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## **Rethinking Service Systems and Public Policy: A Transformative Refugee Service Experience Framework**

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**Authors note** This paper was written by an eclectic and multidisciplinary team of academics, research associates and practitioners with training and experience in different disciplines ranging from public policy, marketing, services, management, to social marketing and non-profit management. In terms of residence, the co-authors reside in seven different countries (Australia, Colombia, Germany, New Zealand, Switzerland, UK, and USA), and in terms of their origins of nationality they represent eight countries (Australia, Brazil, Germany, India, Lebanon, Romania, Turkey, and USA). One common denominator of this diverse group of individuals is their interest

in the global refugee policy crisis, and how individuals, organizations, and public policy makers can help alleviate the suffering and improve the wellbeing of refugees. Therefore, this article is a collective effort of a group of passionate individuals aiming at addressing the current refugee crisis from a service perspective. This was achieved by uniquely integrating their different backgrounds, individual and professional experiences and expertise, to write this contribution.

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## **Rethinking Service Systems and Public Policy:**

### **A Transformative Refugee Service Experience Framework**

#### **Abstract**

The global refugee crisis is a complex humanitarian problem. Service researchers can assist with solving this crisis because refugees are immersed in complex human service systems. Drawing on marketing, sociology, transformative service, and consumer research literature, this study develops a Transformative Refugee Service Experience Framework to enable researchers, service actors, and public policymakers to navigate the challenges faced throughout a refugee's journey. The primary dimensions of our framework encompass the spectrum from hostile to hospitable refugee service systems and the resulting suffering or wellbeing in refugees' experiences. We conceptualize this at each of the three refugee journey phases (entry, transition, and exit) and at three refugee service system levels (macro, meso, and micro) of analysis. The framework is supported by brief examples from a range of service-related refugee contexts, as well as a web appendix with additional cases. Moreover, a comprehensive research agenda is derived from the framework with detailed research questions for public policy and (service) marketing researchers. Managerial directions are provided to increase awareness of refugee

service problems, stimulate productive interactions, and improve collaboration among public and non-profit organizations, private service providers, and refugees. Finally, our work provides a vision for creating hospitable refugee service systems.

**Keywords:** refugee crisis, transformative service research, hostile vs. hospitable refugee service systems, refugee service journey, refugee service experience, public policy

The growing number of global refugees is a humanitarian and social emergency. According to the UNHCR Global Report 2019, the number of displaced people reached a record high. In 2019, the number of displaced people amassed over 86.5 million people, of which 20.4 million are refugees (UNHCR 2020a, p. 9). War, violence and conflicts, such as in Syria, Afghanistan, Venezuela, or Myanmar, are now the main reasons for fleeing from home. However, major incidents, such as climate change and natural disasters (for example hurricanes, earthquakes, storms, and sea-level rise) (Mende and Misra 2020) are becoming increasingly important for refugees and their lives (Behrman and Kent 2018). Not surprisingly, internal displacement grew in the last ten years by more than 60% (UNHCR 2020a, p. 9). A World Bank study forecasts that three regions alone, Latin America, sub-Saharan Africa, and Southeast Asia, will generate 143 million more climate refugees by 2050 (Kumari Rigaud 2018; Podesta 2020). Forecasting future refugee flows and trends is challenging, however, most sources predict constantly increasing levels of refugee flows until 2050 (Sander, Abel, and Riosmena 2013).

The COVID-19 pandemic makes the situation for refugees even worse (Zaman 2020). Given that a large majority of the refugees live in overcrowded camps and settlements in developing countries where health systems are already overwhelmed and under-capacitated, they lack adequate access to health services, clean water, and sanitation required to protect them

against the spread of virus (Clayton 2020). It is evident that this pandemic exacerbates the existing vulnerabilities of the refugees (Scott et al. 2020). Measures taken to limit the spread of the virus, like travel bans and closed borders, coupled with cramped living conditions in camps all amplify the risks to those refugees (McAuliffe and Bauloz 2020). As such, the COVID-19 pandemic has increased existing pressure on public policymakers to develop sustainable refugee solutions.

This article defines refugees as people fleeing their home country due to disaster, conflict, persecution, or climate change that prevents them from returning home safely. This view of refugees' situation is thus broader than the legal definition of refugee status, which provides protection granted by governments or the United Nations (UNHCR 2017). In our conceptualization, a person may be a refugee even without having received formal legal status as such. Such an understanding is vital because a refugee's fundamental needs may not commence or finish with obtaining or relinquishing a legal status.

Despite the given commitment to strengthen refugees' "access to basic services" and to ensure "inclusive service delivery systems" (UNHCR 2018a, objective 15), the fulfillment of those objectives is a time-consuming and challenging task. Indeed, this crisis is complex; refugees' journeys are rarely linear. They involve multiple phases and stakeholders (Yildiz and Sert 2019), during which the service needs of refugees' change (e.g., food, transportation, telecommunications, and safety), and most often remain unfulfilled because of poor access to adequate service. We argue that these situations can be labeled and conceptualized as *hostile refugee service systems*, which lead to refugee experiences of *suffering*.

Failing to address the refugee crisis in a timely and appropriate manner threatens to increase economic, social, and political instability worldwide (Miliband 2017). Betts et al. (2014)

argue that extra effort from the public sector or non-profit organizations, but also from the private sector and refugees themselves, is needed to transform those systems towards what we call *hospitable refugee service systems*. We define the term hospitable refugee service system as a flexibly designed system that permits the free flow of actors and resources to co-create value and *wellbeing* with refugees. Such a hospitable system is agile and can connect with other service systems for value co-creation and to achieve wellbeing outcomes for actors inside and outside the system (Kuppelwieser and Finsterwalder 2016). The solution demands the inclusion of various actors, implying the need for a service system lens that supports complex value co-creation involving multiple actors (Trischler and Charles 2019).

Correspondingly, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) promotes the Global Compact on Refugees (2018), a multi-stakeholder, partnership-based strategic framework that aims to achieve “inclusion, cohesion, and wellbeing” (p. 3). The goals are consistent with the ethos of transformative service research (Rosenbaum et al. 2011), and a few researchers have already developed research agendas on the role of service in refugees’ wellbeing (Finsterwalder 2017; Nasr and Fisk 2019). However, this is an emerging research area and more work on “topics that make a difference” is needed (Martin and Scott 2020, p. 2).

Therefore, the main purpose of this article is to develop a conceptual Refugee Service Experience Framework within a service systems perspective. Our primary framework dimension is suffering or wellbeing of refugees caused by either hostile or hospitable refugee service systems. These are illustrated by short examples from different countries. The framework includes three phases of a refugee service journey (entry, transition, and exit) and three refugee service system levels (micro, meso, and macro).

Our research offers several contributions for academics, practitioners, and public policymakers. First, we propose a Transformative Refugee Service Experience Framework to better address the current refugee crisis. Second, the framework provides novel perspectives for future research projects and stimulating interdisciplinary research collaborations. This includes specific research questions for the different stages of the refugee service journey across system levels, and detailed questions for public policy and marketing researchers. Third, we contribute to marketing and public policy-making agendas by presenting a stepwise approach on how the framework can be used in practice. The framework offers a set of practical and concrete recommendations managers can employ to assess existing or proposed service system change initiatives designed for refugee services. Finally, we provide suggestions for building awareness of the service system approach to address the challenges associated with the current refugee crisis.

This article is structured in four parts. First, we present a comprehensive literature review on services and refugee studies. Second, we develop our Transformative Refugee Service Experience Framework. Herein, we start with an overview of the framework's dimensions, followed by a discussion on how the journey phases and system levels help explain the impact of more hostile versus more hospitable refugee service systems on refugee experiences. Third, we outline a comprehensive research agenda for public policy and marketing. Finally, we provide strategic direction on how the framework can be used in practice.

### **Literature Review**

We conducted a multidisciplinary review in light of the many academic disciplines that have examined refugee studies, including sociology, medical and health science, education, linguistics, public policy, non-profit, and marketing literatures. We searched for the keywords

“refugees” and/or “asylum seekers” in combination with “services”, “service experience”, “service system”, “access to service”, “refugee journey”, “refugee integration”, and “hostile” vs. “hospitable” environment. Table 1 contains an overview of selected articles and describes significant research gaps which this study seeks to address. The literature review below is organized around four themes: literature on refugee service experience, literature on refugee service systems, literature on refugee journey and integration, and literature on refugee service system levels.

----Insert Table 1 about here----

### *Literature on Refugee Service Experience*

Literature on refugee experiences has a very long tradition in refugee and sociological research, and it is nearly impossible to give a comprehensive overview on all published studies. For example, in the *Journal of Refugee Studies* more than 712 research articles match the keyword “refugee experience” (<https://academic.oup.com/jrs>, accessed August 2020; notably, Lønning 2020; Rapp et al. 2019). Previous studies often adopt qualitative approaches and analyze individual refugee experiences in specific situations such as experiences in refugee camps (Karr, Sajadi and Aronson-Ensign 2020) or experiences of stress and discrimination (Rapp et al. 2019). Some refugee studies relate negative experiences to “suffering” to when they conceptualize and describe the refugee situation with one concept (Baker 1990; Brough et al. 2013; Evans 2007). The concept of suffering has been adopted by other disciplines. From the marketing community, for example, Nasr and Fisk (2019) argue that the very definition of Transformative Service Research (TSR) requires expansion: “...instead of solely focusing on ‘improving wellbeing’, there is a profound need to include the idea of ‘relieving suffering’ into the definition and subsequent research within TSR” (p. 684). Despite the large number of studies



that focus on the refugee experiences in general, a much smaller number of studies discuss service experiences more explicitly (Bianco et al. 2016; Kabadayi 2019; McIntosh and Cockburn-Wootten 2019; Polonsky et al. 2018; Shneikat and Ryan 2018). For example, Polonsky et al. (2018) examine how refugees' perceptions of discrimination, past behavior, objective knowledge, and medical mistrust affect their inclusion in healthcare services. Shneikat and Ryan (2018) analyze service experiences of 26 refugees who aim to achieve a sense of normality in their new host country. Kabadayi (2019) investigates sabotage behaviors by service employees in Turkey who undermine attempts to better serve Syrian refugees. Moreover, very few studies focus on positive refugee service experience that help to improve refugees' wellbeing. For example, Forde et al. (2015) highlight community and sport recreation programs as good ways to generate positive experiences for refugees. Huang, Chu, and Cheng (2019) identify financial resources, social connection, and sense of control as essential drivers of life satisfaction of refugees. To sum up, a first research gap is identified (Table 1).

Research Gap 1: Lack of understanding of refugee service needs and experiences. Only a few previous studies address refugee service needs and experiences.

#### *Literature on Refugee Service Systems*

Two research areas in particular contribute to the discussion on refugee service systems. First, macromarketing studies undertake an “optimistic inquiry into market and societal phenomena with the goal of improving markets/market systems for the benefit of society” (Wooliscroft 2016, p. 8). Although most researchers refer to migrants (Krisjanous and Kadirov 2018) or vulnerable/poor consumers in general (Laczniak and Santos 2011), their findings contribute to an understanding of how multiple actors become embedded in market systems. A market systems lens accounts for interconnectedness and complexity among the factors that

influence refugees and hinder their ability to cope with threats (Haase, Becker, and Pick 2018). Macromarketing researchers have begun seeking ways to better address the refugee crisis. Recently, Shultz and colleagues (2020) introduced “the refugee pathway” (p. 131) and discussed the need to design a more “Humanitarian Marketing System to better meet the needs of forcibly displaced persons” (Shultz et al. 2020, p. 137).

Second, several disciplines such as philosophy (Sabine 1916), social sciences (Fixsen et al. 2013; Safouane 2017), economics (Carmeli 2007), law (Floss 2006; Michaels 1998), information and communication technology (Beghtol 2003; Muter et al. 1993), medicine, healthcare (Okie 2007; Simelela and Venter 2014), biological sciences (Miller and Bohannan 2019), and politics (McFadyen 2016; Silver, Keeper, and MacKenzie 2005) take a system view and discuss hospitable vs. hostile systems. For example, Floss (2006, p. 217) examines asylum laws and asks whether asylum seekers should be greeted by “administrative blundering, ignorance, incompetence, or perhaps political posturing” as they enter a host country. Okie (2007, p. 525) notes intersections of immigrants with healthcare to identify “daunting encounters with a fragmented, bewildering, and hostile system.” Fixsen et al. (2013) propose that hospitable system environments are needed to facilitate evidence-based programs that support human services. Yet, these authors do not explicitly define the terms “hostile or hospitable system.” However, a traditional meaning of being hospitable encompasses a sacred commitment not just to accommodate a guest but also to safeguard strangers who arrive at the door (Lynch et al. 2011). We are not aware of any previous articles that focuses conceptually or empirically on hostile or hospitable refugee service systems (Table 1).

**Research Gap 2:** Limited knowledge on how to transform a hostile refugee service system into a more hospitable one.

### *Literature on Refugee Journeys and Integration*

In sociology, two areas are of particular interest: refugee journeys and refugee integration. Table 2 gives an overview of previous conceptualizations of the refugee journey. Kunz (1973) is one of the first authors who conceptualizes the refugee journey as a “kinetic model of refugee movements” (Kunz 1973, p. 131). The journey according to Kunz (1973) is a chronological passage *en route*, starting in the country of origin, followed by transit through other countries, and ending with arrival in a host country. Desjarlais et al. (1995) label a pre-flight period, flight phase, a reception period, and a resettlement phase. Others, such as Brekke and Aarset (2009) distinguish between three phases of a refugee journey, namely country of origin, transition countries, and host country. Some scholars follow a more experiential approach and reflect on other aspects than the journey phases, such as decision making, drivers, or characteristics of refugees who decide to undertake a refugee journey (BenEzer and Zetter 2014; Nardone and Correa-Velez 2015). Chuah et al.’s work (2018) is one of the few articles that links the refugee journey to service access and conceptualizes a pre-departure phase, a travel phase, and an arrival phase.

----Insert Table 2 about here----

Previous literature often focuses on the last phase of the refugee journey. Consequently, refugee integration into the host country is another important sociological research interest (Ager and Strang 2008; Cheung and Philimore 2014; Stenvig et al. 2018). Ager and Strang (2008), in particular, present a model of core domains of refugee integration that highlights access to employment, housing, education, and health as key factors for a successful integration. The model contains three facilitators of integration: social bonds and links, language and cultural

knowledge, as well as safety and stability. Finally, rights and citizenship are conceptualized as foundational.

Not surprisingly, studies from other disciplines take out one of the core domains and analyze refugees' access to services in more detail. Nonprofit research, for example, highlights the role of civil society in helping refugees receive access to basic humanitarian services (Garkisch, Heidingsfelder, and Beckmann 2017). Public policy and economics research (Cheung and Philimore 2014; Rainbird 2012; Tomlinson and Egan 2002), address refugees' access to employment and suggest that refugees find employment through social contacts (Eisnecker and Schacht 2016). Some studies highlight refugee social entrepreneurship and call for more support to motivate refugees to start their own business (Alrawadieh et al. 2019; Betts et al. 2014; Heilbrunn, Freiling, and Harima 2019; Shneikat and Alrawadieh 2019). Refugees' limited access to healthcare is another research stream (Chuah et al. 2018; Wångdahl et al. 2015), which has become increasingly important in the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, previous studies focus on barriers when analyzing refugee integration. Such barriers include language, restricted mobility, and lacking cultural and system knowledge (Dryden-Peterson 2016; Kang, Tomkow, and Farrington 2019; Ziersch and Due 2018). To sum up, previous work mainly addresses certain elements or aspects of the refugee journey, mostly the last phase of the journey, rather than conceptualizing the refugee journey holistically. None of these studies address dynamic refugee needs and experiences or the value of mapping refugee journeys to service-related issues at each touchpoint (Table 1).

Research Gap 3: Insufficient acknowledgement and understanding of refugee service needs and experiences within *all* phases of the refugee journey.

*Literature on Refugee Service System Levels*

Previous refugee studies often focus on an individual level of analysis. Brought et al. (2013), however, highlight that the micro context of refugee journeys is connected to macro socio-political factors. Another area of literature that differentiates between macro, meso and micro level factors and analysis is Transformative Consumer Research (TCR) (Crockett et al. 2011; Davis, Ozanne, and Hill 2016; Ozanne 2011; Mick et al. 2012); however, refugee-related studies are limited within this field. Shultz et al. (2012), for example, call to prioritize refugee issues across all phases of the refugee journey. Kriechbaum-Vitellozzi and Kreuzbauer (2006) study refugees' consumption-related coping strategies when living in affluent societies. Zourrig (2018) explores altered refugee consumption patterns related to food. Transformative Service Research (TSR), shares the TCR commitment to create social change and also focus on service topics at respectively across all three phases. Finsterwalder (2017) was the first service researcher to call for more macro, meso and micro level research on the role that refugees and host country residents play as service actors and how refugees and service ecosystems interact. Similarly, Fisk et al. (2018) cite "service inclusion" as a means to reduce refugees' vulnerability and exclusion to ensure fair access to services. Alkire et al. (2020) propose an interdisciplinary framework, integrating service design and social entrepreneurship with TSR, and provide options for service organizations to support the wellbeing of refugees and their communities among other vulnerable populations. Examining service systems, Cheung and McColl-Kennedy (2019) discuss how vulnerability takes place within service systems and suggest that the refugee situations in Australia and the United States of America are examples of service systems that increase suffering rather than relieve it.

Moreover, a 2019 issue of the *Service Industries Journal* highlights the important role of services for refugees. Farmaki and Christou (2019) call for stronger theoretical foundations and

multidisciplinary approaches to refugee studies in their literature review. Nasr and Fisk (2019, p. 10) explicitly ask: “how can we [service researchers] help?” They suggest that service scholars can provide a better understanding of how to leverage refugees’ knowledge and skills to support cultural integration, as well as how to empower refugees to become economically productive. They suggest a service design approach that includes all three levels of a refugee ecosystem (micro, meso, and macro) to improve services. Nasr and Fisk (2019) conceptualize transdisciplinary research, transformative service research and service design as cornerstones to address the complexity of the refugee crisis. Empirical studies in this special issue examine (1) reception services offered by non-profit organizations, community groups, and state institutions (McIntosh and Cockburn-Wooten 2019); (2) refugee integration through entrepreneurship (Alrawadieh, Karayilan, and Cetin 2019; Shneikat and Alrawadieh 2019); and (3) refugees’ access to the job market (Daunfeldt, Johansson, and Westerberg 2019). In sum, we conclude that the knowledge of refugees’ service needs and experiences within the service system and at different system levels is very limited (Table 1).

Research Gap 4: Limited knowledge of refugees’ service needs and experiences across and within all service system levels.

Our research addresses the research gaps identified above by conceptualizing an encompassing framework that integrates refugee service experience, refugee service system characteristics, refugee service journey, and service system levels.

## **Transformative Refugee Service Experience Framework**

### *Overview of Framework*

Figure 1 visualizes the Transformative Refugee Service Experience Framework. We explain the framework by building it from the ground up: First, we show that refugee experience

interrelates with the current refugee service systems. Then, we explain the nature of a refugee service journey and its phases. This is followed by explicating the refugee service system levels. Finally, in the last two sections, we amalgamate the elements and integrate the journey phases within the system levels and explain the impact of hostile vs. hospitable refugee service systems on negative vs. positive refugee experience in more details.

The upper part of Figure 1 visualizes the primary dimension of the framework. In line with previous research, it respectively conceptualize that *refugees* service experiences are interrelated to the *characteristics of the refugee service system*. We identify two different refugee experiences and two different types of service system characteristics that can cause these experiences. Both are at opposite ends of a spectrum from negative to positive. First, and according to our framework, *suffering to wellbeing* are similar to temperature labels for the range of experiences the refugees might receive. Second, the service system characteristics range from *hostile to hospitable systems*. Definitions of the word “hostile” refer to threats and unfriendly behaviors that create dangerous situations for others. As mentioned earlier, we define a hospitable refugee service system as an open, flexibly designed system that permits the free flow of actors and resources to co-create value and wellbeing with refugees. Such a fluid system has built-in transformational capabilities and permeable system boundaries. It is agile and can connect with other service systems for value co-creation and to achieve wellbeing outcomes for actors inside and outside the system (Kuppelwieser and Finsterwalder 2016).

The lower part of Figure 1 dives deeper into the framework’s logic and explains how specific refugee journey phases as well as system levels relate to refugee experiences and service systems.

----Insert Figure 1 about here----

### *Refugee Service Journeys*

We introduce and define the term “refugee service journey,” as the focal actor’s (refugee’s) interactions with service co-creating actors at all touchpoints across physical, social, and psychological factors of the journey that are integral to refugee wellbeing, and help the refugee balance resources with challenges (Dodge et al. 2012). Based on previous refugee journey research (see Table 2), the framework includes three phases of the *refugee service journey*: entry, transition, and exit.

*Entry phase.* The refugee journey begins with the decision to flee a country of origin, triggered by anticipated or perceived events that threaten the actors’ safety (UNHCR 2019a, 2019b). Some refugees invest in, plan for, and mentally prepare for their flight. Other refugees must leave suddenly to escape imminent danger (Brekke and Aarset 2009) due to persecution, war, hunger, or other risks (UNHCR 2019b). Leaving often entails obstacles and requires difficult decisions to be made. Refugees must plan ahead to finance their escape and determine which provisions to take, such as clothes, food, and medical supplies. Because they risk a lack of service support, they might need additional resources for unanticipated encounters, including resources to pay for bribes or identifying hiding places (BenEzer and Zetter 2014).

*Transition phase.* Refugees’ transitions are far from linear. They involve experiencing vulnerability in situations that demand multiple, dynamic survival strategies and modes of travel (BenEzer and Zetter 2014; Collyer 2007). This transition phase should not be confused with transit, which connotes a point of departure and a linear process (Brekke and Brochmann 2015; Boer 2015; Hampshire et al. 2008; Kuschminder and Waidler 2019). Instead, refugees may remain in limbo for uncertain and lengthy periods of time, including while they wait in refugee camps. For example, in Lebanon the Shatila refugee camp for Palestinians has been in existence



for more than six decades (Fisher 2015). If viable strategies are limited, refugees may resort to more dangerous options. Undocumented or irregular migration often involves informal agents, acting outside the law (e.g., smugglers), and substantial power asymmetries (Brekke and Aarset 2009; Freedman 2016). The limited opportunities render refugees particularly vulnerable to human trafficking; and exploitation can take multiple forms, including forced labor, forced begging, and/or sexual and conjugal slavery. Furthermore, refugees might arrive in safer countries but still continue journeying to more “promising” destinations (Brekke and Borchmann 2015; Kuschminder and Waidler 2019). Refugees arriving at their destinations thus tend to exhibit high self-determined mobility, even within the destination country (BenEzer 2002).

*Exit phase.* After their arrival in a destination country, refugees usually reside within reception camps awaiting the official asylum-granting process. While in the camps, if they have adequate opportunities, refugees can start slowly planning and engaging in activities to facilitate their integration and resettlement as residents of the host country. During this phase, refugees may learn the host country’s language, pursue educational/employment pathways, or establish connections within the host society (Finsterwalder 2017; Stevenson and Willot 2007). However, it is often during this period that refugees also experience challenges to their mental health, agency, and autonomy (Bowles 1998; De Genova, Garelli, and Tazzioli 2018). We depict the end of the refugee service journey when both physical and experiential passages conclude. This may be marked by the period when a refugee integrates in the host country or voluntarily and safely returns to their country of origin.

### *Refugee Service System Levels*

A well-functioning service system should link refugees and their needs with other actors and resources at different system levels. Therefore, our framework includes the micro, meso, and

macro levels (Beirão, Patrício, and Fisk 2017; Edvardsson, Tronvoll, and Gruber 2011; Fisk et al. 2016) together with an established system of exchange among actors within and across system levels. As mentioned in the introduction, service systems are self-adjusting exchange systems. They comprise people, tools, and resources, such as the skills, knowledge, capabilities, rights, and responsibilities of various actors, including entities, organizations, or societal institutions (Vargo and Akaka 2012). Actors engaged in the co-creation of wellbeing through transformative service need to coordinate their efforts horizontally (for example by partnering with multiple service providers at the same system level) and vertically (for example by coordinating regional and national efforts) (Finsterwalder 2017). Each level is directly or indirectly linked to other actors within the refugee service system (Fisk et al. 2016; Hepi et al. 2017) (see Figure 1).

*Micro level.* Individual service experiences and activities are highly variable and particular. At the micro level, refugee families, fellow refugees, and citizens are critical actors (Finsterwalder 2017). In terms of TSR outcomes, individual access to services, diminished individual barriers, and improvements to financial, educational, healthcare, or housing situations are focal factors.

*Meso level.* This mid-range layer of the service exchange describes organizational or community levels of relationships and interactions, often formalized through contractual rules. Public, non-profit, and for-profit service providers; service mediating networks; and the refugee community in a city are all situated at the meso level; and they develop and implement specific refugee service interventions to match refugee service needs.

*Macro level.* The broader societal structures embedded within socio-cultural systems include institutionalized norms and values (e.g., laws, political debates, and media) based on

shared meaning and discourses. Institutions, such as national governments, regional governments, the UNHCR, or international bodies of justice, appear at the macro level.

### *Hostile Refugee Service Systems and Refugee Experiences*

As mentioned earlier, we now merge the refugee journey phases with the service system levels and explain the impact of hostile refugee service systems in more detail. We use the phrase hostile refugee service system to refer to a refugee system that hampers the free flow of actors and resources to co-create value and wellbeing with refugees. Kuppelwieser and Finsterwalder (2016, p. 96) similarly describe a “rigid service system with fixed boundaries and no [or only limited] transformational capability,” which reflect the system’s ability to “adapt and change to altered or new requirements and, if necessary, to reconfigure itself by means of new actor and resource combinations” (Kuppelwieser and Finsterwalder 2016, p. 97). That is, rigidity prevents a system from being flexible, agile, fluid, and adaptive. It still might allow for actors residing within it to exchange services and co-create value, but the system boundaries limit the access granted to new actors and might even prevent actors within the system from establishing connections with those inside and outside it.

In the following section, we present a few short case examples to illustrate specific journey phases as well as system levels when explaining hostile or hospitable characteristics of a system and their impact on the refugee experience. Additionally, a web appendix is available depicting more extensive and tangible examples for the different cells in the framework where the system levels intersect with the phases of the refugee’s service journey. The *Turkey-Greece border conflict* at the end of February 2020 represents our first example of a hostile service system in transition. Since Turkey announced that its border is open for refugees, thousands of refugees from Syria and Afghanistan tried to enter the European Union (EU) at the Greek border.

Refugees, among them unaccompanied children, have been held captive under inhumane conditions at the border. However, all active attempts at the border crossing were hindered by Greek authorities utilizing tear gas and water cannons (The Guardian 2020). More cases on hostile refugee service systems (Venezuela, Jordan, Turkey) can be found in the web appendix ([insert link of the web appendix here](#)).

Restrictions such as legal, political, or resource constraints can prevent actors in the system from co-creating wellbeing with actors located in the same system, with those entering the system, or with actors outside the system (Kuppelwieser and Finsterwalder 2016). Certain political movements and ideologies that cite alleged risks to security due to the arrival of refugees might prevent them from entering in the first place (Osborne 2019). Derrida (2000) argues that restrictions change the pure nature of hospitality, such that systems might become hostile, at least in part, by imposing long waiting times for refugees to access services or be legally admitted to the new service system. This built-in “hostipitality” (Derrida 2000, p. 3) relates to “hospitality towards the undesirable guest”, reflects the “fear of the other abusing the system (and the host state) [and] is resulting in stringent policies that are detrimentally impacting on those individuals seeking sanctuary” (McFadyen 2016, pp. 600, 614).

Thus, a hostile refugee service system features hostility toward actors (refugees) inside or outside the system and can lead to a decline in their wellbeing. For instance, *Jordan* (see Web Appendix: [insert link of the web appendix here](#), Case 5) is host to more than 1.2 million Syrian refugees, about half of whom have registered with UNHCR. Many of these Syrian refugees aspire to resettle in Europe. The 2016 Jordan Compact includes a series of agreements with the European Union, detailing funding and initiatives for service delivery (e.g., healthcare, education) to people in refugee camps (e.g., The Jordan Compact; Barbelet, Hagen-Zanker, and

Mansour-Ille 2018; Salemi, Bowman, and Compton 2018). Yet, despite good intentions and international support, several decelerators limit the education services available to children and potentially rendering the system hostile. As a pressing macro-level issue, recently passed Jordanian regulations tighten the requirements to obtain refugee status. Official channels into exit camps previously demanded that any Jordanian national could “bail out” each refugee, but since 2014, sponsorship by a relative has been required (Salemi, Bowman, and Compton 2018).

### *Hospitable Refugee Service Systems and Refugee Experiences*

Despite limited scholarly insights related to hospitable systems, hospitality and tourism research offers relevant insights (Buhalis and Sinarta 2019). This applies to studies of hospitality as a cultural phenomenon (Lashley 2008), using a social lens (Lashley, Lynch, and Morrison 2007), or taking a psychological perspective in connection to personality and wellbeing (Biswas-Diener et al. 2019). Lynch et al. (2011, p. 4) assert that hospitality marks the “boundaries between inside and outside, familiar and alien.” Fixsen et al. (2013) propose that hospitable system environments are needed to facilitate evidence-based programs that support human services. Hospitable refugee service systems (Bulley 2016; Oliver, Madura, and Ahmed 2019; Spohrer 2010) offer a means to ensure the “human right ... to hospitality” (Derrida 2000, p. 4).

For example, the refugee service system in *Uganda* (see Web Appendix: [insert link of the web appendix here](#), Case 2), which is the largest refugee-hosting country in Africa with a refugee population of approximately 1.2 million, illustrates features of a hospitable system for the transition phase. At the *macro* level the government’s narrative views refugees as contributors rather than a burden, acknowledging the agency, skills, and talent that they bring (Betts et al. 2014, Coggio 2018; Momodu 2018). The Uganda Refugee Act of 2006 ensures basic freedoms (e.g., right to work, freedom of movement), which in turn enables the refugee settlements to connect to wider economic systems and create value at the *meso* level through refugee initiatives, social enterprises, and informal economy solutions (e.g., credit and savings associations; farmers associations) (Betts et al. 2014). At the *micro level*, a culture of openness and refugee economic activities facilitate friendly neighborhood encounters and connections between the locals and refugees, which create opportunities for wellbeing as refugees build social capital and develop feelings of security and belonging (Elliott and Yusuf 2014). Two other cases on hospitable

systems and refugee experiences in the entry (Case 1: Somalia) and exit phase (Case 3: Colombia) can be found in the web appendix ([insert link of the web appendix here](#)).

Open, integrative, and flexible systems (Kuppelwieser and Finsterwalder 2016) help ensure refugees' dignity, equity, autonomy, participation, belonging, inclusion, and legitimacy (Cheung and McColl-Kennedy 2019; Council of Europe 2005). Most prior studies identify the state or government (macro level) as the "central space and agent of welcome" (Bulley 2016, p. 2; Benhabib 2004). In the framework, actors at all service system levels are instrumental to providing services. In Figure 1, the service system can facilitate wellbeing service experiences along the refugee's service journey by carefully managing questions of "ethics, power and space" that relate inherently to hospitality (Bulley 2016, p. 3).

However, actors, not systems, manage the system. That is, due to the nature of hospitable refugee service systems, actors should feel mobilized to support refugee wellbeing by integrating available resources for value co-creation. A recent example of this is *German cities* acting as diplomatic agents of hospitality. Despite the partially negative trend and atmosphere among the general public toward hosting more refugees, seven mayors of German cities requested the German government to give permission to the cities to accept underage refugees from overcrowded refugee camps in Greece. The plan of the "coalition of the willing" is to help "either unaccompanied children under the age of 14 or children in need of urgent medical assistance" (DW 2020). After controversial political discussions, German governmental representatives announced that the country is prepared to take in "an appropriate share" of the neediest refugee children. Another example is the *Scottish Guardianship System*, which is highly praised in its efforts to equip interested potential guardians for the protection and integration of unaccompanied minor asylum seekers and refugees (Iván 2016). This system enables guardians

through establishing clear criteria about qualifications, identifying needs for training and building skills (e.g., providing standards about treating the children and young people with respect and dignity), as well as extending supervision and support over time.

It is necessary to remove potential decelerators, such as restrictions and constraints that increase refugee suffering, to achieve movement toward more hospitable refugee service systems.

A pressing *macro*-level issue is recent tight regulations on obtaining refugee status, which prompted thousands of Syrians to depart the camps without official asylum-seeker status, rendering their children ineligible for UNHCR-provided educational services (Salemi, Bowman, and Compton 2018). At the *meso* level, the lack of sufficiently trained personnel (e.g., inexperienced teachers) and stigmas against Syrians are ongoing concerns (Salemi, Bowman, and Compton 2018). Finally, a *micro*-level factor arises from families' decisions to resort to child labor, due to the severe financial strain they face, impeding regular school attendance (UNICEF 2017). The interactivity of these different levels across multiple issues (e.g., regulatory changes prompt individual behaviors, resulting in status changes) echoes the idea that service actors should coordinate vertically across different system levels (Finsterwalder 2017).

The above-mentioned challenges show that accelerators for value co-creation are critical to improving refugees' wellbeing through the creation of hospitable refugee service experiences, such as faster access to services, improved processes, or a lack of red tape to meet wellbeing needs and generate outcomes that align with respect for human rights, transparency, fairness, and trust (Rhee and Rha 2009).

In *Somalia* (see Web Appendix: [insert link of the web appendix here](#), Case 1), climate change over the next decades is expected to force millions to leave their homes to seek refuge in



their own country, as well as across international borders. *Macro-level* international initiatives providing financial and technical support are integral to providing humanitarian aid for individuals displaced by natural disasters. One example of an accelerator is The Nansen Initiative on Disaster-Induced Cross-Border Displacement, which raises awareness, with many developed countries pledging to help alleviate the struggles of climate change-induced migration (The Nansen Initiative 2012, 2015). At a *meso* level, OXFAM is partnering with local organizations like the Horn of Africa Voluntary Youth Committee to provide water access services (e.g., hand washing stations). At a *micro* level, drawing on Islamic principles, poor local communities in the Puntland and Somaliland regions helped to settle unusually large numbers of displaced people. Sufi brotherhoods known for linking people from different clans and origins played a role in this integration process (Adani 2019).

In summary, the Transformative Refugee Service Experience Framework seeks to ensure that all relevant factors are taken into account when designing or redesigning services for refugees (Fisk et al. 2018), devising refugee-related public policy (Black 2001), serving refugees to relieve suffering (Cheung and McColl-Kennedy 2019; Nasr and Fisk 2019), and enabling the improvement of their lives (Stenvig et al. 2018). Therefore, this framework can be applied to analyzing refugees' service needs along their journey as well as scrutinizing the system levels where service provision should be located. By mapping refugee needs and service experiences, the framework helps identify potential critical events during refugees' service encounters and therefore suggests ways to improve or redesign services. It also assists with organizing crucial research topics for public policymakers and for marketing and service scholars.

### **Research Agenda: Directions and Challenges**

Despite an increasing number of studies in recent years, the global refugee crisis has not been sufficiently addressed by the public policy and marketing research community. With our research agenda, we call for more research on refugee experiences, systems and journeys. Such research might enable converting hostile refugee service systems into hospitable refugee service systems and facilitate informed decision making by policymakers and practitioners concerning refugee needs. For this purpose, we suggest adopting the relational engagement approach proposed by Ozanne et al. (2017). We argue that the knowledge and research output created through persistent and productive interactions among academics and between academics and various stakeholders are more likely to lead to positive social change and wellbeing outcomes, not only for refugees but for all engaged stakeholders and the wider ecosystem (Anderson et al. 2013). Therefore, the proposed research agenda has the following three major perspectives.

*Interdisciplinary research.* First, the research agenda is interdisciplinary in that it calls for persistent research collaboration between individuals from different disciplines. Given the size and complexity of problems faced by refugees, more interdisciplinary research and collaboration are necessary (Finsterwalder 2017; Martin and Scott 2020; Nasr and Fisk 2019). The multitude of active stakeholders, wellbeing outcomes, and different approaches for support require collaboration and joint research projects among scholars from various related disciplines. Creating a synthesis of discipline specific theories, research approaches, methodologies, measures, among other key research components, should have a synergetic and amplifying effect on easing the world's refugee crisis. The list of such disciplines is extensive, including political science, economics, psychology, sociology, refugee and immigration studies, among others. Given the scope of this paper, we focus on the public policy and marketing disciplines in

generating our research agenda. One such interdisciplinary research effort is *ServCollab* ([www.servcollab.org](http://www.servcollab.org)). ServCollab is a nonprofit organization that seeks to serve humanity through service research collaborations (Fisk et al. 2020). The initiative is open to researchers and practitioners to join and assist with resolving society's big challenges. Ultimately, refugee researchers need to collaborate and co-create solutions with refugees themselves. A co-creative approach enables working with refugees to integrate their experiential knowledge and empower them to become decision makers in developing dignified and long-lasting solutions to their own needs.

*Multi-stakeholder approach.* Second, and in line with the Global Compact on Refugees (UNHCR 2018a), a multi-stakeholder approach is needed to ensure the practicality and impact of the research agenda. Such a multi-stakeholder approach would include refugees themselves, service providers and other practitioners, relevant NGOs and policymakers who might contribute to and benefit from the knowledge created in their research projects. The exact configurations of different stakeholders involved and their roles in a project may differ based on the specific research questions. Building research partnerships with diverse stakeholders might include taking their different perspectives into account, not only in identifying research questions to be studied but also when interpreting the results and outlining implications of those research projects. Therefore, an involvement of multiple stakeholders using their language, understanding, interests, and expertise could provide better workable solutions for refugee related problems (Ozanne and Saatcioglu 2008). A possible way to increase engagement with different stakeholders is to become a member of the UNHCR Global Academic Network (UNHCR 2020b). The network's goal is "linking academia, policy makers and practitioners in the field of forced displacement and statelessness" (p. 1). So far, three working groups exist: Group 1 aims

to connect refugee research with practitioners and policy makers. Group 2 concentrates on teaching topics about refugees. Group 3 brings stakeholders together who have implemented specific support for refugee students (e.g., refugee study orientation programs at universities) and/or scholarships for academics with a refugee background.

*Multiple levels and stages.* Finally, researchers must acknowledge relationships between different actors and players at the multiple levels and stages of the Transformative Refugee Service Experience Framework to generate more accurate and insightful research projects that address the refugee crisis. The framework emphasizes that all levels and stages in refugees' journey are interconnected. To comprehensively understand and support a refugee's wellbeing at any given time during the journey, experiences in previous phases, as well as actors at other levels, must be considered; and the intended and unintended effects of wellbeing measures must be carefully considered, monitored, and managed (Cheung and McColl-Kennedy 2019; Finsterwalder and Kuppelwieser 2020). Scholars need to take a holistic approach to their research projects involving interactions between multiple stakeholders, at different levels, over different stages of refugees' journey.

### *Research Directions*

Figure 2 depicts a proposed research agenda that follows from our conceptual framework. It distinguishes the topics by target groups, i.e., those of prevailing interest to public policymakers and those mainly of interest to (service) marketers. However, we acknowledge that the questions often relate to both groups. Detailed research questions relating to Figure 2 are listed in the web appendix ([insert link of the web appendix here](#); Table 1\_WA). For illustration purposes, we discuss a few selected research questions to provide some concrete ideas for future research projects.

--- Figure 2 about here ---

The first research direction based on the developed framework, is to focus on questions related to the entry stage. For example, researchers could analyze *climate change* factors that cause refugees to commence their journey. More specifically, researchers should develop a detailed understanding of how climate change exacerbates the refugee crisis and what can be done to mitigate its impact on provided services can help policymakers and service organizations develop measures to prevent those individuals from turning into refugees. Furthermore, the effectiveness of various innovative proposals like climate change impact bonds (Ahmed 2019) to help fund rehabilitation centers and other service solutions can be studied to ease the impact of climate change on the refugee crisis.

A second research direction is to focus on questions related to the transition stage. Future research could analyze the impact of *establishing and running health service centers* for refugees in transition. For example, studying questions like what specific care options need to be offered in such centers, or what resources are needed to ensure public health and safety, would provide valuable insights for policymakers. Another important research topic is *refugee camps*. Future research could examine the effectiveness of different strategies that shape governmental efforts, for example, on the island of Lesbos (Greece), to ensure that refugee camps do not become a long-term solution.

A third research direction is to focus on refugee integration topics within the exit phase. “How can services help refugees to integrate into the host community?” is an open question researchers could focus on. One specific research stream could be to continue the efforts to understand the importance of educational services for refugees’ successful integration. Streitwieser et al. (2019), for example, analyze refugee-specific educational interventions

implemented by universities and other institutions in the U.S and Europe. The authors find a few positive effects of such educational service interventions. Future research projects could empirically test the proposed positive effects of such transformative service initiatives in more detail.

A fourth direction is to analyze *service inclusion across all three phases* of the refugee journey. Given the evidence that refugees lack fair and equitable access to services in many contexts, understanding the reasons for such exclusion would be an important step in removing such causes of suffering and thereby improving their wellbeing. Another research idea is to analyze refugee *barriers* (decelerators) to fair access to services during entry, transition and exit stages of their journey, and to develop strategies that help refugees overcome such barriers. Related to this, context specific barriers are not well-known. Analyzing the specific decelerators for access to education, to housing, or to financial services would be a needed contribution. The public policy implications of such efforts to improve inclusion of refugees in service settings would be an interesting topic to study as it may have repercussions for governments and policy makers in terms of potential response and pushback from their constituents.

Fifth, the Transformative Refugee Service Experience Framework includes a refugee experience gauge ranging from suffering to wellbeing, and positions such a gauge at each of the nine points in the journey phases/system levels matrix. A refugee experience scale could be created and tested allowing refugee service researchers to assess the refugee's experience at each point in the matrix and then to develop an overall refugee experience measure by combining the nine matrix points. Further, such a refugee experience scale could be used to aggregate refugee experiences in different countries and from different nationalities, which would enable benchmarking efforts to improve refugee experiences. Finally, a very timely and important

research direction could be to monitor the prevention and treatment of a pandemic like COVID-19 for this displaced population. Developing new research ideas and projects would help prepare the appropriate action, such as access to health services for refugees, who are one of the most vulnerable populations in the advent of COVID-19 (Clayton 2020).

To sum up, engaging in refugee-related research presents the opportunity for public policy and marketing researchers to work on solving one of today's pressing grand challenges (Eisenhardt et al. 2016) or wicked problems (Kennedy et al. 2017).

### *Challenges*

Despite the promising research directions proposed above, we acknowledge a number of challenges that need to be addressed. One such challenge is the *lack of a specific theory* or comprehensive theoretical frameworks that researchers can use. Our conceptual framework can be a starting point and provide a structured guidance to researchers and policymakers in their efforts to support refugees and navigate the refugee research, service, and policy landscapes.

Another challenge is that *refugee data are difficult to access*. Related to this is the *lack of specific and clear outcome variables* to include in such research projects. This challenge is in fact part of the overall difficulty in measuring the impact of any effort to help refugees. One solution for this challenge could be to adopt more action-based research approaches (Elg et al. 2020; Lewin 1946; Ozanne and Saatcioglu 2008). Such research may simultaneously allow actively supporting refugees and establishing relevant measures that can be continuously improved and evaluated by researchers. Furthermore, it allows collecting longitudinal qualitative and quantitative data, which enables researchers to integrate information from the outlined stages of the journey to identify disruption points in the refugee service system and gain insights on how previous refugee experiences shape refugees' future needs.

### **Managerial Agenda: Directions and Recommendations**

We hope that the framework developed in this paper will offer various stakeholders including governments, policymakers, service organizations and NGOs a new lens and mindset to approach the refugee problem. This framework suggests that refugees cannot be treated as a homogenous group with the same or similar needs. In fact, refugees go through multi-phase journeys with different needs at different levels of a service system during each phase. Therefore, those stakeholders need to adopt similar multi-level, multi-phase thinking in their efforts, whether those efforts include service solutions or policies that seek to help refugees. Furthermore, rather than treating refugees as recipients or passive beneficiaries of services, our framework suggests that stakeholders should recognize the active agency of refugees through the design, monitoring, and evaluation of public service systems so they can be change agents in their own right. Therefore, various stakeholders including service organizations and policymakers need to motivate and engage refugees in public service provision as co-producers for other refugees as well as for the wider population. However, these expected long-term effects require a stepwise approach that makes the framework more actionable. Inspired by the ideas and discussion of Ozanne et al. (2017, p. 1) on “assessing the societal impact of research,” we suggest the following three strategic directions: (1) awareness creation, (2) productive interactions, and (3) improved collaboration to develop long-term refugee solutions.

#### *Awareness Creation (short-term)*

In line with the recommendations of Ozanne et al. (2017), our own ideas and contributions to create awareness among practitioners are practitioner-oriented publications and reports, a refugee service blog, online communication outputs, and other managerial presentations.



*Productive Interactions (mid-term)*

Addressing the refugee crisis requires productive interactions between stakeholders. It is critical for policymakers, managers, and non-profit organizations to understand the importance of such interactions and collaborations with each other, as refugee needs change depending on the levels of refugee service systems and the phases of their journey as suggested by the framework. One possibility for productive interaction for policymakers is, for example, to join the World Economic Forum and to discuss topics such as “how refugees can realize their own economic potential” ([www.weforum.org/agenda/2019](http://www.weforum.org/agenda/2019)). Similarly, it would be helpful for practitioners to initiate and formalize interactions with public policy actors such as national or local governments, representatives of ministries responsible for refugee integration, or representatives of political parties.

*Public policy stakeholders*, for example, could take away from these interactions that the refugee journey should be understood as a legal journey relating to formal requirements and a physical journey. In contrast, our conception of the refugee service journey as consisting of entry, transitions, and exit phases shifts the focus towards the evolution of the refugee situation, a concept that integrates formal, dynamic, and experiential considerations. Furthermore, since their journeys may involve different countries, as the physical locations of refugees change from phase to phase, interactions with service organizations and policymakers across countries may be needed to make their overall refugee experiences less prone to suffering and more likely to be wellbeing experiences.

*Service providers*, such as the Avanti Communication Group which donates Telecommunications equipment for the UNHCR operation in Uganda (UNHCR 2020a, p. 55), can use the framework to discuss possibilities to improve (telecommunication) services for the

benefit of refugees in all phases of their journey. Moreover, productive interactions among all stakeholders would help identify the processes that lead to gaps between (macro-level) policy and (meso- and micro-level) practice.

Finally, productive interactions rely on authentic actor-to-actor connections that refugees experience in contact with host country individuals and host communities. Productive interactions between *refugees and host country representatives* can instill confidence among refugees to apply their skills to realize their own business ideas, such as social enterprises, refugee-for-refugee initiatives, or refugee farmer associations (Betts et al. 2014). Our research shows that some host communities willingly welcome refugees by opening their homes or volunteering in reception centers that coordinate and distribute essential resources such as water, food, shelter, finance, or healthcare services. However, these private engagements need recognition, motivation, and support to sustain engagement.

#### *Improved Collaboration (long-term)*

In a long-term perspective (5-10 years), the most important position public policy and other stakeholders could take is that current refugee service systems need to become more hospitable. A fundamental requirement of such transformation processes are improved collaborations. For instance, the TERN initiative is a good example of a long-term refugee entrepreneurial collaboration with a network of 210 entrepreneurs and 350 company supporters ([www.wearetern.org](http://www.wearetern.org)). TERN states: “We support refugee entrepreneurs in the creation and development of their businesses, providing services throughout three stages of entrepreneurial process: business exploration, business start-up and business growth”.

Moreover, the UNHCR (2018a) recommends the establishment of more local refugee service points by national or local governmental institutions in the long-term. The “Welcome to

the Colorado Refugee Services Program” is a good example of a government-initiated network for refugee resettlement ([www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdhs/refugee-services](http://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdhs/refugee-services)).

Fundamentally, our society needs to adopt transformative collaboration approaches and methods that accelerate solving the profound inequality problems of the refugee crisis (Fisk et al. 2019) and elevate the Human Experience (HX) (Fisk et al. 2020).

### **Conclusion**

The Transformative Refugee Service Experience Framework portrays the refugee experience (ranging from suffering to wellbeing) as the culmination of the refugee service system (ranging from hostile to hospitable) at each of three service levels (micro, meso and macro) during the refugee service journey (entry, transitions, exit). The framework provides a tool for actors in refugee service systems to critically evaluate their service offerings to refugees. Researchers and practitioners alike can use the framework to focus on the many specific areas and contexts identified in the paper to create enduring hospitable refugee service systems that co-create humane refugee services.

As this article was written, the rapid spread of the COVID-19 virus had been declared a pandemic. Since the plight of every refugee is an involuntary migration of uncertain duration, such involuntary migration is only made worse by public health recommendations for “social distancing.” Refugees are frequently crowded into temporary holding pens, transport boats, and refugee camps, with very poor sanitation systems. None of these environments allow for “social distancing,” which will leave refugees among the most vulnerable human beings in the most severe public health crisis since the “1918 flu pandemic”. Refugees will face two new risks: 1) higher risk of getting infected with COVID-19 and increased likelihood of dying from the virus, and 2) greater risk of discrimination and persecution because they are more likely to get sick than

the local citizens in the countries they seek to join. Recently, Greece reported its first cases of COVID-19 infection among its tens of thousands of refugees, the majority of whom dwell in grossly overcrowded camps with limited access to basic necessities like soap and water (The Guardian 2020). Hence there is great risk that the global refugee crisis this article seeks to reduce through the Transformative Refugee Service Experience Framework will become much worse before refugee services can be transformed to become more humane. Human societies should be judged by how they treat the most vulnerable humans. It appears that the humanity of every country will be severely tested by the COVID-19 pandemic.

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**Table 1. Selected Articles on Refugees and Services and Related Research Gaps**

Literature Area	Research Focus	Authors (Year)	Key Content	Research Method	Research Gaps
<i>Refugee Service Experience</i>	Refugee Experiences and Suffering	Baker (1990) Evans (2007) Rapp et al. (2019) Karr et al. (2020) Lønning (2020)	Refugee experience Suffering: Senegal conflict Experiences of self-reported health Experience of refugee children Experiences of fragmented journeys	Conceptual Empirical, mixed method Empirical, quantitative Empirical, photovoice Empirical, ethnographic	Research Gap 1: Lack of understanding of refugee service needs and experiences. Only a few previous studies address refugee service needs and experiences.
	Refugee Service Experience	Polonsky et al. (2018) Shneikat and Ryan (2018) Kabadayi (2019) Forde et al. (2015) Cheung and McColl-Kennedy (2019)	Discrimination reduces blood donation How to enter normality Sabotage behaviour by employees Positive experiences through sport Refugee situation in Australia, U.S.	Empirical, quantitative Empirical, qualitative Empirical, netnographic Empirical, case study Empirical, qualitative	
<i>Refugee Service System</i>	Marketing and Market Systems	Mittelstaedt et al. (2009) Shultz et al. (2012) Krisjanous and Kadirov (2018) Haase et al. (2018) Shultz et al. (2020)	System view on access to healthcare Call to prioritize refugee topics Demystification framework Value creation, marketing systems Framework on refugees' pathways	Conceptual Conceptual Historical case Empirical, qualitative Conceptual, CfA	Research Gap 2: Limited knowledge on how to transform a hostile refugee service system into a more hospitable one.
	Hostile versus Hospitable Systems	Fixsen et al. (2013) McFaden (2016) Safouane (2017)	Evidence-based programs Hospitality, U.K., asylum system Hospitality vs inhospitality in Germany	Conceptual Archival analysis Secondary data	
<i>Refugee Journeys and Integration</i>	Refugee Journeys	Kunz (1973) Brekke and Aarset (2009) BenEzer and Zetter (2014) Nardone and Correa-Velez (2015) Chuah et al. (2018)	Early concept of refugee movement Destination choice of refugees Understand the refugee journey Journeys are unpredictable Health needs and access barriers	Conceptual Empirical, quantitative Conceptual Empirical, qualitative Empirical, qualitative	Research Gap 3: Insufficient acknowledgement and understanding of refugee service needs and experiences within <i>all</i> phases of the refugee journey.
	Transformative Consumer Research	Kriechbaum-V. and Kreuzbauer (2006) Zourrig (2018)	Refugees consumption Refugees food consumption	Empirical, qualitative Conceptual	Research Gap 4: Limited knowledge of refugees' service needs and

<b><i>Refugee Service System Levels</i></b>	Transformative Service Research	Finsterwalder (2017) Fisk et al. (2018) Shneikat and Ryan (2018) Alkire et al. (2020)	Research agenda Suffering is a TSR outcome Social Entrepreneurship Framework Services support needed	Conceptual, CfA Conceptual, CfA Empirical, qualitative Empirical, qualitative	experiences across and within all service system levels.
	Special Issue Service Industries Journal	Farmaki and Christou (2019) Nasr and Fisk (2019) McIntosh et al. (2019) Alrawadieh et al. (2019) Shneikat and Alrawadieh (2019) Daunfeldt et al. (2019)	Research agenda How can service researchers help Reception services offered by NPOs Refugee entrepreneurship Refugee entrepreneurship Access to the job market	Literature review, CfA Conceptual, CfA Empirical, quantitative Empirical, quantitative Empirical, quantitative Empirical, quantitative	

Key: CfA = Call for Action

**Table 2. Conceptualizations of the Refugee Journey**

<b>Author(s)</b>	<b>Journey Conceptualization</b>	<b>Approach</b>
Chuah et al. (2018)	1) Pre-departure phase 2) Travel phase 3) Arrival phase	Kinetic
Nardone and Correa-Velez (2015)	1) First movements 2) Decision making 3) Transit country experience 4) Arrival in host country	Experiential
BenEzer and Zetter (2014)	1) Temporal aspects 2) Drivers 3) Process of the journey 4) Refugee characteristics	Experiential
Brekke and Aarset (2009)	1) Country of origin 2) Transition countries 3) Host country	Kinetic
Desjarlais et al. (1995)	1) Pre-flight period 2) Flight phase 3) Reception period 4) Resettlement phase	Kinetic
Kunz (1973)	1) Departure cohort 2) Form of displacement 3) Asylum interval 4) Resettlement cohort	Kinetic

Key: Kinetic model = chronological passage of refugees  
 Experiential model = experiences of refugees along their passage

**Figure 1. Transformative Refugee Service Experience Framework**

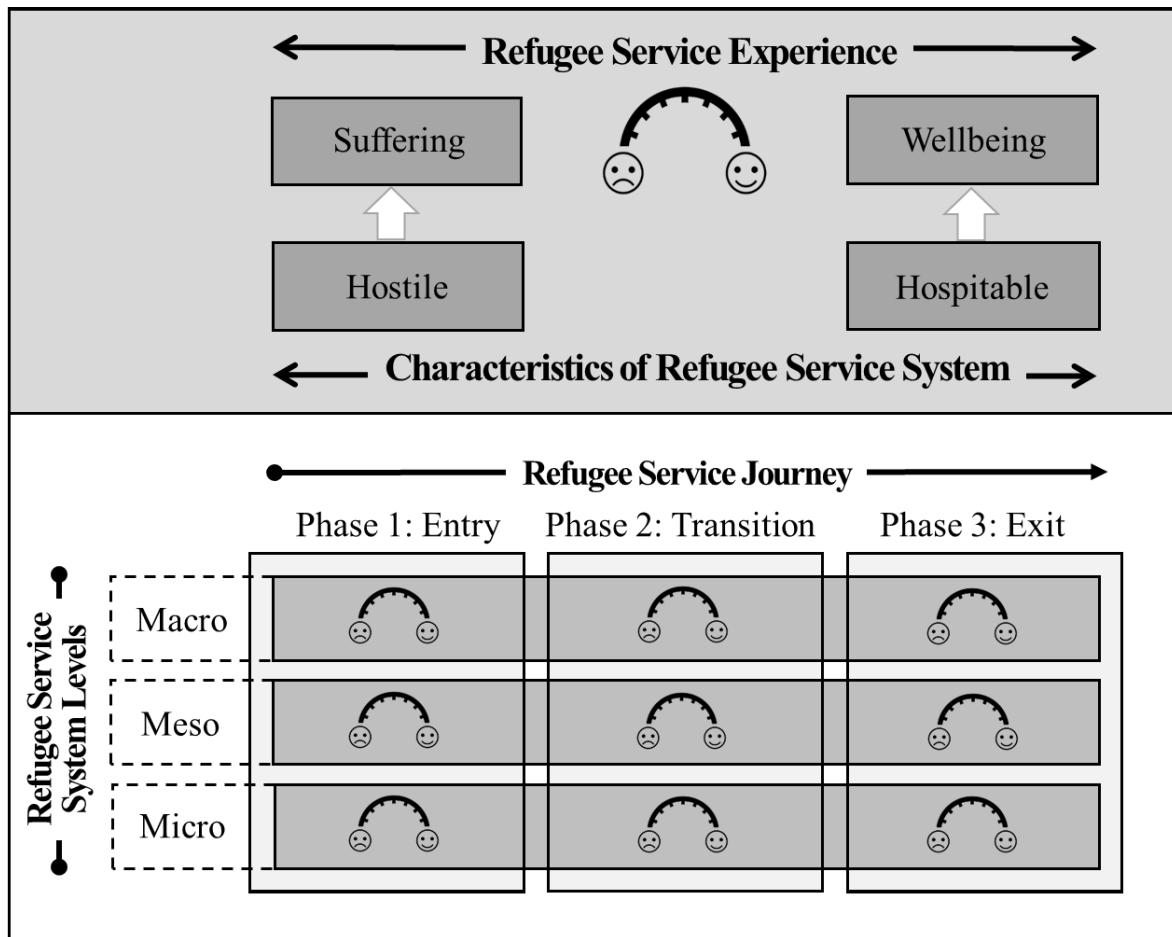


Figure 2. Research Agenda for Public Policy and Marketing

