

Refugees at home: The role of hospitableness in fostering pro-social attitudes and behaviours towards refugees

Authors: Zaid Alrawadieh, Levent Altinay, Nataša Urbančíková, Oto Hudec

Purpose – This study examines the role of hospitableness towards refugees, as embraced by local hosts, in engendering positive social outcomes including fostering favourable attitudes and empathy towards refugees, satisfaction from hosting refugees in private dwellings, and advocacy for hosting them.

Methodology – Rooted in the Contact Theory and drawing on a hospitality social lens framework, the study employs a mixed-methods approach using a sequential quantitative-qualitative design to understand the interface between hospitableness, attitudes and empathy towards refugees, satisfaction from hosting refugees in private dwellings, and advocacy for hosting them. A conceptual model is proposed and tested using 160 valid surveys collected from individuals hosting Ukrainian refugees in Slovakia. SEM-PLS is used to test the proposed model. Twenty-five in-depth interviews with Slovakian individuals hosting refugees in private dwellings were also conducted to explain and further explore the initial quantitative results.

Findings – The findings indicate that hospitableness has a positive effect on attitudes towards refugees, fosters a sense of empathy, and results in satisfaction from hosting refugees. Interestingly, while hospitableness *per se* does not directly affect advocacy for hosting refugees, it does so indirectly via favourable attitudes towards refugees and satisfaction from the hosting experience. While qualitative findings largely support and further explain the quantitative results, interesting insights are also obtained.

Practical implications – The study advocates that hospitableness should be addressed from a social lens beyond its traditional commercial boundaries. Several implications for policy-makers, NGOs, and other stakeholders involved in hosting refugees are proposed. Overall, policies need to be oriented toward harnessing the power of refugee hosting schemes thus increasing the role of hospitableness in addressing societal challenges such as the refugee crisis.

Originality/value – While not new, private hosting of refugees has recently gained momentum following the outbreak of the Ukrainian refugee crisis. Despite some valuable research delving into hosting experiences from the refugees' and hosts' perspectives, this research stream is notably fragmented and largely exploratory. Specifically, there seems to be no comprehensive understanding of how hospitableness towards refugees, as embraced by hosts, can engender positive social outcomes including fostering favourable attitudes and empathy towards refugees, satisfaction from hosting refugees, and advocacy for hosting refugees in private dwellings. Overall, hospitality research is notably biased towards commercial settings focusing on instrumental benefits rather than societal outcomes. This study focuses on the societal outcomes of hospitableness as a tool to address the refugee crisis.

Keywords: hospitableness, attitudes towards refugees, empathy towards refugees, satisfaction, advocacy intention, refugee welcome, private sponsorship of refugees, guest–host relationship, Ukrainian refugees.

Introduction

Hospitality in both its commercial and non-commercial forms has a central role in establishing and nurturing community life and well-being (Davari et al., 2023). However, hospitality research is notably biased towards commercial settings focusing on instrumental benefits rather than societal outcomes. In this sense, the paucity of research around refugee hospitality is not surprising. “This narrow focus reduces hospitality to an economic activity, just as it reduces the interactions between hosts and guests to commercial exchanges” (Lynch et al., 2011: 5). However, recently, there has been fragmented yet growing interest in addressing the non-commercial outcomes of hospitality and its role in tackling global challenges and societal issues such as the aging population (Feng et al., 2023) and the refugee crisis (Altinay et al., 2023a). In a recent study, Altinay et al. (2023a) noted that hospitableness as perceived by Ukrainian refugees fosters social inclusion while also mitigating loneliness. However, despite the valuable contribution of these research endeavours, most focus primarily on the perspective of the end-user (i.e., the guest) while neglecting the crucial role of the facilitator (i.e., the host). The current study endeavours to address the above-mentioned research gaps by exploring the interface between hospitableness, attitudes, and empathy towards refugees, satisfaction from hosting refugees, and advocacy for hosting them. We do so by proposing and testing a theoretical model linking these relationships (see Figure 1) followed by a qualitative study to explain and further explore the initial quantitative results.

Driven mainly by humanitarian and ethical concerns as well as advocacy for diversity and multiculturalism (Holloway et al., 2019), local residents may engage in supporting refugees using their private resources (e.g., financial support, hosting in own dwellings). This has encouraged the introduction of private sponsorship of refugee programmes in several countries including Canada, the UK, and Slovakia (the context of the present study) whereby locals challenge restrictive asylum policies by sponsoring refugees and even offering hospitality in their own dwellings (Boccagni & Giudici, 2022). Overall, while sponsorship of refugees implies some sort of hospitality, there is limited understanding of the interface between hospitableness of the hosts, attitudes and empathy towards refugees, satisfaction from hosting, and advocacy for hosting behaviour. This omission is intriguing given that the sustainability of refugee hosting behaviour may well depend on how favourably hosts perceive and view refugees (Schrooten et al., 2022). As noted by McIntosh and Cockburn-Wooten (2019), there is a need for greater emphasis on service provision that entails social inclusion and welcome of refugees. The present study proposes hospitableness, engendered through private hosting of refugees, as a path to promote pro-social outcomes contributing to refugee welcome in hosting societies.

The present study’s contribution to literature is multi-fold. First, rooted in the Contact Theory (Allport, 1954), the current study is among the first empirical investigations to examine the role of hospitableness as a potential driver of pro-social behaviour involving refugees. By doing so, the study responds to a recent call by Knappert et al. (2021: 438) “to explore ways in which this [personal] contact [between refugees and host-country residents] can be facilitated”. This is particularly important in the context of refugees given the limited empirical inquiry around the contact hypothesis in relation to refugee–host community interactions and attitudes (Betts et al., 2023). Second, the study brings extant fragmented research exploring private sponsorship

of refugees to the fore by providing a more comprehensive understanding of the outcomes of hospitableness. By doing so, our study joins a limited but notably promising stream of research, bringing hospitality, mobility, and refugee studies into closer dialogue (Altinay et al., 2023a; Farahani, 2021). Third, drawing on the hospitality social lens framework (Causevic & Lynch, 2009), the present study shifts attention to non-commercial hospitality and underscores the positive social outcomes of hospitableness in addressing global challenges such as the refugee crisis (Altinay et al., 2023a). This shift of attention has become necessary with the majority of extant hospitality research being biased towards commercial settings and focusing on instrumental benefits rather than societal outcomes (Altinay et al., 2023a; Causevic & Lynch, 2009). By doing so, we respond to Lynch et al.'s (2011: 3) still-valid concerns around the “absence of interdisciplinary conversation” and the “missed opportunity to infuse hospitality studies with critical significance and to bring the concept of hospitality to bear on some of the most pressing social, cultural and political questions of our time”.

Literature review

Contact theory

The Contact Theory (Allport, 1954) advocates that, under certain conditions, opportunities of direct contact between individuals pertaining to different social groups and ethnicities (e.g., majority vs minority) enhance mutual understanding and reduce negative stereotyping, prejudice, and conflict. This theory has received considerable attention and has been subject to extensive application across various disciplines including social psychology (e.g., Driel & Verkuyten, 2022), migration and refugee research (e.g., Betts et al., 2023) and, to a much lesser extent, tourism and hospitality (e.g., Li & Wang, 2020). Overall, the validity of the contact hypothesis as a sensible lens to understand the favourable outcomes of social contact has been widely confirmed (Betts et al., 2023).

In the specific context of refugees, the contact theory has been applied to show how contact between refugees and host population improves public attitudes towards the refugees while also reducing negative prejudice and stereotyping against them (De Coninck et al., 2021). For instance, in their large-scale study, Knappert et al. (2021) found that personal contact with refugees is associated with less negative stereotypes among residents in the Netherlands. One way to influence and shape locals' attitudes towards refugees is through encouraging closer contact between refugees and host populations (Dempster & Hargrave, 2017). Thus, private sponsorship of refugees through hosting them can provide an ideal space for this contact. For the present study, the contact theory serves as a useful lens to understand how hospitableness of local hosts towards refugees represents a genuine social contact that eventually engenders positive attitudes and empathy towards refugees and fosters pro-social behaviour (i.e., advocacy for private hosting of refugees).

Private sponsorship of refugees

Private hosting of refugees by locals is not new. For more than four decades now, Canadian citizens have been able to sponsor refugees through the country's private sponsorship of refugees scheme, taking on the responsibility of supporting refugees resettling to Canada (Treviranus & Casasola, 2003). However, it is only recently that private sponsorship schemes

have been introduced in some countries, such as Australia and the UK, as a way to involve the public community in sharing the costs of refugee resettlement. Existing research addressing private sponsorship of refugees tends to examine the evolution and development of these schemes (e.g., Treviranus & Casasola, 2003), their benefits and limitations (e.g., Altinay et al., 2023a), the motives and characteristics of sponsors (i.e., hosts) and sponsored refugees (e.g., Derwing & Mulder, 2003), and host–refugee relations (Macklin et al., 2020). Interestingly, however, little is known about the role of hospitableness of sponsoring individuals (i.e., the hosts) in fostering pro-social attitudes and behavioural intentions towards refugees. This omission is intriguing given that private sponsorship of refugees implies a sort of hospitality offered to a stranger (i.e., the refugee) which necessitates a better understanding of the social outcomes of hospitableness (Altinay et al., 2023a).

Hospitableness towards refugees

As a catalyst for transformative experiences and a path to fostering prosperity and wellbeing, (Bilgihan et al., 2023), hospitableness can be defined as the hosts' involvement in "offering hospitality in a giving and generous way, without thought of repayment in kind or any other form of reciprocity" (Blain & Lashley, 2014: 2). Hospitality and hostility towards refugees have been traditionally at the heart of growing research in various disciplines including migration studies (Boano & Astolfo, 2020) and political psychology (Fraser & Murakami, 2022). Recently, there has also been some research within the realm of hospitality focusing on refugees (Altinay et al., 2023a). By definition, refugees are forcibly displaced individuals who seek safe refuge in hosting societies. Refugee flux can create pressure on local welfare systems, resulting in social intolerance and hostility towards refugees (Kheireddine et al., 2021). Hence, there exists considerable research addressing hostility towards refugees (e.g., Kheireddine et al., 2021) and, to a lesser extent, hospitality towards them (Altinay et al., 2023a). The intertwined nature of hospitality and hostility in the context of refugees is intriguing as "there is always a little hostility in all hosting and hospitality [of refugees]" (Kheireddine et al., 2021:401)". In sum, as vulnerable people, hostility towards refugees can have detrimental impacts on their well-being and integration (da Silva Rebelo et al., 2018) while hospitableness can contribute positively by enhancing their overall social well-being (Ran & Join-Lambert, 2020). For instance, in their recent study, Altinay et al. (2023a) examined the positive social and psychological outcomes of hospitableness for refugees. However, their work focuses on refugees while neglecting the hosts' perspectives. The present study addresses the role of hospitableness, as embraced by individuals hosting refugees, in fostering pro-social attitudes and behaviours towards refugees. In accordance with the contact theory (Allport, 1954), attitudes towards refugees can be improved as a result of positive contact between refugees and the host population (Betts et al., 2023). In this sense, we view hospitableness embraced by the hosts as a path to facilitate and engender favourable attitudes towards refugees.

Theoretical background and hypotheses development

The social outcomes of hospitableness

Extant research highlights the positive social outcomes of hospitality in commercial settings (Altinay et al., 2019; 2023b). However, there exists very limited empirical investigation on how hospitableness, outside its traditional commercial context, results in favourable societal outcomes. In the context of refugees, hospitableness promotes social inclusion while also mitigating loneliness (Altinay et al., 2023a). The theory of humanitarian deservingness suggests that public support for refugees is shaped based on how hosts view refugees as vulnerable persons who deserve protection (Fraser & Murakami, 2022). Being hospitable implies openness and generosity towards the other (Blain & Lashley, 2014). This is particularly relevant when the other is “in need”—such as refugees (Böhm et al., 2018). Previous research suggests a positive relationship between refugee–host interaction and the perception of hosts towards refugees (Betts et al., 2023). Betts et al. (2023) also highlight that attitudes towards refugees are largely formed at the intra-group level, within households and immediate neighbourhoods. Therefore, based on contact theory (Allport, 1954), we argue that hospitableness implies a personal contact between hosts and refugees which is associated with more positive attitudes towards refugees (Knappert et al., 2021). Based on the above discussion, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: Hospitableness positively fosters attitudes towards refugees.

Empathy towards refugees as a largely vulnerable segment of the society is crucial to reducing prejudice and stereotyping against them (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008). Broadly defined as “the reactions of one individual to the observed experiences of another” (Davis, 1983: 113), empathy can be enhanced through direct contact between hosts and refugees. The experience of sponsoring and hosting refugees can be meaningful, rewarding, and transformative (Macklin et al., 2020). Specifically, the extent to which hosts may develop a sense of empathy towards their refugee guests may be associated with how hospitable they are. Macklin et al.’s (2020) study on refugee sponsors revealed how transformative hosting could be through cultivating empathetic capacity in individuals hosting refugees. Based on this discussion, we argue that hospitable hosts are likely to develop a sense of empathy towards refugees. Thus, we propose the following hypothesis:

H2: Hospitableness positively enhances a sense of empathy towards refugees.

Favourable evaluation of private sponsorship and hosting of refugees is vital to sustaining hosts’ contribution to the refugee resettlement and integration process (Ran & Join-Lambert, 2020). As a personality trait, hospitableness can involve a sense of altruism to please the other (i.e., the guest) (Lashley, 2015) and a sense of joy from caring about the well-being of the other (Blain & Lashley, 2014). In this sense, satisfaction from hosting refugees may be associated with the level of hospitableness of the hosts. Based on the contact theory, we argue that hospitable hosts who enjoy taking responsibility for the well-being of their guests and who seek out opportunities to help refugees through hosting them are more likely to derive satisfaction from their hosting experience. Based on the above discussion, we propose the following hypothesis:

H3: Hospitableness has a positive effect on satisfaction from hosting.

Antecedents of advocacy for private hosting of refugees

As established earlier, private hosting of refugees can be an innovative and cost-efficient approach to accommodate refugees and facilitate their resettlement and integration process (Ran & Join-Lambert, 2020). Crucial to the sustainability of these schemes is the advocacy through spreading positive word-of-mouth and recommendation to others. In their study, Macklin et al. (2018) noted that family, friendship, and neighbourhood networks were helpful resources in assisting refugee sponsors to come together. In accordance with the contact theory, we expect that hospitable individuals develop a sense of responsibility for the well-being of refugees to the extent to which they may recommend that others engage in hosting refugees. Hence, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H4: Hospitableness positively influences advocacy for hosting refugees.

Similarly, pro-social behaviour through advocacy for hosting refugees can depend on how hosts view refugees and the extent to which they sense empathy towards them. As noted by Böhm et al. (2018), attitudes towards refugees determine (un)willingness to help them. Thus, one may safely assume that favourable attitudes towards refugees may enhance hosts' intention to recommend family members and friends to host refugees. Likewise, and in accordance with the empathy–altruism hypothesis (Batson, 1991), empathy felt for an individual in need fosters the readiness to help that individual (Batson et al., 2002). Sense of empathy is often associated with selflessness and concern for others (Davis, 1983). Hence, hosting refugees in private dwellings often reflects care and empathy towards vulnerable individuals (Rémy, 2019). In this sense, one may predict that hosts who demonstrate high empathy towards refugees are likely to develop a sense of responsibility towards them which results in them advocating for hosting refugees through recommending it to family members and friends. Based on the aforementioned discussion, we predict favourable attitudes towards refugees and empathy towards them to positively influence advocacy for hosting refugees. Thus, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H5: Attitude towards refugees positively influences advocacy for hosting them.

H6: Empathy towards refugees positively influences advocacy for hosting them.

As highlighted in the previous sections, sponsoring and hosting refugees can be both challenging and rewarding (Macklin et al., 2020). Previous research indicates that experiences in hosting refugees can determine behavioural intention such as willingness to host again and recommending hosting to others (Macklin et al., 2020). For instance, Macklin et al. (2020) found that the majority of their sample (88%) would recommend sponsoring/hosting to others. In accordance with the social exchange theory (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005), favourable evaluation of an experience is likely to positively influence advocacy behaviour through recommendation to friends and family members (Harrison et al., 2021). In the specific context of the present study, it is logical to assume that hosts who perceive their hosting experience to be positive are likely to advocate for hosting through spreading positive word-of-mouth and recommending others to host refugees. Thus, we propose the following hypothesis:

H7: Satisfaction from hosting refugees has a positive effect on advocacy for hosting them.

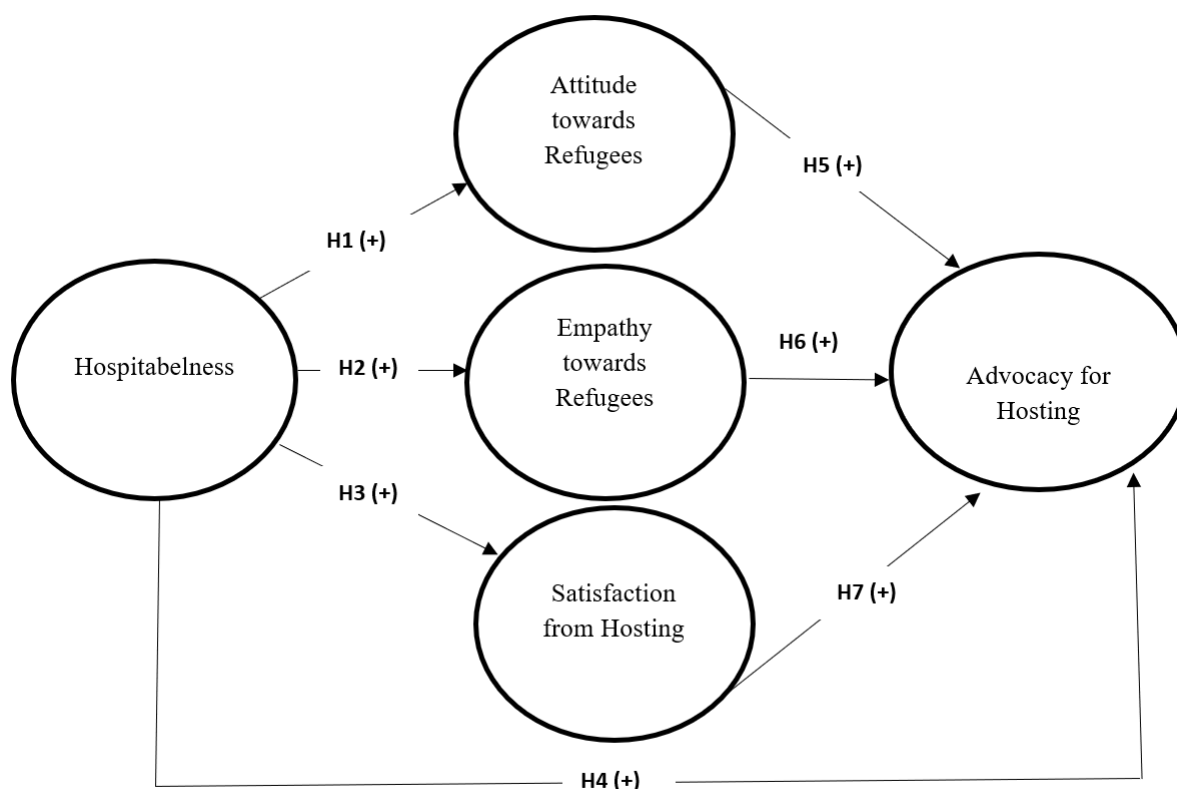
The mediating effect of attitudes and empathy towards refugees and satisfaction from hosting refugees

As established above, we argue that hospitableness may result in positive pro-social behaviour through advocating for hosting refugees. However, one may argue that hospitableness, as a personality trait (Telfer, 2000), may not be a sufficient driver for recommendation intention. Previous research indicates that not all sponsorship and hosting experiences can be favourable (Derwing & Mulder, 2003) and, therefore, even though initially hospitable, some hosts may refrain from engaging in future hosting of refugees and/or recommending hosting to others. In this sense, we argue that attitudes and empathy towards refugees, as well as satisfaction from hosting refugees, can represent the underlying mechanism through which hospitableness positively impacts recommendation intention. This assumption is based on the contact theory (Allport, 1954), and Pettigrew and Tropp's (2008) proposition that the positive effect of contact is transmitted through knowledge about the outgroup (i.e., refugees) and empathy towards them. Based on the aforementioned discussion, we propose the following hypotheses:

H8: Attitudes towards refugees mediates the relationship between hospitableness and advocacy for hosting refugees.

H9: Empathy towards refugees mediates the relationship between hospitableness and advocacy for hosting refugees.

H10: Satisfaction from hosting refugees mediates the relationship between hospitableness and advocacy for hosting refugees.



H8: Hospitableness → attitudes towards refugees → advocacy for hosting refugees.

H9: Hospitableness → empathy towards refugees → advocacy for hosting refugees.

H10: Hospitableness → satisfaction from hosting refugees → advocacy for hosting refugees.

Fig. 1: Conceptual model.

Authors' own creation

Research design

Drawing on a two-phase sequential explanatory mixed-methods design, the present study is based on a quantitative research followed by a qualitative enquiry to explain and further explore the initial quantitative results (Creswell & Clark, 2017). In Study 1, the hypothesized relationships are proposed and tested whereas in Study 2 a qualitative enquiry is undertaken to explain in more depth how hospitableness can engender positive social outcomes (i.e., fostering favourable attitudes and empathy towards refugees), while also leading to satisfaction from hosting refugees, and advocacy for hosting them in private dwellings. The following sections present the methodological procedures and the findings of Study 1 and Study 2 followed by a holistic discussion on the interface between hospitableness and pro-social attitudes and behaviours towards refugees. Ethical approval for this study was obtained from the Technical University of Košice.

Context: private hosting of Ukrainian refugees in Slovakia

As these lines are being written (10 March 2023), Slovakia has hosted around 110,000 Ukrainian refugees; equal to around 1.4% of the eight million Ukrainian refugees registered across Europe (Statistia, 2023). While Slovakia has received far fewer refugees compared to major Ukrainian refugee hosting countries such as Poland (19.3%), Germany (13%), and Czechia (6%) (Statistia, 2023), providing the basic needs of shelter and healthcare was a challenge during the first weeks and months of the crisis. Alongside the temporary protection scheme introduced by the Slovakian government to help refugees access basic services, including accommodation and healthcare, a private sponsorship of refugees programme was introduced allowing locals to host refugees in their own dwellings. The government-supported sponsorship scheme provided financial assistance and guidance to those who wanted to host refugees in their homes. The programme has been successful in increasing the number of privately sponsored refugees and improving the quality of their accommodation.

Study 1

Measures

To measure the five constructs employed in the present study, multiple-item scales were adapted from previous research. Hospitableness, conceptualised in the present study as the extent to which hosts view themselves as hospitable, was measured using nine items adapted from Blain and Lashley (2014) on a five-point Likert scale (1= Strongly Disagree, 5= Strongly Agree). Attitude towards refugees was measured using nine items describing two dimensions: *warmth* (i.e., friendly, warmth, trustworthy, tolerant, and sincere) and *competence* (i.e., capable, efficient, organised, and skilful) adapted from Knappert et al. (2021) based on Fiske et al.'s (2002) model of stereotype content. Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which these qualities apply to refugees using a five-point Likert scale anchored by 1= Not at all to 5= Extremely. Empathy towards refugees was measured using 14 items adapted from

Davis (1983). Respondents were presented with statements describing empathy with others and were asked to indicate the extent to which these statements describe them using a scale ranging from 1= Does not describe me well to 5= Describes me very well. Three items were adapted from Wu and Chang (2019) to measure advocacy intention on a five-point Likert scale (1=Very Unlikely to 5= Very Likely). Finally, satisfaction from hosting refugees was measured using three items adapted from Oliver (1997) and measured using a five-point Likert scale anchored by 1= Strongly Disagree to 5= Strongly Agree.

Sampling and data collection

To test the proposed model, data were collected from Slovaks hosting Ukrainian refugees in their private homes. Ukrainian refugees seek housing mainly in larger cities where they can find better employment, accommodation, and better social infrastructure. A self-administered survey was developed and distributed to hosts in Košice (100 km from the Ukrainian border) and eastern Slovakia, as well as Bratislava and other regional cities. The questionnaire was initially prepared in English and then translated into the Slovak language. The data collection instrument was pilot-tested prior to the data collection. It is noteworthy that respondents were not easily identifiable and accessible as many hosts seem to not have registered their accommodation officially. The data collection process began in mid-July and was completed by mid-November 2022. By the end of the data collection process, a total of 160 valid surveys were obtained and retained for further analysis. An overview of the sample is presented in Table 1. The high educational attainment of hosts is notably remarkable (around 63% hold a Master's or Ph.D. degree). This is in line with the general profile of refugee private sponsors in different countries such as Canada (Macklin et al., 2018; 2020) and Belgium (Schrooten et al., 2022).

Table 1: Descriptive profile of respondents

<i>Gender</i>	N	%	<i>Marital Status</i>	N	%
Male	68	42.5	Single	33	20.6
Female	92	57.5	Married	108	67.5
Total	160	100.0	Other	19	11.9
			Total	160	100.0
<i>Age</i>			<i>Education</i>		
16–24 years old	3	1.9	High school graduate or less	40	25.0
25–34 years old	23	14.4	College graduate/undergraduate	15	9.4
35–44 years old	64	40.0	Postgraduate	82	51.2
45–54 years old	30	18.8	Doctoral degree	19	11.9
55–64 years old	27	16.9	Professional	4	2.5
65 and above	13	8.1	Total	160	100.0
Total	160	100.0			

Source: Authors own creation

Data analysis

To test the proposed theoretical model, Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) was used (Hair et al., 2017). This technique has attracted much attention from

researchers in various disciplines including hospitality (Becker et al., 2023). PLS-SEM involves the assessment of the measurement model (i.e., outer model) followed by the assessment of the structural model (i.e., inner model) (Usakli & Kucukergin, 2018). This method was considered appropriate for this study given the relatively small sample size employed. SmartPLS 4.0 with bootstrapping of 10000 draws was used to estimate the model.

Measurement Model Assessment

Before assessing the structural model, it is essential to evaluate the measurement model. To this end, the internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity were evaluated. After dropping nine items (Hosp2, Att3, Emp1, Emp3, Emp4, Emp6, Emp7, Emp9, Emp12), all item loadings were above the recommended cut-off (Hair et al., 2017). Cronbach's alpha (CA), Composite Reliability (CR), and rho_A were examined to assess internal consistency reliability. These values are all above 0.70 (Hair et al., 2017) (see Table 2). Finally, AVE values of all constructs are above 0.50 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981) indicating that convergent validity is established.

Table 2: Assessment of measurement model

Measurement items	λ	α	CR (rho_a)	CR (rho_c)	AVE
<i>Hospitableness</i>		0.887	0.902	0.909	0.556
Hosp1: I put guests' enjoyment before my own	0.735				
Hosp3: I always try to live up to my idea of what makes a good host	0.666				
Hosp4: The comfort of guests is most important to me	0.809				
Hosp5: I get a natural high when I make my guests feel special	0.790				
Hosp6: I enjoy taking responsibility for the well-being of guests	0.841				
Hosp7: It means the world to me when guests show their approval of my hospitality	0.691				
Hosp8: It's important to do the things that people expect of a good host	0.710				
Hosp9: I seek out opportunities to help others	0.704				
<i>Attitude towards Refugees</i>		0.920	0.925	0.934	0.640
Att1: Friendly	0.774				
Att2: Warmth	0.759				
Att4: Tolerant	0.815				
Att5: Sincere	0.801				
Att6: Capable	0.859				
Att7: Efficient	0.823				
Att8: Organised	0.780				
Att9: Skilful	0.785				
<i>Empathy towards Refugees</i>		0.835	0.848	0.877	0.509
Emp2: I try to look at everybody's side of a disagreement before I make a decision	0.576				
Emp5: I believe that there are two sides to every question and try to look at them both	0.565				
Emp8: I often have tender, concerned feelings for people less fortunate than me	0.778				

Emp10: When I see someone being taken advantage of, I feel kind of protective towards them	0.770				
Emp11: Other people's misfortunes do not usually disturb me a great deal ^(R)	0.663				
Emp13: I am often quite touched by things that I see happen	0.792				
Emp14: I would describe myself as a pretty soft-hearted person	0.804				
Advocacy for Hosting		0.908	0.911	0.936	0.785
Adv1: I will recommend hosting refugees to friends and family	0.918				
Adv2: I will encourage family and friends to host refugees	0.900				
Adv3: I will say positive things about hosting refugees	0.855				
Satisfaction from Hosting		0.948	0.948	0.966	0.905
Sat1: I am sure it was the right thing to host a refugee	0.955				
Sat2: I am satisfied with the decision to host a refugee	0.962				
Sat3: I feel good about the decision to host a refugee	0.937				

(R): Reverse coded items

Source: Authors own creation

To assess the discriminant validity, the Heterotrait–Monotrait (HTMT) method (Henseler et al., 2015) was employed. All HTMT values are lower than the threshold of 0.85 indicating that the discriminant validity is established (see Table 3).

Table 3: Discriminant Validity

	HTMT ₈₅ Criterion				
	1	2	3	4	5
Attitudes towards refugees					
Empathy towards refugees	0.396				
Hospitableness	0.406	0.724			
Recommending hosting	0.580	0.478	0.401		
Satisfaction from hosting	0.434	0.562	0.353	0.811	

Source: Authors own creation

Structural Model Assessment

After assessing the measurement model, the structural model was evaluated using a bootstrapping procedure with 10000 subsamples to calculate path estimates and their corresponding t -values. Results indicate that a significant and positive relationship was found between hospitableness and attitudes towards refugees ($\beta = 0.374$, $t = 4.428$), as well as hospitableness and satisfaction from hosting refugees ($\beta = 0.362$, $t = 5.582$); thus, H1 and H3 are supported. A strong and positive relationship was found between hospitableness and empathy towards refugees ($\beta = 0.657$, $t = 14.042$), thus supporting H2. A positive relationship was found between attitude towards refugees and recommending hosting ($\beta = 0.272$, $t = 5.003$); thus, H5 is supported. Results indicate that the hypothesised positive effect of hospitableness and empathy towards refugees on recommending hosting is not significant; thus, H4 and H6 are not supported. Finally, H7 is supported given that a positive relationship was found between satisfaction from hosting and recommending hosting ($\beta = 0.641$, $t = 8.802$).

Table 4: Hypotheses Testing

Structural paths	Beta	t-value	p-value	Supported?
H1: Hospitableness → Attitudes towards refugees	0.374	4.428	0.000	Yes
H2: Hospitableness → Empathy towards refugees	0.657	14.042	0.000	Yes
H3: Hospitableness → Satisfaction from hosting	0.362	5.582	0.000	Yes
H4: Hospitableness → Advocacy for hosting	0.097	1.550	0.121	No
H5: Attitude towards refugees → Advocacy for hosting	0.272	5.003	0.000	Yes
H6: Empathy towards refugees → Advocacy for hosting	0.005	0.085	0.933	No
H7: Satisfaction from hosting → Advocacy for hosting	0.641	8.802	0.000	Yes

Source: Authors own creation

Mediating effects

Figure 1 predicts attitudes towards refugees, empathy towards refugees, and satisfaction from hosting refugees to act as potential mediators of the relationship between hospitableness and recommendation intention. The mediation effect was assessed following Zhao et al.'s (2010) recommendation. Our results reveal that attitudes towards refugees ($p < 0.001$, BCa CI:[0.042–0.177]) and satisfaction from hosting refugees ($p < 0.001$, BCa CI:[0.139–0.336]) act as potential mediators of the relationship between hospitableness and recommendation intention, but fail to confirm the mediating effects of empathy towards refugees. Thus, H8 and H10 were supported whereas H9 was not supported.

Study 2

To further explore the initial quantitative results (Study 1), a qualitative enquiry using in-depth interviews was conducted in Study 2. Twenty-five in-depth interviews were conducted with Slovakian individuals hosting Ukrainian refugees in private dwellings. This qualitative phase of the study is necessary to offer new and rich insights into host-refugee relationship and the outcomes of hospitableness.

Data collection

During Study 1, the research team established a network of local Slovaks hosting Ukrainian refugees in their private homes which facilitated accessibility to informants in Study 2. An interview protocol was developed based on initial quantitative findings as well as an extensive review of the literature. In brief, informants were asked to talk through their experience of hosting refugees in their private dwellings, their motives for doing so, and whether they were overall satisfied with their decisions to host refugees. Informants were also enquired about what hospitableness meant for them and how they demonstrate it to their hosted refugees. The qualitative data collection process began in mid-April and was completed by mid-May 2023. An overview of the sample is presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Descriptive profile of the participants

No.	Age	Gender	Past experience in hosting	Profession	Education
P1	32	Female	Yes	Freelance artist	Undergraduate degree
P2	58	Male	No	Teacher	Undergraduate degree
P3	39	Male	No	Musician	High school
P4	36	Male	No	Computer scientist	Undergraduate degree
P5	52	Male	No	Energy technician	High school

P6	67	Female	No	Retired	High school
P7	37	Male	Yes	Project manager	Undergraduate degree
P8	32	Female	No	Researcher	Undergraduate degree
P9	50	Male	No	Businessman	High school
P10	33	Female	No	Culture and creative industries NGO affiliated	Undergraduate degree
P11	47	Male	Yes	Tourism entrepreneur	High school
P12	38	Female	No	Civil society volunteer	Undergraduate degree
P13	38	Female	No	Social worker	Undergraduate degree
P14	43	Female	No	Translator	Undergraduate degree
P15	46	Female	No	Doctor	Undergraduate degree
P16	56	Male	No	Farmer	High school
P17	69	Female	No	Retired	Undergraduate degree
P18	37	Male	No	Tour guide	High school
P19	42	Male	No	Real estate entrepreneur	High school
P20	44	Female	Yes	Religious volunteer	High school
P21	36	Female	No	Employee at a regional entity dealing with refugees	Undergraduate degree
P22	56	Female	No	Architect	Undergraduate degree
P23	76	Male	No	Pension officer	Undergraduate degree
P24	44	Male	No	Project manager	Undergraduate degree
P25	45	Male	No	Businessman	High school

Authors' own creation

Qualitative Data analysis

To analyze the qualitative data obtained from interviews, a thematic analysis approach was adapted. The transcripts were read several times to get familiar with the data. A hybrid approach of data-driven and theory-driven content analysis was employed (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). This approach addresses primary data inductively without overlooking existing theoretical assessments and empirical enquiries on the topic (e.g., Merikoski, 2021). Authentic quotations from the interview transcripts were utilised to enhance the reliability of the data and to help a better understanding of the findings.

Findings

Overall, informants seem to be driven by a *moral obligation* to help someone who is in need. The media coverage, especially in the earlier stage of the conflict, seems to have cultivated that sense of moral obligation towards displaced individuals fleeing Ukraine. This is also in line with a recent survey on Belgian hosts (Schrooten et al., 2022). This moral obligation seems to be influenced and shaped by cultural and family values. P24 mentions “*my family hid Jews during World War II. They risked their lives, I risk almost nothing*”. For informants, being hospitable meant providing both essential practical support (e.g., accommodation, support in schooling children and finding jobs for adults) and emotional support (e.g., being sensitive to refugees' suffering). Regardless of their initial motives and their understanding of hospitableness, there is clear agreement among informants on the overall positive experience of hosting. In some cases, however, hosts seem to be happy to host refugees during the first weeks, but they gradually become unsatisfied with their experience due to several constraints

including reduced space/freedom in their own dwelling, language and cultural barriers, and uncertainty about refugees' settlement/return options.

Hosting refugees seems to cultivate a sense of perspective-taking and empathy towards refugees. as noted by P13, "*their [the refugees] suffering touched us. In the past, when we saw war and people fleeing [their countries] on TV, social media or in the newspaper, it was just a moment that we could leave behind. However, when they come to our home, we share their suffering*". Not only do these findings confirm the initial quantitative results but they also provide deeper understanding of how close contact with refugees through private hosting provides an opportunity to understand their unique (and often traumatic) experiences thus enabling a genuine sense of empathy. Confirming this, P14 notes "*hospitality means being empathic and willing to give your time and energy for the good of others*".

Interestingly, factors such as common interests, religious affinity, cultural distance, and gender seem to be determining in hosting behaviour while also contributing to how social contact is established. For instance, P3, a musician, mentions: "*I hosted a [male] musician because I am a musician too. If I were to host a woman with children, I would not have been able to take care of them and my girlfriend would not have liked it*". Similarly, P6 notes "*It was probably good that we helped someone. I realized that we are a bit selfish. We accepted Ukrainians, but I would be really afraid to host someone from Africa, definitely not*". P13 describes hosting as a "spiritually enriching" experience and "*part of our faith and love for people*". Similarly, P19 adds "*at least these [Ukrainian refugees] are Christians and neighbours*".

Confirming quantitative results from Study 1, qualitative data from Study 2 provides clear evidence of the positive relationship between satisfaction from hosting refugees and advocacy for hosting. Hosts who had a *consistently* satisfactory hosting experience believed that others should help by hosting refugees highlighting the benefits of hosting (e.g., transformative experience, learning about another culture, overcoming loneliness) while those who, despite being initially enthusiastic to help and host refugees, emphasized the challenges associated with hosting refugees tended to be overall sceptical. While recommending hosting to others, P22 warns that "*a high degree of tolerance is necessary*".

Discussion

Rooted in the Contact Theory and drawing on a hospitality social lens framework, this study has employed a mixed-methods approach using a sequential quantitative-qualitative design to understand the interface between hospitableness, attitudes, and empathy towards refugees, satisfaction from hosting refugees, and advocacy for hosting refugees. Study 1 proposed and tested a theoretical model linking the above-mentioned relationships whereas Study 2 endeavoured to explain and further explore the initial quantitative results.

Our results confirm that hospitableness can positively enhance attitudes towards refugees. These findings are in line with the contact theory (Allport, 1954) and corroborate the arguments of Betts et al. (2023) and Knappert et al. (2021) that hosts' attitudes towards refugees are influenced and shaped based on refugee–host interactions. Our findings also confirm that hospitableness can positively enhance empathy towards refugees. These findings are in line

with the arguments of Macklin et al. (2020) that hosting experiences can be transformative through cultivating empathetic capacity in those individuals who are hosting refugees. Hosting refugees in private dwellings is ideal for close and strong social contact between hosts and refugees (Merikoski, 2021). As evidenced by the qualitative data from Study 2, this social contact by hospitable hosts seems to facilitate greater knowledge and awareness of the refugee experiences, hence cultivating empathy towards them.

As predicted, our findings confirm the positive effect of hospitableness on satisfaction from hosting. This finding lends support to extant theoretical assessment arguing that hospitableness can involve a sense of altruism to please the other (Lashley, 2015) and a sense of joy from caring about the well-being of the other (Blain & Lashley, 2014). It seems that hospitableness is transformative in that it helps develop a sense of satisfaction from helping refugees through hosting them (Macklin et al., 2020). This is well captured in the qualitative data, for instance, P8 notes: *“I knew this [hosting refugees] would be a big change in my life, but I decided to help someone who really needs it. [...] Even when we first met, I felt great satisfaction that I could help someone and I felt that I was doing the right thing [...] [by hosting a refugee], you gain more than you lose”*. This confirms that hospitableness can serve as an antecedent of human flourishing (Mody, 2023).

Our findings reveal that advocacy intention is positively influenced by attitudes towards refugees and satisfaction from hosting them. These findings are in line with the argument of Böhm et al. (2018) that attitudes towards refugees play a crucial role in determining (in)willingness to help them. Our findings also echo previous research alluding to the role of positive hosting experience in recommending hosting refugees to others (e.g., Macklin et al., 2018; Macklin et al., 2020). However, contrary to past research (Batson, 1991; Batson et al., 2002), our findings fail to confirm the predicted positive effect of empathy on advocacy intention. This may be because empathy, in contrast to attitudes towards refugees, is so intimately internalised by hosts that they become reluctant to recommend others to host.

While our results fail to confirm the predicted positive effect of hospitableness on advocacy for private hosting of refugees, this effect is fully transmitted through attitudes towards refugees and satisfaction from hosting. This finding is generally in line with the argument of Böhm et al. (2018) who demonstrated how prosocial behaviour towards refugees (i.e., willingness to help refugees) is shaped based on associated economic and psychological costs of helping. Our qualitative data provides further explanation showcasing how hospitable individuals may recognise the costs of hosting refugees in private dwellings which prevents them from further helping through advocating hosting to others; however, when satisfied from their hosting experience, and when they perceive favourable attitudes towards refugees, they are more likely to recommend others to host refugees. Interestingly, however, and contrary to existing research advocating empathy as a mediator in the contact theory (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008), our results fail to confirm the role of empathy as an underlying mechanism through which hospitableness leads to recommendation intention. This finding also generally contradicts Böhm et al.’s (2018) suggestion that pro-social behaviour towards refugees is fostered when refugees are perceived as vulnerable and needy. Again, the intimacy engendered through household practices (Sirriyeh, 2013) may marginalise the role of empathy as a potential underlying mechanism explaining the effect of hospitableness on advocacy behaviour.

Conclusions and Implications

Theoretical implications

By investigating the interface between hospitableness, attitudes, and empathy towards refugees, satisfaction from hosting refugees, and advocacy towards hosting them, the present study makes significant contributions to hospitality knowledge. *First*, the current study addresses hospitableness from a hospitality social lens framework (Causevic & Lynch, 2009), demonstrating how it can contribute to political questions of citizenship and human rights (Derrida, 2000; Lynch et al., 2011). By doing so, our study joins a promising but interestingly unpopular stream of research, bringing hospitality and mobility studies into closer dialogue (Altinay et al., 2023a; Farahani, 2021). This is crucial given that hospitability, as a field of study, is criticised for being “inhospitable to the interdisciplinary study of hospitality” (Lynch et al., 2011: 3). *Second*, our study views hospitality as a human phenomenon (Causevic & Lynch, 2009) with increasing potential to contribute to addressing societal challenges rather than just acting as a space for commercial exchanges. By doing so, the present study contributes by positioning hospitality research into the centre of a more humanitarian approach to host–guest relationships (Altinay et al., 2023a; Causevic & Lynch, 2009; Viglia et al., 2022).

Third, our study provides further empirical support to the contact theory (Allport, 1954) and extends its applicability to refugees (Betts et al., 2023) by showcasing how hospitableness of hosts can be used as a tool to foster positive attitudes towards refugees and engender empathy towards them, while also engendering positive evaluation of the hosting experience and triggering advocacy for hosting. Building on this perspective, the present study contributes to a growing debate on the societal implications of refugee hospitality (Boccagni & Giudici, 2022). *Finally*, our study makes an incremental methodological contribution by advancing refugee- and refugee hosting-centred research drawing on a mixed-methods approach using a sequential quantitative-qualitative research design. This is especially important given that the majority of work in this research stream is based on a single research method (e.g., Schrooten et al., 2022; Ran & Join-Lambert; Merikoski, 2021; Gunaratnam, 2021). Mixed-methods approach is especially crucial for the study of societal challenges which need specific attention by policy makers (Tzagkarakis & Kritas, 2023).

Practical implications

The findings of the study have implications for both; policy-makers, NGOs, and other stakeholders involved in hosting refugees. Our findings indicate that hospitableness can not only foster a sense of empathy towards vulnerable groups such as refugees, but can also enhance welcoming and positive attitudes towards them. This finding underscores the vital role of hospitableness in alleviating societal tensions about refugees. An obvious implication for policy-makers is that public involvement in private sponsorship of refugees should be further encouraged. This can be achieved through communicating the benefits of privately hosting refugees and emphasising the collective social responsibility towards vulnerable people within the host society. Moreover, alongside other objective indicators (e.g., financial ability, availability of space), hospitableness should be considered as a vital trait when deciding on who can sponsor and host refugees.

Welcoming and hosting vulnerable groups has been traditionally viewed as a responsible approach to involving local communities in addressing the socio-cultural problems of societies. Our findings support this view but also show that hosts who are hospitable are more likely to be satisfied from their hosting experience and, eventually, they tend to advocate for hosting of vulnerable guests. This underscores the importance of hospitableness to the sustainability of refugee hosting schemes. One recommendation to make is that these schemes may engage in promoting vulnerable group hosting behaviour through disseminating stories of successful hosting experiences using various means (e.g., local press, social media). There is also scope for existing sponsorship schemes to identify hosts who were satisfied with their hosting experience to determine the underlying factors of satisfaction and use these to feed into future host–vulnerable guests matching processes.

This study also provides recommendations specifically for the governmental bodies and the NGOs supporting private sponsorship of refugees. One highlight of the present study is that hospitableness *per se* does not affect intention to recommend hosting to others; rather, it does so indirectly via favourable attitudes towards refugees and satisfaction from hosting experience. This indicates that, for hosts to advocate hosting to others, how hospitable they are can be meaningless unless they develop favourable attitudes towards refugees and a sense of satisfaction from hosting them. An obvious implication is that governmental bodies and NGOs supporting private sponsorship of refugee schemes need to actively promote positive attitudes towards refugees while also communicating the transformative benefits of hosting refugees for the hosts themselves. This is crucial to the sustainability of these schemes.

Limitation and avenues for future research

Despite its contributions, this study is not without limitations. While it may be a cliché, it is important to note that the current research is based on a cross-sectional study design drawing on a relatively small sample from one host country (i.e., Slovakia). Future research may employ longitudinal study designs using larger samples in different host countries. Second, our study focuses on Slovaks who host Ukrainian refugees. One may argue that some sort of cultural and religious affinity may play a role in the extent to which hospitableness is enacted and the extent to which it shapes attitudes and behaviour. Therefore, extending and refining the current model by modelling (or controlling for) such factors may enrich our understanding of the social outcomes of hospitableness.

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