



Intersectional Insights into Hosting Frameworks for Refugee Women in Canada

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Abstract

Purpose: This review investigates the complexities of hosting frameworks for refugee women in Canada, emphasizing the need for policies and practices that are both intersectional and gender informed. It aims to highlight the existing gaps in the literature and policy regarding the hosting of refugee women, particularly homestay hosting frameworks and how these frameworks address or fail to address the unique challenges faced by this group. **Materials and Methods:** The review synthesizes information from a wide range of sources, including governmental reports, academic studies, and humanitarian organization publications. It applies an intersectional analysis to examine how various factors such as gender, ethnicity, and socio-economic status influence the experiences of refugee women in hosting situations. The focus is on identifying the strengths and weaknesses of current hosting practices and policies from a gendered perspective. **Results:** The review reveals that existing hosting frameworks frequently fail to fully grasp the unique gender-specific challenges faced by refugee women, resulting in policies that do not provide adequate support or inclusivity. Key shortcomings include the under representation of women in policy development, inadequate gender-sensitive training for host families, and a dearth of measures to tackle specific vulnerabilities like gender-based violence and discrimination. The findings highlight the urgent need to embed gender and intersectionality more thoroughly in the creation and execution of hosting policies and frameworks to enhance the integration and welfare of refugee women. **Final Considerations:** To effectively support refugee women, it is essential to create hosting frameworks that address their specific needs and recognize them as active participants rather than passive aid recipients. Policymakers and practitioners need to adopt holistic and inclusive strategies to enhance the effectiveness of these frameworks, ensuring the dignity and security of refugee women.

Keywords: *Refugee Women; Hosting Frameworks; Intersectionality; Gender-Informed Policies; Canada*

Introduction

Worldwide the recent significant socio-political conflicts, threats of persecution or environmental disasters has forced the displacement of millions of individuals from their homes (Government of Canada, 2022). In 2022, the global displacement of refugees amounted to 35.3 million individuals, with a majority comprising female (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR], 2023). In Canada, approximately 46% of hosted refugees are women (Global Affairs Canada, 2022). However, as the number of individuals seeking refuge in Canada grows the housing needs of such persons beckons resolution. One solution that has arisen from housing needs is refugee hosting (Caron, 2019). Within the purview of refugee studies, the term “hosting” signifies the established societies or communities that undertake the resettlement of refugees (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2016). Hosting communities are often credited with the expectation to foster welcoming and accepting environments for refugee women and their families to settle after escaping conflict (Gardner et al., 2022). Families seeking support in Canada may be placed, by publicly or privately funded organizations, into the homes of host families (Al-Hamad et al., 2024). Such homes are volunteered by willing families or individuals, many of whom were refugees or immigrants (Gardner et al., 2022). Refugee women hosting refers to the experiences and challenges faced by refugee women as they initially navigate unfamiliar environments while seeking asylum or refuge (Gardner et al., 2022). Refugee women may experience a range of challenges during hosting including discrimination and hostility (Rottmann & Nimer, 2021), sexual and gender-based violence (Freedman, 2016), language barriers, and limited employment opportunities (Senthanar & MacEachen, 2023). Moreover, their experiences are extremely unique specially when are compounded by academic and professional constraints and limitations, healthcare and childcare acquisition difficulties and the intersectionality of other personal factors with gender including one’s age, ability, ethnicity, etc.(Caron, 2019). Such factors make this group particularly susceptible to adverse experiences in settling and complications when seeking accommodation (Caron, 2019). Dağtaş (2018) argues that the lived experience of displaced women is heavily influenced by the host country’s political conditions and social welfare policies for refugees. In addition, current literature has revealed that hosting frameworks have created a racialized discourse of non-belonging (Rottmann & Nimer, 2021). Existing policies must be amended with timely and relevant research to reflect outcomes of social welfare and dignified accommodation for refugee women, especially in hosting situations (Guanyu & Join-Lambert, 2020).

There is a notable gap in integrating intersectional and gendered perspectives into social welfare regulations, policies, and practices concerning hosting frameworks for refugee women (Guanyu & Join-Lambert, 2020). This underscores the need to prioritize gender considerations when hosting refugee women within the realms of social welfare practice and policy. This paper will use an intersectional analysis to review existing literature that critically explored hosting frameworks implemented for refugees, as well as provide recommendations with more efficacious incorporation of gendered and intersectional frameworks into existing and nonexistent policy and social welfare practices concerning refugee women hosting.

Conceptualizing Refugee Hosting

The unprecedented influx of refugees to Canada in recent years necessitates the adjustment of social welfare policymakers and host community approaches toward refugee groups (Government of Canada, 2022). Whether it be those hosting refugees, communities and families alike, or organizations providing support to these vulnerable individuals, gender sensitivity is vital (Monforte et al., 2021). Hosting communities and their members often play a crucial role in extending hospitality and support to refugee women and their families to facilitate integration (Boccagni & Giudici, 2022) (Hebbani et al., 2016; Monforte et al., 2021). This culture of hospitality is also observed at the individual level notably within urban communities, where there is a rising trend of individuals and families hosting refugees in their private residences (Ran & Join-Lambert, 2020). Hosting families provide crucial aid to refugees,

including more tangible forms of support, such as housing or financial aid, in addition to more abstract forms of assistance, such as cultural orientation, emotional support and social comfort (Monforte et al., 2021). In addition, the role of these host families typically involves temporarily sharing their homes and resources with newly arrived refugees, all with the aim of enhancing the settlement process (Ran & Join-Lambert, 2020).

Current literature emphasizes the need to reframe hosting practices and social welfare policies through a gendered perspective. Terms such as "refugees" need to have a gender definition, and the social discourse of hosting refugees needs to steer away from the idea of which refugee is deserving and undeserving to being all-around inclusive and focusing on integration (Al-Hamad et al., 2024; Boccagni & Giudici, 2022; Dağtaş, 2018; Gardner et al., 2022). This underscores the current insufficient understanding of how gender influences the experiences and requirements of refugee women during hosting situations (Al-Hamad et al., 2024). However, insights from literature discussing domestic hosting practices emphasizes the importance of providing comprehensive training to host families to effectively support refugees, which benefits both the refugees and the host families (Ran & Join-Lambert, 2020). By addressing the needs of both refugee and host groups, it becomes possible to alleviate tensions and promote social cohesion (Eggerman et al., 2023). Moreover, social welfare policies and support organizations can embrace a holistic approach by creating additional opportunities for refugees to expand their social networks and contribute to the local economy, thus reducing the dependency of refugee women on external assistance (Eggerman et al., 2023; Senthanaar & MacEachen, 2023).

The psychological and emotional impacts of refugee hosting are also important considerations and must not be underestimated (Guanyu & Join-Lambert, 2020; Ruiz & Vargas-Silva, 2018). These impacts are experienced by both the refugees themselves, and by host communities and families (Caron, 2019). The trauma experienced by refugees who are forcefully displaced, often from disastrous, persecutory environments is immense. Furthermore, the cultural shock and distress emerging from the experience of settling in a foreign community can be devastating (Gardner et al., 2022; Hebbani et al., 2016). Unfortunately, the difficulties experienced by many individuals in Canada attempting to access mental health support may be magnified in refugee women who also face additional barriers to healthcare (Al-Hamad et al., 2023). The hosting families and communities may also experience psychological challenges while, for example, providing instrumental emotional support to refugees, exposing their lives and sharing spaces with individuals, and frustrations accompanied by limitations on resources and support they can provide (Caron, 2019).

Social welfare policies have the potential to either mitigate or exacerbate existing power imbalances, inequalities, difficulties and vulnerabilities of refugee women. Thus, the incorporation of intersectionality in such practices is crucial to the well-being and welfare of refugee women, particularly in a hosting context. While currently there is no official international and national framework for homestay refugee hosting, existing literature provides insight into the benefits of incorporating a focus on human security and refugee-led initiatives in frameworks for hosting practices for refugee women that aims for the independence and self-sufficiency of refugee women in their host environments (Al-Hamad et al., 2024; Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2016; Gardner et al., 2022). Overall, there is a need for a more profound exploration of refugee hosting to effectively foster the development of holistic, gender-informed approaches to hosting practices.

Intersectionality in Refugee Hosting

Humanitarian aid organizations are meant to support refugees and assist in integration, social welfare policies of the countries or the organizations' regulations can disadvantage refugees. The prevailing portrayal of refugee women as mere beneficiaries of aid limits their agency and perpetuates their exclusion from decision-making processes (Gardner et al., 2022; Thompson et al., 2022).

Empowering refugee women by involving them in policy development and decision-making not only challenges this passive narrative but also enables them to address welfare issues directly affecting them (Harley & Hobbs, 2020; Thompson et al., 2022). The adoption of a bottom-up approach, which incorporates the insights and experiences of refugee women, improve understanding of their unique gender-specific needs and thereby facilitating a more effective hosting process (Thompson et al., 2022). Therefore, fostering the meaningful engagement of refugee women proves pivotal in the development of inclusive policies (Harley & Hobbs, 2020).

The current body of scholarly work on refugee hosting displays a noticeable deficiency, particularly in its inadequate attention to gender-specific experiences within the hosting process (Al-Hamad et al., 2024). For instance, household heads who work are not considered to be a priority for financial aid thus, creating the different financial statuses among refugees and social categorizations (Zoubi, 2023). Similarly, hospitality infrastructures' regulations in hosting refugees can influence the discourse that refugees should be "grateful victims" thus, reducing their identity to just that (Farahani, 2021; Kyriakidou, 2021; Vandevooordt, 2017). Despite policies outlining that refugees have the right to services, basic needs, and protection, it fails to do so because of the ambiguity behind the phrasing of such resolutions/statements. For instance, the International Refugee Protection Regime (IRPR) considers refugees as gender-neutral, failing to protect women from persecution and harm that occurs in the microsphere (Sengul, 2022). Although hosting countries protect women refugees from the political persecution they face, it fails to recognize and protect refugee women experiencing gender-based oppression as they are not considered a refugee by definition. Similarly, Farahani (2021) argues the need for critically understanding what hospitality means in the hosting framework. Hospitality and homes hosting in social welfare policies creates an idea of "deserving" and "undeserving" towards refugees, and as a result, it creates a social categorization and idea that refugees must be compliant and grateful. With this perspective in mind, it fosters discrimination and hate towards refugees by the local host communities (Farahani, 2021; Rottmann & Nimer, 2021). Therefore, the term homestay hosting must be comprehensive and women inclusive.

The use of the terms "host" and "hosting" illustrates a host-guest relationship, positioning refugees as within the domain of the hosts. This conveys an underlying power imbalance between the hosts and the refugees (Gardner et al., 2022; Monforte et al., 2021). This dynamic can also cultivate certain expectations imposed on refugees, dictating their behavior according to the host's perceived standards of being worthy of hospitality (Monforte et al., 2021). For example, in a study by Monforte et al. (2021), exploring the responsibility of hosting, private hosts expressed emotional connection and mutual affection as a jointly shared responsibility with refugees, placing expectations on refugees to reciprocate. When refugees did not meet their hosts expectation due to language barriers or unwillingness to discuss their past, hosts' perception of the refugee's value altered (Monforte et al., 2021). The expectation on the refugee to be a "good guest" highlights the conditional nature of private or homestay hosting, therefore requiring refugee to prove they are deserving of being hosted (Boccagni & Giudici, 2022; Gardner et al., 2022; Monforte et al., 2021). When refugees do not match the expectations or ideas of hosts this can create an uncomfortable environment for refugees (Boccagni & Giudici, 2022).

Hosting arrangement and expectations can also limit refugees' control over their surroundings, as they are essentially guests in someone else's domain (Gardner et al., 2022; Monforte et al., 2021; Ran & Join-Lambert, 2020). This lack of control over their living situation can potentially hinder their ability to rebuild their lives autonomously and trigger power differences and an extra layer of vulnerability (Farahani, 2021; Zhou, 2023). This power difference is even more pronounced for refugee women due to the intersection of gender-related disparities (Al-Hamad et al., 2022; Al-Hamad et al., 2024). In addition, refugees lack of host country citizenship further positions them as guests and makes them vulnerable to various abuses of power (de Simone, 2020). Viewing refugee women as mere guests within host homes and communities increases their social and economic vulnerabilities, especially without sufficient system-

level policies and safeguards in place to protect their welfare (Senthanar & MacEachen, 2023). Within the broader social welfare framework of host communities, biases and obstacles present in the labor market together with women's refugee status and their limited control over their economic situation led to a situation where refugee women must prove themselves worthy of employment, accessing and using social assistance services (Senthanar & MacEachen, 2023).

Although communities and host families play an immense role in refugee settlement, refugee well-being relies heavily on standards being shaped by inclusive and informed social welfare policies and practices (Hebbani et al., 2016). The application of an intersectional framework to refugee hosting is vital to a comprehensive understanding of individual dimensions when engaging in the development of social welfare policy and practice (Gardner et al., 2022). Such policies establish a framework for appropriate economic and social practices while addressing the susceptibilities and power imbalances impacting such a vulnerable group (Gardner et al., 2022). However, as generally unregulated social groups, the success of such support provided to refugees can vary largely based on cultural competency, empathetic disposition and understanding, and the attitudes and perspectives of communities and host families (Gardner et al., 2022; Hebbani et al., 2016). Thus, the incorporation of intersectional perspectives by communities and families hosting refugees is pivotal to the success of the assistance and support they provide. For example, refugee women, especially in a predominantly homogenous host community, may face unique challenges that remain unaddressed without the incorporation of gendered and intersectional perspectives (Al-Hamad et al., 2022).

Another challenge to be considered in refugee hosting is the balance of responsibility. Host communities and families supporting refugees are often expected to shoulder significant burdens, emotionally, financially, and socially (Ayenew, 2021; Ruiz & Vargas-Silva, 2018). The financial and social implications of large groups of refugees settling in one area can be immense. Such implications may result in tension or strain on relationships between refugees and host communities or families and deplete existing resources (Caron, 2019). Such resources may require reallocation and the development of additional support and aid may be necessary to address existing demands. An intersectional framework also highlights how the burden of responsibility may disproportionately fall onto certain groups within these communities, and inordinately affect refugee women.

Inequalities for refugee women may be further elucidated by power imbalances experienced (Gardner et al., 2022). Such individuals experience disproportionate vulnerabilities related to not only their refugee identities but also their gender. Further identity components may subject such people to additional challenges or exacerbate existing difficulties. Imbalances may result in limited decision-making power and independence (Gardner et al., 2022). Intersectionality-informed policies and social welfare practices are therefore required to preserve the autonomy and empowerment of refugee women in host environments. Empowerment may address differentials in power allocation and provide more opportunities for successful settlement and prosperity in host communities. Uyar Mura (2022) argues that hosting is a form of unpaid, gendered work highlighting how the failure of a comprehensive hosting framework puts refugee women in deeper poverty. Similarly, Dağtaş (2018) argues that being a "host" is an innate and cultural identity of Syrian refugee women in Hatay, Turkey. However, because the political discourse in hosting refugees in Hatay heavily implies that refugees are "the other or temporary guests," it is difficult for Syrian women to continue their culture of having guests over. Locals deny them any other identity and their capability of hosting. Consequently, this creates a loss of identity for these refugee women, making them susceptible to social harm and marginalization. The gendered unpaid work of hosting refugees showcases that they are more than capable of being employed (Dağtaş, 2018; Uyar Mura, 2022). However, Turkey's welfare system has failed these women by placing them at the bottom of the employment hierarchical system. Being at the bottom of the hierarchical system creates the identity that refugee women lack skills and are vulnerable (Dağtaş, 2018; Uyar Mura, 2022).

Refugee Women's Hosting Frameworks

As refugee hosting has become more prevalent the need for development and cultivation of relevant global and national frameworks has simultaneously increased (Hebbani et al., 2016). However, the needs are largely unmet by current efforts and existing academia. Upon thorough review of existing literature, the availability of intersectional frameworks for refugee-hosting is essentially nonexistent, including gender-informed versions of such frameworks. The lack of developed welfare policies and best practice guidelines is concerning given the prevalence of refugee hosting (Guanyu & Join-Lambert, 2020). Moreover, the absence of frameworks prevents the integration of necessary intersectional and gender-informed perspectives.

The growing body of literature on refugee women hosting emphasizes the significance of adopting a "hybrid host" approach when examining gendered and intersectional hosting practices (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2016; Gardner et al., 2022; Rottmann & Nimer, 2021). This approach underscores that refugee women play a pivotal and valuable role in hosting and hospitality within their home and community contexts. Fiddian-Qasmiyeh (2016) concept of a "hybrid host" highlights the intricate nature of integration and settlement, revealing that refugees can simultaneously be hosts to newly arrived refugees. This challenges the conventional notion of hosts solely as native citizens, while also illustrating the benefits of refugees from similar origins undertaking hosting roles, which can provide a sense of comfort to new refugees in an unfamiliar environment (Gardner et al., 2022). Gardner et al. (2022) study exemplifies this by showcasing how refugee women proactively assumed hosting responsibilities, both formally and informally, to assist recently arrived refugee women, even as newcomers themselves. The study advocates for the utilization of culturally familiar hosting practices as an effective approach for delivering support and resources. Similarly, Rottmann and Nimer (2021) research underscores the significance of refugee women expressing hospitality towards their hosts. The study highlights that Syrian refugee women employed hosting as a means to challenge power dynamics in host-guest relationships and prevailing narratives that depict them solely as hospitality recipients (Rottmann & Nimer, 2021). Therefore, providing refugee women the opportunity to engage in reciprocal hosting practices can help foster empowerment and disrupting perceptions of them as passive recipients.

In a study conducted by Eggerman et al. (2023), it was discovered that volunteering opportunities serve as a valuable means for refugee women to improve their social capital. This empowerment, in turn, enables these women to better engage in work, learning, and social interactions. Furthermore, the concept of human security is suggested as an approach for refugees to counter victimizing narratives within their host countries (de Simone, 2020). Human security, a person-centered approach that prioritizes the welfare of individuals, was proposed by de Simone (2020) as a framework for refugee-hosting areas in Africa. This framework recognizes refugees' agency and positions them as active participants in shaping their lives and security within their living environments (de Simone, 2020). From a human security perspective, hosting refugees goes beyond providing shelter; it involves enabling them to rebuild their lives and contribute positively to their new communities. While Simone's initial application of the human security framework was focused on refugee-hosting areas in Africa, its potential advantages could extend to refugee-hosting areas globally. Illustrating the practical relevance of the human security approach, Senthanaar and MacEachen (2023) study in Canada revealed Syrian refugee women aspire for financial independence but face systemic barriers within the labor market, leading them to rely on social assistance. By applying a human security approach, notions of welfare chauvinism are challenged, and interventions can be better shifted towards breaking down these barriers and empowering refugee women to contribute economically (de Simone, 2020; Senthanaar & MacEachen, 2023). Many organizations including the United Nations (UN) and the UNHCR have developed policies and practice guidelines to protect refugee welfare, however, the recommendations concerning refugee hosting are absent in these frameworks (UNHCR, 1991). One example of the aforementioned international frameworks is the UNHCR's Guidelines on the Protection of Refugee Women (UNHCR, 1991). These guidelines were developed with

gender-informed perspectives to highlight the unique vulnerabilities experienced by refugee women and emphasize the necessity of integrating gendered perspectives into protective and supportive policies and practices pertaining to refugee women. Such domains of assistance and protection may include the healthcare sector, financial support and education. Although this framework integrates gender-sensitive perspectives toward refugee women, it does not specifically address refugee hosting. Unfortunately, this limitation is noted in both the existing international and national frameworks (Guanyu & Join-Lambert, 2020). Thus, the development of international and national frameworks for refugee hosting is imperative and urgent.

The UNHCR's development of women-only spaces for refugees in Jordan is another example of how gendered perspectives may be integrated into efforts to protect and support refugee women (Arjona & Maglietti, 2014). This initiative acknowledges the unique vulnerabilities of refugee women incorporating sensitivities and protective measures to commonly accessed spaces such as shelters, or refugee camp receptions. This initiative also partners with other organizations and agencies to offer services including psychosocial support, education, and legal aid to refugee women. The UNHCR's women-only spaces emphasize how gendered perspectives integrated into social welfare efforts address the unique risks and vulnerabilities of refugee women (Arjona & Maglietti, 2014). When developing practice guidelines and through policy implementation efforts to understand the unique vulnerabilities of diverse groups has been increasingly prioritized (Gardner et al., 2022; Ruiz & Vargas-Silva, 2018). By examining case studies of successful efforts, such as the Women Only Spaces initiative in Jordan, evidence-informed policy and guideline development may occur (Arjona & Maglietti, 2014). Although the integration of gender-sensitive perspectives is commonly prioritized in refugee policy development any form of international or national framework for refugee hosting, regardless of gender sensitivity, remains absent (Guanyu & Join-Lambert, 2020).

The IRPR framework is "protection-centered," thus failing to recognize the needs of women and to highlight that there is gender-related persecution that makes women vulnerable. Sengul (2022) argue that having a gender-neutral definition of refugees fails to include gender-based oppression experienced by women as a form of persecution, such as sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). Because the IRPR views the definition of refugee as having no gender, it then views persecution to be committed by the state or its agent, thus disregarding the more private-sphere types of persecution experienced by women. The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolutions on the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) Agenda is another hosting framework that is more women-inclusive (United Nations Peacemaker, 2019). The WPS agenda that has been adopted by Germany's hosting framework from 2017-2020 focuses on four aspects of refugee women which are: participation, protection, prevention, and relief and recovery (Sengul, 2022). Overall, the resolutions stated in the WPS focus on women's decision-making process, protection from SGBV, encouragement of participation in the host country, and the need for gender-sensitive and/or women-led programs. Similarly, Uganda's hosting framework adopted The Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) (UNHCR, 2018). This framework states that international humanitarian organizations and government bodies must support both refugees and host communities (Zhou, 2023). Both Germany and Uganda serve as prime examples and models of how incorporating the WPS Agenda and CRRF is holistic, women-friendly, and beneficial to both refugees and host communities. Refugee women access services that are gender-sensitive and/or women-led and are provided services and materials needed to live. In return, because they are protected from any types of harm they can be resilient and integrate into society better (Sengul, 2022; Zhou, 2023). Integrating into society can aid host communities as they can help increase local communities' revenue and services. Therefore, the WPS agenda and CRRF framework act in synergy to prevent putting women at a disadvantage in their host community.

Sengul (2022) use Turkey as a case study to highlight how the country's hosting framework, which is IRPR-based-only, fails to protect and integrate women. The country's framework influences the

views on refugee women, who are viewed as vulnerable and needing protection. This discourse of refugee women being temporary guests creates difficulties in integrating, finding employment, and eventually becoming socially marginalized. These implications corroborate findings that although refugees have access to services through work permits, education, and health services, these policies are not accompanied by strong integration discourse (Rottmann & Nimer, 2021). Because of the lack of strong integration discourse, host communities view refugees as competition and the “guests” who should be compliant and modest in their needs (Dağtaş, 2018; Rottmann & Nimer, 2021; Sengul, 2022; Uyar Mura, 2022). These views on refugees ultimately burden the population by placing them at a disadvantage that prevents them from accessing their rights to services and protection. In a similar vein, Uyar Mura (2022) uses Turkey's welfare system as an example of how its policies further burden refugee women and exacerbate their social and economic vulnerabilities. Turkey's welfare system is based on a corporatist model, where it privileges certain social groups over others, thus creating a hierarchical social structure. Unfortunately, many refugee women could not obtain formal employment compared to their husbands. As a result, refugee women are considered at the bottom of this hierarchy, further deepening the gender and class gap (Uyar Mura, 2022).

Implications and Recommendations

This literature review has revealed an enormous gap in the literature on refugee women's hosting, including the existence of women inclusive framework, social welfare policy and best practice guidelines (Guanyu & Join-Lambert, 2020). Furthermore, it has revealed a gross lack of gender-informed statistics or data pertaining to this unique group. This lack of data has also manifested in a lack of frameworks or models and case studies of refugee women and their hosting experiences. The existing literature, albeit limited, has revealed a need for more holistic and gender-informed approaches to refugee women homestay hosting research and policy development. As this group experiences unique vulnerabilities and challenges, a general consideration of refugees even within a hosting context will not suffice (Gardner et al., 2022).

Understanding the lived experiences of this group and urging further research development, we can achieve positive change for this community and better support refugee women. Further, a stronger understanding of the needs of refugee women may better enable appropriate policy development, and the allocation of relevant supports and services (Gardner et al., 2022; Monforte et al., 2021). Ultimately, in a time plagued by displacement and conflict, the need for policymakers, advocates and practitioners to adapt and rethink current hosting frameworks, social welfare policies and best practice guidelines has only grown (Monforte et al., 2021). It is a time that calls for the equitable practice and a move in the direction that best supports the prosperity of refugee women. One crucial criterion of holistic policy and guideline development is the inclusion of target groups or individuals in the decision-making process (Gardner et al., 2022). The unique experiences and perspectives of these individuals provide a unique and comprehensive perspective that may be otherwise neglected (Boccagni & Giudici, 2022). As a result of failing to include actual refugee women in policy creation processes, such policies and guidelines may fail to address the actual needs of those they are allegedly protecting. Secondly, the integration of holistic, gender-informed approaches to policy development (Ruiz & Vargas-Silva, 2018). This recommendation likely requires the integration of gender-informed data collection processes and intersectional frameworks into the hosting frameworks and policy design processes (Gardner et al., 2022; Ruiz & Vargas-Silva, 2018). Furthermore, this pillar of policy design must seek to prioritize gender equality whilst addressing gender-based issues, including discrimination, gender-based violence, and the gender-specific challenges of refugee women (e.g. childcare, education, cultural norms, etc.) (Guanyu & Join-Lambert, 2020; Ruiz & Vargas-Silva, 2018).

The success of future refugee policies and practice guidelines hinges on policymakers' and guideline creators' integration of holistic and gender-informed approaches (Gardner et al., 2022; Hebbani

et al., 2016). This may require such individuals to involve refugee women in policy design, garnering support from informed organizations, and inform guideline-makers to grasp intersectional frameworks. In prioritizing the social welfare of refugee women, this group's unique issues, including unique vulnerabilities, threats, lack of adequate access to education, employment opportunities, healthcare, and childcare, and preserving their overall well-being may be achieved (Gardner et al., 2022; Monforte et al., 2021). It is the responsibility of future policymakers to inform their efforts with common goals of bringing inclusive, holistic and sustainable solutions to refugee women's priority issues. Sengul (2022) argue that social welfare policies for refugee women must prioritize peace, which is defined as women being able "to meet material, social, and spiritual needs away from structural violence" (p. 54). Failing to revise current welfare policies can perpetuate harm and gender-based persecution of refugee women, undermining their protection, resilience, and integration.

The success of homestay programs for refugee women centers on comprehensive training for host families that covers cultural sensitivity, legal rights, and conflict resolution. Training should also tackle specific needs and vulnerabilities of refugee women such as privacy and safety, and clearly outline roles and responsibilities to foster mutual respect and avoid misunderstandings. A robust homestay framework that includes regular monitoring and clear emergency protocols is essential for ensuring the safety and well-being of refugee women. It's critical that policies not only accommodate but actively enhance the success of refugee women, necessitating a commitment to develop inclusive, holistic, and sustainable solutions that benefit both the individuals and the community at large.

Conclusion

The reviewed literature reveals the complex nature of refugee women's hosting, highlighting challenges and intricacies for both the refugees and host communities. It underscores the power dynamics and gender disparities that often leave refugee women vulnerable and dependent on their hosts. Meaningful integration and empowerment require a comprehensive, inclusive homestay framework and policy interventions that involve refugee women in development and decision-making processes. Further research is needed to explore the interplay between gender, refugee experiences, and hosting dynamics, and to develop holistic, gender-informed homestay practices. Additional gaps identified in the literature include a lack of understanding of intersectional factors like race and socio-economic status that impact hosting experiences. Most studies focus on European and Middle Eastern contexts, indicating a need for more research on homestay practices in Canada. There is a critical need for a gendered and intersectional homestay framework that shifts from viewing women as vulnerable to empowering them and promoting peacebuilding. Such a framework should bridge the gaps between refugee women and hosts, ensuring that both parties and the broader community benefit from the services provided.

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