. Nevertheless, today, we have numerous civil programs to cope with refugee issues, family hosting being an example. Therefore, we have more phenomenon and cases to analyze for a much thorough understanding of refugee integration. Since theory is the result of the times, it will bear the limitations of the times inevitably, and must step up with the times.

By adding a new category to the social bonds concept from the refugee integration domain framework, that the close relationship with the local population could also enhance refugees' social bonding to improve their integration, this finding actually breaks the boundaries, in terms of how to help refugees to achieve the sense of belonging and stability with alternatives. The original definition for social bonds is too constrained and narrows the social work practice for helping refugees.

About education

Since education plays a significant role in supporting refugees to be more constructive and active (Ager and Strang, 2008, 172), it therefore has become a vital element for refugees to seize a better integration in the hosting society. In the refugee integration domain, education for refugees has been mainly regarded as formal education--schools and training agencies being the major education suppliers (Home Office, 2004). However, during the interviews, we have explored that only providing formal education opportunities is not enough to underpin refugees' integration lifting. Informal education about life skill and local culture delivered through daily lives also functions critically for their integration, for instance, to know how to get along with local population and

how to adapt to the new culture.

Take the education for life skills and local culture as an example. Since some hosting countries have already realized that life skills and cultural education have significant impacts on elevating refugee integration, they have started to offer relevant trainings to refugees, for instance, civic training about country values in France (UNHCR, 2016) and integration reception course in Nordic countries (Valenta and Bunar, 2010). Nevertheless, as all of those trainings are organized in a very formal way without enough vivid life experiences and practices, the outcomes of those trainings have been regarded as not ideal as expected (Valenta and Bunar, 2010).

However, both from the remarks of refugees that the life experiences they learned from the hosting family were unique and helpful, and from hosting families' confidence to display their life as a course for refugees to capture the new lifestyle, findings from this research have shown us that the informal education provided by the hosting families could contribute to refugee integration more effectively than formal one.

Thus, to social work practice, informal education shall also be categorized into education for the refugee integration domain framework. It could guide social work practitioners to create more informal ways for refugees to reach educational opportunities in their daily lives and thus effectively accelerate their integration process.

Conclusion

Refugee integration has been treated as the main goal of refugee policy and the targeted outcome for refugee settlement (Ager and Strang, 2008). It matters to both refugee groups and established population in the hosting society. However, the current surging refugee issues have located European countries under enormous pressures.

Family hosting program came into being as an emerging solution while social workers are eager to find new solutions to improve refugee settlement and integration. It has been regarded as an effective civil participation to make up the government deficiency on managing refugee issues.

This research was designed to determine the family hosting's influence on refugee integration and enlighten better social work interventions on refugee settlement and integration issues. Conducting this research could provide us with a comprehensive examination for a new refugee settlement solution about its work mechanism and further influences. By getting involved with multi-stakeholders, namely, refugees, local populations and social workers, this research has presented us a thorough and multifaceted reflection on refugee settlement and integration issues.

In terms of international involvement, since the refugee groups in France possess various nationalities with diverse cultural and religious backgrounds, conducting this research in France by involving with different refugee groups could provide an opportunity to enhance the understanding of social work practitioners worldwide about international refugee phenomenon.

Across the whole Europe, the existing family hosting programs are organized

by agencies that differ from each other in target group, working mechanism, and so on. However, different family hosting programs have all been proven in this research to have very positive impacts on providing refugees a stable living condition and to exert profound influence for integration in the hosting society.

By adopting refugee integration domain framework (Home Office, 2004) for data collection and analysis, this research has confirmed the fact that family hosting could bring all-round influences to refugees' integration, such as progress in language skills, accumulation of social capital and cultivation of a sense of belonging. Meanwhile, as a reciprocal method, it also brings vital effects on hosting families in terms of family education and improving relationship among family members.

Nevertheless, just as every bean has its black, family hosting program has also been testified with limitations if the cohabitation was not guided properly. For instance, violation for refugees' privacy and independence. Meanwhile, family hosting is not a once-and-for-all solution refugee settlement and integration, it is very much dependent on each refugee's situation and demand. In addition to that, even for those refugees who are suitable to join the hosting, different hosting schedules, for example, long-term or short-term, have been verified in this research to function differently in individual cases with pros and cons.

Under the context that civil participation is increasingly influential in international refugee affairs, this research has also detected the defects from the exiting refugee integration concept: lack of civil perspective for guiding a better refugee integration. More specifically, two new categories that could also stimulate refugee integration revealed by family hosting, namely, bonding relationship with local population and informal education, have been

suggested to be added into the existing refugee integration domain (Home Offices, 2004) to guide the social work practice.

Since scholars have already discovered that living together with local populations is a better way to promote integration for refugees (Putnam, 1993; Masso, 2009; Strang and Ager, 2010), couple with the profound influences we have identified from this research on both refugees and hosting families, family hosting program seems to own a bright future for accelerating refugee settlement and integration in the upcoming era.

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Appendix

Appendix 1

Interview outline for refugees

--Family hosting and refugee integration research project

(For those who have participated or are participating in family hosting program)

Basic information

Name: Nationality: Gender: Age:
Religious: Resident country: Refugee status:
Time for arriving in France: Time to participate family-hosting program:
Family hosting accommodation type:

Ice-breaking questions

How do you like here in France? What does “integration” mean to you?

Attitude towards family hosting

Tell me something about the family hosting program?

If he or she does not mention detailed information about participating in the family hosting program, following questions could be asked:

Can you tell me why do you choose to participate in family hosting program?
Where did you live before you participate in family hosting program? How's it?
How's your general feeling of participating in family hosting? Do you like it?
Why?
Has family hosting program satisfied your anticipation?

About the influences to refugee integration from family hosting activities (questions leaded by refugee integration indicators)

Means and Markers

Does family hosting help you achieve any job opportunities? How?
Does family hosting provide you a satisfied accommodation to live? How?

Does family hosting help you get any education opportunity or improve your life skills? How?

Do you think you have a better healthy condition after you participate in family hosting program? Why?

Social connection

Do they provide any opportunity for you to know others, such as, introducing you to their families, friends or neighbors?

What's the hosting family's attitude towards your own custom, culture and your friends from your country or family? Do they support you practice your own custom, culture and religion? Do they support you spend time with your friends and families? Do you feel comfortable with the host family's attitude about this? Does the host family help you to deal with some government official paper works or applying social services?

Facilitators

Does the host family help you to improve your language skills? How?

Does the host family help you to know more about the local culture and custom?

Do you feel safe and stable to live with them?

Foundation

Do you want to become a citizen in the hosting country? Why?

If yes, participating in the family hosting can help you to achieve it? How?

Others

Also, can you tell me anything that you don't feel very well with family hosting?

How long do you plan to stay with the family? Why?

Except living with the local family, do you have any other activities related to this family-hosting program organized by the program organization? What are they? How do you think about these activities?

Interview outline for refugees

--Family hosting and refugee integration research project

(For those who have not participated in any family hosting program)

Basic information

Name: Nationality: Religious:
Gender: Age: Resident country: Refugee status:
Time for arriving in France: Accommodation type:

Ice-breaking questions

How do you like the life here in France? What kind of support you can get from France? (Such as the help from local government, French citizens or other charity organizations) Are those supports helpful to you? Are they sufficient to support your life here? What does "integration" mean to you?

Attitudes towards family hosting

Have you heard about family hosting program for refugees?
How do you think about this program?

Participation motivation

Do you want to participate in this program in the future?
If you want, can you tell me why? What do you want to achieve from this program? If you don't, can you tell me why?

Others

Do you have any friends participating in this kind of program? Do you know how do they think about it?

Appendix 3

Interview outline for Social workers

--Family hosting and refugee integration research project

Basic information

Name: Nationality:

Gender: Age:

Agency:

Job position:

General information about the family-hosting program

Can you introduce me the family-hosting program for refugees in your agency?

Who are the participants in this program? How does it work (workflow)?

Why does your agency decide to organize the family-hosting program for refugees?

What are the difference to refugees do you think between living with local families and living by themselves alone (living in the refugee camp or other accommodations)?

From your anticipation, ideally, what can the refugees achieve by participating in this program? What can the local families achieve from this program?

How's your opinion about the relationship between the family-hosting program and refugee integration in your country?

The family hosting program in practice

Is this program popular among refugees and local families? How and why?

In reality, does this program work well as your anticipation? How and why?

What are the main barriers for you to implement this program in your country?

In your opinion, do you have any strategies to overcome those barriers in the future?

Except matching refugees and local families, what other activities your agency are organizing to ensure this program's implementation? Why do you organize these activities? How do they work?

How are the feedbacks from refugees about this program? And how are the feedbacks from the local hosting families?

How do you evaluate this program? Who are the people participating in the evaluation process? Do you have any specific tools for the evaluation?

Can this program improve refugee integration in your country? How?

How do you think about the future of this program?

Appendix 4

Interview outline for hosting families

--Family hosting and refugee integration research project

Basic information

Name: Nationality: Religion:
Resident country: Gender: Age:
Profession: Accommodation type:
The number of family members (living together):

Ice-breaking questions

How do you think about the term “refugee integration”?

Attitude towards family hosting

Why do you participate in the family-hosting program for refugees?

How long have you been participating in the program?

Do you like it? Why?

Do your family members like it? Why?

About the influences to refugee integration from family hosting activities (questions leaded by refugee integration indicators)

Means and Markers

Have you tried or planed to introduce job opportunity to him/her?

What kind of accommodation do you provide to him/her?

Have you tried to help him/her get some education opportunity?

Do you provide him/her any healthy assistance or suggestion? If you do, does it work?

Social connections

Did you provide any opportunity for him/her to get to know your families, friends, or neighbors?

Do you know his/her friends from his/her hometown? Do you support them spend time together? Have you and your family member(s) met them? How's your attitude to his/her own culture and religion? Will you allow them to practice their own custom, culture and religion at home?

Have you helped him/her to deal with government official paper works or applying social services?

Facilitators

What kind of language do you speak with him/her? Will you teach him/her the local language? Did he/she teach you his/her language?

Did you introduce him/her any local culture or custom? Have you got to know any culture or custom of his/her? How do you think about it?

How long do you plan to provide the host to him/her?

Foundation

How do you think he/she to become a citizen in your country?

Will you help him/her to get it if he/she needs your help for it?

Others

How do you feel like the family-hosting program's organization? Do you have any suggestions to the agency that is organizing this program?

For how long do you think you will keep participating in this program? Why?

Have you achieved anything from participating in hosting refugees? If you do, what are they? How about your family members?

After all, how do you think about family hosting program and refugee integration in hosting country?

Interview Consent Form

For Participation in Family Hosting and Refugee Integration Research Project

Dear Participant,

In order to identify the influences of family hosting activities to refugee integration, and then come up with relevant implications for the future social work practice on improving refugee settlement and integration in hosting society, *Family Hosting and Refugee Integration Research Project* has been designed and conducted in France during the time when European countries are facing ever-increasing refugee issues.

Key informant interview involved with all stakeholders from family hosting activities (refugee, host family and social worker) will be mainly used as the data collection method aiming to achieve comprehensive understanding for this phenomenon.

Thank you so much for your consent to receive this interview as part of the above research project!

This interview will take about **35** minutes. We don't anticipate that there are any risks associated with your participation, but you have the right to stop the interview or withdraw from the research at any time.

This consent form is necessary for us to ensure that you understand the purpose of your involvement and that you agree to the conditions of your participation. Would you therefore read the accompanying information sheet and then sign this form to certify that you approve the following:

- the interview will be recorded, only for research use;
- the interview will be analyzed by the research investigator;
- access to the interview record will be limited to the research investigator, and relevant academic colleagues and researchers whom he might collaborate with as part of the research process;
- any summary interview content, or direct quotations from the interview, that are made available through academic publication or other academic outlets will be anonymized so that you cannot be identified, and care will be taken to ensure that other information in the interview that could identify yourself is not revealed;
- any variation of the conditions above will only occur with your further explicit approval.

Participant Signature

Researcher Signature

Date

Date

Contact Information

This research has been reviewed and approved by the **ADVANCES** Program from Université Paris Nanterre. If you have any further questions or concerns about this study, please contact:

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