

**Understanding Refugee Employment in Tourism Social Enterprises: The Case of the  
Magdas Hotel**

by  
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A thesis  
presented to the University of Waterloo  
in fulfillment of the  
thesis requirement for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
in  
Recreation and Leisure Studies

Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, 2021

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## **Author's Declaration**

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

## **Abstract**

The tourism and hospitality sector has come to rely heavily on immigrants, including displaced people (i.e., refugees), as a significant employee source. While much research has explored the role of immigrants and refugees in the tourism and hospitality sector, fewer studies have considered the tourism social enterprises (TSE) context. This research uses a qualitative case study to better understand refugee employment from the stakeholders' perspective at the Magdas Hotel, a tourism social enterprise in Vienna, Austria. Four groups of 20 stakeholders participated in this study, which included on-site observation and in-depth interviews.

This study contributes to the existing tourism and hospitality literature by investigating refugees' employment experiences from a stakeholder perspective, offering a comprehensive analytical approach to explore refugee employment in the context of tourism social enterprises. Also, this research considered the ethics of care approach, which is rooted in feminist theory and utilized in stakeholder theory to understand refugee employment. Thus, this dissertation introduces the social enterprise of Magdas Hotel as a responsible business model that supports human well-being (Boluk et al., 2019). In addition, this study conceptualizes Magdas Hotel as a market-based approach that applies the ethics of care within the tourism sector to approach social issues and build sustainable choices for societies (Higgins-Desbiolles & Monga, 2020).

Key findings include: (1) the significance of employment as a major priority in a refugee's life; (2) employment in the hospitality sector is a two-way avenue, refugees require

skills to counter labour shortages, while the corporate culture and employment policies need to be flexible and sensitive to refugees' circumstances; (3) tourism social enterprises could be a starting point for refugee job-seekers aiming to join the hospitality sector; (4) refugee workers can be an asset to their employer in the hospitality sector and create a satisfying tourist experience while building an enhanced business reputation. This study has highlighted that tourism social enterprises provide necessary financial, social, and professional support for refugee workers within the hospitality sector's broader scope.

I argue that the findings of this study add to our understanding of this critical and timely topic through the perspectives of various stakeholders. I consider the conclusions of this thesis as an opportunity to improve policy development and implementation based on an enhanced understanding of refugees' employment experiences. Furthermore, this dissertation poses various questions for future research related to refugee employment in the hospitality sector and in regard to tourism social enterprises.

## **Acknowledgements**

I acknowledge that I live and work on the traditional territory of the Neutral, Anishinaabeg and Haudenosaunee peoples. The University of Waterloo is situated on the Haldimand Tract, the land promised to the Six Nations that includes ten kilometers on each side of the Grand River.

First and foremost, I would like to express my most profound appreciation to Dr. Heather Mair for supervising me through this frequently challenging journey. The completion of this dissertation would not have been possible without the support and nurturing of Prof. Mair. Her far-reaching assistance, care, patience, and strength always exceeded my expectations.

I would also like to extend my deepest gratitude to the rest of my committee members, professors Karla Boluk, Marion Joppe, Marlene Epp, and Peter Lugosi, for taking the time to evaluate my work. Your published work and earlier contribution to my thesis project helped me improve and adequately comprehend my work.

Also, I would like to extend my sincere thanks to other individuals from the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies who, directly or indirectly, contributed to my work or helped me in this journey. My thanks go to Dr. Lisbeth Berbary, Sandy Heise, Tracy Taves, Dr. Sherry L. Dupuis, Dr. Bryan Smale, Luc Cousineau, Dr. Mark E. Havitz,

Many thanks to my dearest family – Parents, my wife, my two kids and the rest of the family for their patience and support. I also owe a debt of gratitude to my niece Sabeil Ajani who provided me with valuable inputs.

Finally, thank you to all the wonderful friends I made throughout my time in Austria, mainly Magdas Hotel's management and staff. Thanks to everyone who contributed to the success of this work.

## **Dedication**

This work is dedicated to the souls of refugees who tried to reach a safe place to secure a living but never made it and the refugees who are still struggling to make a living. Refugees' lives and living matter!!



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## List of Abbreviations

CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ILO	International Labor Organization
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
TSE	Tourism Social Enterprises
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNWTO	United Nation World Tourism Organization
WHO	World Health Organization
WTTC	World Travel and Tourism Council

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

Refugee employment is a crucial and timely topic relevant to many countries. Indeed, we are witnessing the largest refugee crisis in modern history. Globally, around 79.5 million people are forcibly displaced, which is more than 1% of the human population (UNHCR, 2020). The countries hosting refugees face significant challenges regarding their employment and integration. However, host countries may convert the employment challenge into an opportunity, given the refugees' skills and aptitudes (Egeland, 2015). The discussions undertaken by UNHCR, in pre-pandemic times, revealed that jobs and housing are the two most essential concerns faced by refugees in their process of integration (OECD, 2018). Not surprisingly, during the COVID-19 pandemic<sup>1</sup>, refugees are suffering additional hurdles linked to their precarious legal status, the associated limitations on their mobility, and the lockdown of enterprises that hire them. These additional challenges maximized the pressure on countries hosting refugees, and the obligation to protect the most vulnerable grows even more urgent (ILO, 2020).

Nonetheless, employment is one of the main priorities for refugees who may live in perpetual uncertainty, influencing their economic, social, psychological, and civic aspects (Banki, 2013; Butler, 2006, 2016). Studies show that most refugees struggle to find full-time and permanent jobs, which places them in precarious employment, and they face complex barriers that prevent them from obtaining suitable work (Bloch, 2002b; Fasani et al., 2020; Jackson &

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<sup>1</sup> The data collection for this study has been completed before the COVID-19 pandemic. There were no further communications with any of the stakeholders or updates on the study findings. Also, this study offers no information related to the pandemic impacts on Magdas Hotel.

Bauder, 2014; Koyama, 2017; McKay, 2008; Zetter & Ruaudel, 2018). Thus, refugees may engage in unauthorized employment forms or accept lower-status jobs, which usually pay less (Baban et al., 2017).

In addition, refugees come from diverse socio-economic backgrounds. Some are highly educated professionals, and some have managerial and entrepreneurial skills. On the other hand, some have no formal education or have only a few years of schooling (OECD, 2018). This diversity can be an opportunity for some sectors, and the hospitality sector is one of them (Baum, 2007, 2012; Baum et al., 2016; Devine et al., 2007; Mwendwa, 2010; Wang & Hsieh, 2016).

The topic of tourism employment and refugees' role in the hospitality sector attracts me because of my extensive human resource development experience in tourism. Furthermore, I have voluntarily associated with refugees through social activities for the past several years. I have recently moved to Canada as an Economic Immigrant<sup>2</sup>. I went through the settlement process required for newcomers. Thus, I am aware of the importance of employment for refugees in their settlement process. Also, direct contact with refugees while working and volunteering with Canadian newcomers' settlement agencies added to my knowledge and understanding of refugees' employment experiences. Thus, this comprehensive background helped me select, design, and implement this study. Yet, in recognizing my position as a researcher, and as explained later in the thesis, I was conscious of acknowledging my biases and being transparent about my subjectivity throughout the research process.

Understanding the experiences of the different stakeholders related to refugees'

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<sup>2</sup> The government of Canada classifies immigrants to Canada into four categories: Family Class members, Economic Immigrants, Humanitarian applicants and Refugees.

employment in the hospitality sector is pivotal for researchers, tourism stakeholders, and policymakers. Such understanding is critical because it relies on refugees' experiences and those involved in refugee employment. This study also contributes to the literature regarding refugees' experiences working in tourism and tourism social enterprises. A comprehensive perspective such as this can help us support refugees in ways that may also offer a solution to what was, in pre-pandemic times, a chronic shortage of labour in the hospitality sector.

The hospitality sector relies partially on immigrants, including displaced people (refugees), as significant employment sources, compared to other industries (Baum, 2007, 2012; Lucas & Mansfield, 2008). Social enterprises often seek to offer employment for those who lack access to the labour market (Defourny & Marthe, 2006) and to provide 'unique local opportunities for economic and social participation for groups experiencing significant barriers to meaningful employment' (Barraket, 2013, p. 18). Furthermore, social enterprises have an attractive, underexplored role in the hospitality sector (De Lange & Dodds, 2017). In Austria, the Magdas Hotel is an example of these social enterprises that employ refugees and is the case I selected to explore in this research.

This exploratory study aims to understand the experiences and views of various stakeholders involved with the Magdas Hotel. Using the qualitative, intrinsic case study methodology, participants comprised four groups: (1) guests who visited/stayed in the hotel during the study period, (2) Magdas Hotel management, (3) other stakeholders, such as individuals from the charity group Caritas and other relevant political leaders in Vienna – the non-management group, and (4) refugee employees working at the hotel.

This study's importance stems from its core interests in the current refugee crisis and their

employment and how one can link these issues to ongoing concerns about employment shortages in the hospitality sector (Joppe, 2012; Zampoukos & Ioannides, 2011). In this context, it is essential to clarify that this dissertation is about what happens when refugees land in the host countries and need employment. Therefore, talking about the causes of the refugee crisis is beyond the scope of this work. Nevertheless, a large body of work addresses the refugee crisis (Carastathis et al., 2018; Carastathis & Tsilimpounidi, 2020; Charpentier, 2016; Jeffers, 2012; Radu, 2016). Furthermore, this dissertation presents the social enterprise of Magdas Hotel as a responsible business model that supports human well-being (Boluk et al., 2019). Finally, this study conceptualizes Magdas Hotel as a market-based approach that uses the ethics of care through the tourism sector to address social issues and create sustainable benefits to societies (Higgins-Desbiolles & Monga, 2020).

## **1.1 Research Purpose and Research Questions**

The research aimed to understand refugee employment from stakeholders' perspectives at the Magdas Hotel, a tourism social enterprise in Vienna. The following questions shaped the research:

- What are the stakeholders' perceptions and experiences concerning refugee employment?
- How do stakeholders see the Magdas Hotel's future as a tourism social enterprise?
- What are the implications of the Magdas Hotel project on the employment of refugees

more broadly?

In short, the objectives of this research were: to explore refugees' employment in tourism social enterprises, understand the Magdas Hotel's initiative in employing refugees, discover various stakeholders' views about this initiative, and understand the implications of Magdas's

project on refugee workers and the hospitality sector.

The study focused on understanding the experiences and perspectives of various stakeholders involved in the employment of refugees. I have conducted this research at Magdas Hotel, which runs as a social business in Austria, and offers refugees employment opportunities and training.

The significant contribution of this study is its investigation into a substantial issue and timely topic that concerns many nations worldwide, in which refugees' hosting countries may utilize job-seekers to fill the hospitality sector's labour shortage. This study adopts a holistic approach to exploring refugee employment in the tourism social enterprise context. The study used thematic analysis to comprehend refugee employment from numerous stakeholders' perspectives at the tourism social enterprise, Magdas Hotel. Therefore, three dimensions were implemented to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the experiences and perspectives of stakeholders and to pave the way for future research about refugees' employment in the hospitality sector. The first dimension explains precarity as a key concept that helps us learn how refugee conditions reshape their employability. The second dimension explained the role of stakeholder theory in the context of this research. The third dimension explains the specific context of this research - this study focuses on tourism social enterprises and how it intersects with corporate social responsibility. In addition, the third dimension includes a framework of the case selected for this research – the Magdas Hotel. This theoretical knowledge presents a broad contribution to our existing understanding of refugees working in the hospitality sector and, more specifically, those working in tourism social enterprises.

Furthermore, refugee employment is often evaluated with other integration determinants like legal rights, education, healthcare, and housing (Carter & Osborne, 2009; Strang & Ager, 2010) or other economic sectors (Lamba, 2008; Lundborg, 2013; Verwiebe et al., 2019). This study, however, approaches refugee employment separately, with a particular focus on tourism social enterprises. Further details about the contribution of this study will follow in the conclusion chapter.

## **1.2 Condition of Refugees**

The European refugee crisis, which has come into focus over the past few years, is a significant example of forced migration<sup>3</sup>. By 2016, European countries witnessed around 5.2 million refugees (UNHCR, 2016a, 2016b). The emergence of such a massive number of refugees has brought a crucial challenge to European states as they struggle to offer adequate living conditions. Some states have arranged accommodation for these refugees by granting asylum. However, the European crisis has raised concerns related to their economic security.

Further, there is a substantial increase in the number of refugees into European countries each year. The available statistical data stated that the refugees' number in Austria, for example, has grown from approximately 72,000 in 2015 to over 135,000 in 2018 (World-Bank, 2021). When considering a country's economic status, these numbers show how important it is for these countries to employ refugees and offer them a better life. On the other hand, integration and well-being are crucial for refugees, especially when they are forced to leave their country and

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<sup>3</sup> The UNCHR referred to forced migration as 'a general term that refers to the movements of refugees and internally displaced people (those displaced by conflicts within their country of origin) as well as people displaced by natural or environmental disasters, chemical or nuclear disasters, famine, or development projects.'

suffer through a terrible journey to reach a safe destination. Therefore, refugees must get the chance to build a new life by utilizing their current skill sets and, where possible, by developing new skills. Additionally, research shows that participation in the labour market helps refugees deal with various aspects of their conditions like poverty and welfare dependency and the mental strain generated by their harsh experiences (Fasani et al., 2020; Porter & Haslam, 2005).

Hosting countries can include refugees in the hospitality industry and other economic sectors. Such a step helps refugees earn a living and allows host countries to utilize foreign skills and boost the national economy (Scheibelhofer & Täubig, 2019). However, host countries must also limit the barriers to inclusion as a significant issue in helping refugees adapt to mainstream life is the availability of jobs (Alrawadieh et al., 2018).

Refugees have unique potential, and they are usually ready to grasp the first opportunity. This is because refugees suffer through harsh living situations and are thus turned into survivors, prepared to face extensive challenges. Apart from that, hiring refugees is not just based on their survival ability but also on their novel talent, abilities to do the job, and diverse skills, hoping to improve the work environment through innovative ideas. As diversity is one of the significant aspects of refugee employment, hiring refugees will drive enhanced productivity, better staff retention, and overall growth (Deloitte, 2019).

### **1.3 Meeting the Needs of the Hospitality Industry**

According to the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), the hospitality industry is a key driver in global value creation. Recent figures published by the WTTC estimated the global contribution of the tourism and hospitality industry of 8.9 trillion USD to the global economy in



2018, representing 10.4 percent of its total GDP<sup>4</sup> (WTTC, 2021a). More specifically, statistics show that the international hotel industry market size has risen from 466 billion in 2014 to 600.49 billion U.S. dollars in 2018 (Statista, 2021).

Globally, 1 out of 10 jobs is supported by travel and tourism (including hospitality), while in the last decade, one out of five jobs has been generated by the industry directly (Rochelle, 2017). In Europe, the hospitality sector alone generated around 1,6 million jobs between 2013 and 2016, whereas hospitality enterprises rose from 1,82 to almost 2 million (Eurostat, 2018). In recent years, the hospitality industry has seen a significant rise in refugee employees' numbers. According to Statista (2021), there was an increase in refugees working in the tourism and hospitality sector. Indeed, refugee workers may significantly support the hospitality sector to fill its vacancy's expansion.

However, COVID-19 has almost halted the sector's operations, provoking harsh economic outcomes globally. UNCTAD (2020) has indicated that a tourism destinations' national income will decrease due to the loss in international tourism revenue, which will dramatically impact employment. Also, the increased number of the sector's employees might not be the case due to COVID-19. Statista (2021) predicted that the global travel and tourism market is forecasted to witness a loss of 100.8 million jobs globally in the year 2020 alone.

## **1.4 Outline of the Thesis**

I have divided this thesis into six chapters. After the introduction chapter, wherein I discussed the problem, purpose and objectives of the research. Chapter 2 discussed hospitality

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<sup>4</sup> The OECD defined the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as the standard amount of the value-added generated through the production of goods and services in a country during a specific period.

and tourism employment factors, factors affecting refugees' employment, and social enterprises' role in the tourism and hospitality context. Following, Chapter 3 presents a detailed discussion of the methodological approach and methods of the study. Initially, I outlined the project's overall design (qualitative case study) followed by an in-depth discussion of the methods (semi-structured interviews and observation) undertaken and the data analysis process and ethical considerations. Next, chapter 4 presents the key findings from the analysis discussed in great detail in Chapter 5. Lastly, Chapter 6 concludes the thesis by summarizing the implications of the work, limitations, and recommendations for future research. In practice, research findings will help tourism stakeholders, and policymakers better evaluate refugees' participation in the hospitality sector's labour market.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Literature Review**

This chapter reviews relevant literature related to refugee employment, specifically in the tourism and hospitality social enterprises context. As shown below, while there has been considerable research on refugee employment, very few researchers have considered it in the context of tourism social enterprises.

Refugee research falls into various academic disciplines, making it challenging to research the topic of refugee employment for a particular field of study (Lee et al., 2020). At the same time, previous research points to the need for a comprehensive understanding of the refugee group to better learn about their employment-related issues (Szkudlarek, 2019). Therefore, a literature review around the refugee employment topic needs to take the across-discipline approach to create a holistic and comprehensive understanding. For example, a case study of the Magdas Hotel could be situated within the literature of different fields of study, starting from migrants and refugee studies, studies of tourism social entrepreneurship, and extended to tourism and hospitality employment. Because it is such a unique case, the Magdas model may serve any of these various fields. Nonetheless, I would suggest that the social entrepreneurship literature should be of primary interest as this evolving area of study has only lately become interested in investigating refugee employment.

Therefore, I have divided this review into three major sections to understand better the foundations that drive this study. The first one explores the refugee employment context and how precarious conditions impact refugees' employability. This section also covers the literature on

social support and social networks and their impacts on the employability of refugees. The second section reviews literature related to recognizing the potential of the hospitality industry to support refugees. Thus, it covers opportunities that the sector offers for refugees. Since the study design was influenced by stakeholder theory, the last part of the chapter discusses this theory before and links it to the context of this study. In addition, the last section introduces the relevant literature associated with social enterprises, tourism social enterprises and corporate social responsibility.

## **2.1 Understanding Refugees and their Employability**

According to the UNHCR, article 1(A) (2) of the 1951 Refugee Convention defines a refugee, known as a forced migrant, as: ‘Someone who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion’ (UNHCR, 1951, p. 3).

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees views refugees as displaced people (UNHCR, 2016b), and they share similar challenges concerning employment as migrants<sup>5</sup>.

Finding a job is one of the priorities for refugees when arriving in the host country. However, only those employable will be able to find placement. So, what is employability for refugees, and what does it mean in the context of this study?

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<sup>5</sup> According to UNCHR, Migrants decide to depart their homeland not because of a personal threat of torture, persecution, or death, but mainly to improve their lives by finding work. Unlike refugees who cannot reliably travel back home, migrants face no such obstacle to return. Yet, both categories may face similar challenges in their integration process in the host country. Thus, in this study, the reader might find some citations from the migrant studies’ context.

Scholars explained employability differently. For example, employability is the personal ability to find a job for the first time or the ability to move to another position (Forrier & Sels, 2003). Llinares-Insa et al. (2018) view employability as a mechanism for investigating and adjusting the labour, socioeconomic, and political setting. In comparison, Hillage and Pollard (1998) referred to employability as the individual ability to move within the labour market to achieve a stable job. Furthermore, employability is the job-seekers capacity to obtain work, develop the needed skills, and transfer them to other settings (Williams, 2009). Consequently, refugees need an opportunity to enter the labour market to build their skills and thus move with these skills somewhere else if needed. In the context of this study, employability reflects the ability of refugees to develop and improve their personal and professional skills during their employment at the Magdas Hotel while considering the social, economic, and political atmosphere around them.

McQuaid and Lindsay (2005) used employability as a framework to understand the conditions that impact job seekers or those working in different sectors of the economy. According to the authors, the employability framework can consist of three main components: *individual* factors, *personal* circumstances, and *external* factors. These components impact an individual's status when searching for or performing employment. *Individual* factors consist of skills, demographic characteristics, health and well-being, job seeking, adaptability, and mobility. The *personal* circumstances are subcategorized as household circumstances, the work culture, and access to resources. Lastly, the *external* factors are related to market supply and demand and employment policies (McQuaid & Lindsay, 2005).

McQuaid and Lindsay (2005) developed this framework to analyze employability and inform labour market policies in the UK and European countries. This framework focuses heavily on the labour supply side and includes vocational training as a significant skill contributing to employability. For example, to embrace more encouraging labour initiatives and offer paid employment for unemployed individuals. However, this framework does not take into consideration if the job seeker is a local or immigrant. One explanation for this could be that the migrants, refugees, and other vulnerable groups are differentiated through the individual factors addressed by McQuaid and Lindsay. Still, the framework clarifies that the employer is not the only stakeholder to determine the nature of employability skills. Based on McQuaid and Lindsay's framework, the following subthemes highlight what I suggest are significant areas that impact the employability of refugees.

### ***2.1.1 Challenges to Refugee Employability***

#### **2.1.1.1 Legal Challenges and Policy**

Williams (2009) specified that the legal framework and policies that control the job market greatly influence refugees' employability. The legal framework can limit refugees who enter the host countries informally from getting a job. They are either non-compliant or semi-compliant with policies that regulate the market (Williams, 2009). As most countries primarily develop their policies to protect the economy and their citizens, 'informal' refugees are excluded from accessing jobs and thus face a barrier to employment.

Zetter and Ruaudel (2018) noted that one of the most critical legal barriers includes the 'right to work' policies. Certain studies have analyzed the 'right to work' for refugees and

indicated little coherence in executing the right to work. Even when a particular country has constructive policies toward refugee employment, it is insufficient without enforcement mechanisms. Moreover, according to Bahar and Dooley (2019), a specific country's domestic policies have a lot to do with shaping refugee employment opportunities. The authors state that refugees are offered full rights to education and healthcare facilities in some countries, while they are restricted from such rights in some other countries.

Similarly, Joppe (2012) found that countries have different regulations covering immigrant employment. Such inconstancy influences the refugees' right to work. In many cases, stringent rules play an essential role in limiting refugees' ability to find jobs in the host countries. For instance, Finland had strict immigration policies and had limited the number of immigrant workers in the country. In the Austrian context, Verwiebe et al. (2019) highlighted their concerns about how the Austrian government has, unprecedentedly, set in motion a series of new policies intended to undermine refugees' integration efforts into the Austrian labour market. Further discussion on the Austrian policies related to refugees will occur in the methodology chapter, where I introduce the case study context.

De Vroome and van Tubergen (2010) found policies that propose to advance labour market participation, such as businesses that provide employment support, will likely enhance refugees' chance to find employment and positively impact their economic life. Zimmermann (2017) added that preventing refugees from a work permit until recognized as 'legal' refugees negatively affects their employability.

Lundborg (2013) evaluated refugees' integration into the workforce in Sweden, which had relatively accommodating immigration policies at the time. However, even with having such

friendly policies, the author found that refugees face challenges finding employment in specific job categories. The author also recognized that getting work is different for refugees from other parts of the world. The country of origin and gender are the factors on which the job results depend. For instance, the author noted that refugees from Muslim countries had less chance than non-Muslim refugees of getting employment in the Swedish labour market. Also, refugees with higher education had a higher chance of finding a job (Lundborg, 2013). Legrain (2017) added that the precarious status represented in many countries in initially granting temporary residence permits to the refugees makes them unattractive for employment. In fact, not only employment-related policies are the ones that impact refugee employability. For example, Smith (2019) assessed health policies and their impact on refugees' employment in Western countries and how they intend to protect refugees' health, thereby assuring refugees' health difficulties do not impede employment.

The literature reviewed above shows how policies and legal frameworks in receiving countries can challenge refugees' employability. Still, how the legal framework and policies may affect refugees working in the hospitality sector remains understudied. Consequently, part of this research explores the perspectives of the Magdas Hotel's stakeholders concerning such policies. In the following section, I will discuss the socio-cultural challenges to employability.

#### **2.1.1.2 Socio-Cultural Challenges.**

Previous research indicates that refugees' pre and post-arrival experiences are deciding factors that impact how they integrate with the new socioeconomic systems in the country they move to (Bakker et al., 2017; Phillimore & Goodson, 2006). The studies illustrate how refugees face numerous challenges like social loneliness, racism, language issues, and family reunification



barriers (Brunner et al., 2014; Wehrle et al., 2018). These challenges reduce refugees' ability to join the labour market and impact their employability directly (Hussein et al., 2011).

Various scholars view the language barrier as the most common employment challenge (Haan et al., 2017; Lamba, 2008; Verwiebe et al., 2019). Verwiebe et al. (2019) recommended additional support and language training for refugees intending to enter the labour market, especially those with limited work experience. Equipping refugees with the proper training programs to support their learning of the host country's language is critical for enhancing their employability. It would be challenging for refugees with poor language skills in the host country to view and comprehend published job offers, compose a CV, or manage a job interview. Furthermore, their opportunity to communicate with employment agencies will be limited, thus reducing their chance of finding employment. Thus, poor language skills can significantly reduce refugees' employability and adds to difficulties with joining the labour market (Haan et al., 2017).

In her series of papers, Bloch (2002a); (Bloch, 2002b); Bloch (2004) cited language as a critical barrier in the employment and training of the refugees living in five regions of England, who were from Iraq, Turkey, Sri Lanka, Kosova, and Somali regions. Legrain (2017) also mentioned that language training is a priority for refugees targeting the labour market. Likewise, Verwiebe et al. (2019) studied refugees' challenges while entering the market and concluded that language barriers were one of the main obstacles. The authors interviewed 26 refugees from Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, and Iran living in Austria. Other than language barriers, they identified other vital obstacles, including discrimination and lack of awareness, or understanding, of job-search processes. The findings of these studies emphasize the significance of refugees'

knowledge of the receiving countries' local language. Such results align with other readings from the North American context (Jackson & Bauder, 2013).

Apart from the language barrier, previous studies cited discrimination based on gender, race, religion, country of origin, and other characteristics, contributing significantly to refugees' engagement in the job market (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2007; Fozdar & Torezani, 2008). In addition, some studies signified that some refugees in Europe experience cultural intolerance from their local hosts (Joly, 2016). They are forced to keep to themselves as their Islamic culture, for instance, is ordinarily stereotyped as being connected to terrorist groups and extreme Islamic groups. Even with the different support provided to refugees, there are groups in every society who want them to 'go back home' (Svenberg et al., 2009, p. 284).

Studies from the Austrian context indicated that refugees might face difficulties finding or maintaining employment because they are unfamiliar with local standards and job application procedures. Many of these refugees lack social networks and accredited qualifications (Ratheiser et al., 2019; Verwiebe et al., 2019). Moreover, Ratheiser et al. and Verwiebe et al. argued that speaking and understanding the local language (in this case, German) to an advanced level is crucial for refugees' employment and social integration. Indeed, language is a huge barrier that contributes significantly to the employability of most refugees, as will be deliberated in the discussion chapter. In the next section, I will address the literature related to the refugees' qualifications and skills and how it contributes to their employability.

### **2.1.1.3 Lack of Qualifications and Skills.**

Extant research illustrated how refugees' qualifications and skills impact their employability. Qualifications and skills can be a significant barrier while refugees are seeking a

job or while employed. Undeniably, they may be left with no choice but to accept low-paying, low-status jobs or engage in informal employment arrangements (Baban et al., 2017).

Early literature states that refugees often face a lack of acceptance of their qualifications, and they may lack guidance regarding training and retraining opportunities (Korac, 2003; Mestheneos & Ioannidi, 2002). Unfortunately, more recent research underscores these issues and reflects the refusal to recognize refugee qualifications (Luimpöck, 2019). However, it is essential to acknowledge some countries' efforts to fix this issue. For example, Ecuador, Germany, the US and Zambia have set new procedures to recognize refugees' foreign qualifications (Zetter & Ruaudel, 2018).

Job qualification is a critical factor in entering the labour market, and refugees bring varying qualifications, capabilities and skills as they enter the host country. As Legrain (2016) clarified, in comparatively flexible labour markets, like the US and the UK, refugees may need minimum or no qualifications to get certain positions, which is not the case with the highly regulated labour markets like France, Germany, and Sweden. Hence, the refugees need much more training in regulated markets. Overall, the non-recognition of refugees' qualifications may act as a vital obstacle that prevents them from entering the labour market (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2006).

Willott and Stevenson (2013) evaluated the attitude of skilled refugees towards employment in the United Kingdom. When entering the host country, the majority of refugees are motivated to work. However, the lack of access to jobs that meet their skills, unemployment experiences, and low-paying jobs turned them away from the labour market, and they reported a loss of self-esteem. While some refugees opt to requalify and retrain to meet the labour market

requirements, the authors noted that not every refugee could take retraining programs, limiting their capacity to work in the host country. Loss of motivation for employment leads to frustration, further limiting a refugee's ability to seek jobs (Willott & Stevenson, 2013).

Joppe (2012) conducted a comprehensive study across 28 countries within the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The researcher investigated the integration of immigrant workers in the tourism labour market in selected countries. The investigation included topics related to education, skills, training, development and the challenges these nations face while incorporating migrant workers into the tourism sector. Joppe's focus was on migrants and how they could play a significant role in filling employment shortages, even though such filling is not more than a temporary fix, except for some countries. She added that the nature of the tourism sector being seasonal will spur tourism businesses to employ migrant workers, particularly for entry-level jobs requiring low skills. The same can be applied to refugees who can potentially resolve the labour shortage if provided with the necessary skills. However, refugees may be viewed as a long-term solution as a significant percentage of them tend to permanently stay in the receiving countries (Tayfun, 2021).

Masoud et al. (2020) studied integration policies and training methods that develop refugees' employability in Finland. The authors reviewed and analyzed reports related to integration policies and practices, and they interviewed 18 Arabic-speaking young refugees (aged 20 to 35 years), integration project administrators, and a few trainers. They found that the general dominant employability discourse reflects 'not yet employable,' despite their prior qualifications, skills, and experiences. As I have addressed earlier, many refugees may lack qualifications and thus, seeking alternative methods that help secure employment will be critical

to refugees' integration. As shown throughout this research, the internship program at Magdas Hotel is intended to requalify refugee employees.

Phillimore (2008) conducted a study concerning the employability initiative for refugees in the EU. The researcher found that a mixture of well-structured work experience, positive employer support, and on-site accreditation of previous learning is crucial for maximizing refugees' employment possibilities. Indeed, there is a need for alternative approaches to conducting business that stems from moral perspectives to assist refugee workers. As suggested by Phillimore's study, a project such as Magdas Hotel may support refugees' learning and boost their employability. In the next section, I will discuss the literature related to refugee's health and their employability.

#### **2.1.1.4 Refugee's Health Conditions.**

This study emphasizes that refugee's health conditions are a critical feature that contributes to their employability. Studies found that the general health problems and distress negatively influence refugees' economic integration, including their employability (De Vroome & Van Tubergen, 2010).

Refugee's health conditions and experiences of trauma are major challenges to accessing the labour market and gaining stable employment (Flatau et al., 2015). Wright et al. (2016) interviewed 286 refugees three times over two years. They found that pre-and post-displacement trauma, such as anxiety and depression, does not impact the refugee's employment status (whether employed or not). However, the pre-and post-displacement trauma influences the employment rate (chances of getting employed) of refugees. The study found that refugees with

this type of trauma had a 91% chance of being unemployed within their first two years in the host country (Wright et al., 2016).

Indeed, research has shown that physical and mental health disorders are common challenges that refugees face throughout the process of their settlement. As a steady job requires physically and mentally stable people, having health difficulties can affect an employee's working ability, which may be a barrier to getting a steady job (Popescu, 2016). Hence, pre-and post-migration traumas can be considered essential factors affecting refugees' employability (Abdelkerim & Grace, 2012). Also, the lack of post-trauma counselling further complicates the refugees' situations (Baban et al., 2017). Thus, reducing the employability of refugees adds to their instability and further complicates their precarious conditions.

Employment, generally, positively influences refugees' health, primarily because employed individuals benefit from financial security, opportunities to use skills, and interaction with others. This reality matches with empirical data, which has consistently shown that unemployment, performing informal work and poor working conditions result in refugees' poor physical and emotional suffering (Huot et al., 2016; Jackson & Bauder, 2013).

Similarly, a study by Van Der Noordt et al. (2014) underlined the positive effect of employment on health. The authors emphasized the findings of a systematic review of 33 studies, concluding that employment promotes good mental health and well-being. Having a job is crucial for supporting refugees' emotional lives, especially if they are comfortable doing a job that matches their skills. Such employment may support refugees as they build self-confidence and feel valuable in their new society. As is explained in the discussion chapter of this thesis, my

work highlighted the efforts of the Magdas Hotel to support refugees in ways that surpass consideration of health issues and their views of these initiatives.

Common health issues negatively influence refugees' employability and vice versa; unemployment may cause health problems. According to Böckerman and Ilmakunnas (2009), unemployment and health troubles form a malignant circle that sustains itself continually as unemployment is linked to health issues and health issues influence unemployment. Moreover, as Agic et al. (2019) asserted, pre-migration, migration, and post-migration experiences such as employment affect the refugees' health. Yet, less attention has been given to investigations into how employment in a specific context, such as tourism social enterprises, contributes to enhancing refugee's health. Less attention has been given to investigations into how employment contributes to the enhancement of refugee's health.

The COVID-19 pandemic has negatively affected many people worldwide, both as a health subject and an economic one. Refugees have been hit particularly hard as they already suffer from precarious conditions. The latest report by WHO (2020) assessed the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on refugees' and migrants' health and work (employability). Through a survey that included more than 30,000 refugees and migrants from various countries worldwide, the report highlighted an increase in the level of depression, anxiety, and stress for refugees and migrants. Also, the consumption of drugs and alcohol has risen, also as many became out of employment. Furthermore, according to the same report, refugees are highly exposed to diseases like COVID-19 as they live in overcrowded conditions and often without the ability to follow preventative measures (WHO, 2020).

Furthermore, the refugee population represents most of the homeless population and thus, do not have access to sanitation facilities. Therefore, the health-related support they usually get in humanitarian settings is compromised because of the shortages of amenities in pandemic situations. Moreover, loss of income, security, reduction in employment further affect them physically and mentally (Agic et al., 2019; Campbell et al., 2018; Llinares-Insa et al., 2020; WHO, 2020).

#### **2.1.1.5 Market Challenges to Employability.**

Different studies have affirmed that seasonality and low wages are the main issues that impact tourism and hospitality workers (Baban et al., 2017; Fellini et al., 2007; Rodriguez, 2004). Janta, Ladkin, et al. (2011) highlighted that the migrants critically necessitate income and the hospitality sector is usually open to accommodate them. Authors attribute the easiness of finding employment in the sector to the inadequate working conditions and the low-skilled nature of the work. Yet migrant or refugee workers still endure in this industry because 'the features of the hospitality sector provide a framework of employment norms and conditions that thrive so long as migrant labour is readily available.' (Janta, Ladkin, et al., 2011, p. 1017).

Consequently, the low-wage occupations upsurge in countries with higher numbers of refugees (Andersson et al., 2019). Yet, the reliance on foreign labour such as immigrants or refugees is one of the most challenging aspects of the hospitality sector, given that most employers require cheap labour to increase their profitability. Moreover, the absence of strict regulations and government oversight regarding migrants' earnings and working conditions leaves job seekers dependent on the employers' commands (Joppe, 2012).



In addition to the market conditions, employment vulnerability due to economic crises was a significant challenge for immigrant workers (Joppe, 2012). During financial problems, organizations terminate temporary jobs to cut operational costs. It also happens during low operation periods, where employees are either laid off or given unpaid leaves (Dwyer et al., 2016). Such conditions will adversely affect refugee employees as they comprise a marginalized group with less power than other employees. Refugees confront, in addition, more prominent difficulties because they lack several of the resources that skilled migrants typically depend on (Eggenhofer-Rehart et al., 2018).

The hospitality labour market segmentation can be based on gender, race, legal status, and other categories (Allan, 2012). The refugee segment, as stated earlier, usually accepts lower-paying jobs. Hence, the segmented labour market is one of the barriers refugees face while seeking job opportunities in the market. According to Colic-Peisker and Tilbury (2006), in Australia, the refugees find employment niches that comprise secondary jobs, such as taxi driving, security positions and cleaning jobs, which are low-paying and generally undesirable to the locals. However, refugees find it challenging to seek employment in the more competitive job opportunities where the natives mainly work. Thus, the refugees find it challenging to get employment due to segmented markets, thereby increasing the number of unemployed skilled refugees (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2007).

Furthermore, employers reap benefits as refugees usually lack the power to demand proper compensation (Pelek, 2019). Given all we know about refugees' employment in the hospitality sector, we need to learn more about the specific context of tourism social enterprises and how they treat and support their employees regarding support, working conditions, job

stability, and other related issues. As it was evident in Alter's (2006) classification listed, the social enterprises present the Employment Model, which provides employment opportunities to those who lack labour market access. Therefore, in the tourism context, the study of Magdas Hotel should be valuable in garnering evidence for the most beneficial practices within the field (Buzinde et al., 2017).

### ***2.1.2 Importance of Social Support for Refugees' Employability***

Schwarzer and Knoll (2007, p. 244) defined social support as the 'resources provided by others, as coping assistance, as an exchange of resources, or even as a personality trait.' The concept of social support is different from social integration or social networks, which describes the organizational features of a person's social relations - family, friends, work peers, etc. Instead, social support describes the practical and qualitative characteristics of ties. Social support significantly impacts refugees' well-being and helps them thrive in their jobs (Newman, Nielsen, et al., 2018). Berkman et al. (2000) classified social support as emotional, instrumental or tangible aid and informational support. Different aspects of support were covered in Berkman's classification, which matches this study's interest.

Social support alludes to the preparation of emotional and physical support that assists beneficiaries in coping with stressful situations in their lives (Cohen et al., 2004). Recently, scholars have worked on studying the importance of social support for the well-being of refugees. For example, Campbell et al. (2018) examined the influence of social determinants, such as employment and language ability, on refugees' mental health in the UK. Through a longitudinal study, they found that these determinants impact refugee well-being. The study pointed to unemployment can cause financial struggle and lack of self-esteem, social connection,

and increasing exposure to health-mischievous behaviours such as addiction to alcohol and drugs.

Newman, Nielsen, et al. (2018) investigated the connection between social support from work and non-work fields and refugee employees' psychological well-being. They examined the mediating impact of 'psychological capital' on these connections. The authors surveyed 190 refugee employees living in Australia. They reported that while family and organizational support are undeniably related to refugee employees' well-being, the relationship between the direct supervisor's support and well-being is not notable. This study, and most literature, discussed refugees' social support with less attention to the social enterprises' context and its valuable role in supporting refugees (Hong & Ju, 2019).

While Colic-Peisker (2009) found that less social support decreases refugees' psychological well-being, Miller et al. (2001) found that social support increased refugees' social capital and improved their well-being. With the increasing studies highlighting the value of social support to refugees' mental well-being, there is still a lack of understanding of tourism social enterprises' context and their role on refugees' emotional or psychological well-being. In addition, there is a need for identification and recognition of the social enterprises' influence on refugees' social support on a broader scope, a gap that this study aims to fill (Ateljevic & Page, 2017). The following section will highlight literature exploring the role of social networks in shaping refugees' social support.

#### **2.1.2.1 Social Networks.**

The social networks we are involved in begin with immediate family members, continuing to colleagues, friends, and neighbours. The social network creates links among these

relationships, producing empathy and attachment (Wang & Handy, 2014). There is a general agreement on the significance of social networks for refugee employment (Beaman, 2011; Lamba, 2008), and it is discussed in more detail below.

Lamba (2008) stated that refugees in Canada use their available social networks, such as relatives and their ethnic group, to find employment in the Canadian labour market. Another study conducted in the North American context by Koyama (2017) applied the actor-network theory to study the connection among multiple factors that form refugees' social networks. The author aimed to understand the impact of social networks on employment for newly arriving refugees in the United States of America. The study's data was collected through surveys, interviews, observation, and document analysis. In addition to assessing the importance of social networks, the author used the collected data to understand how new socio-material networks could shape refugees' new understanding. These socio-material networks included the refugees themselves, settlement organizations, and other material objects (such as employment contracts) used for refugee employment and other settlement processes. The author found that social networks help create stable jobs, although this stability might be temporary (Koyama, 2017).

Migrant literature, similar to refugee literature, highlighted the importance of social networks to migrant employees in the hospitality sector. According to Lugosi et al. (2016), migrants find it beneficial to build social networks in the hospitality sector. The authors added that work-based relationships are significant, and it is usually impacted by the nature of the job and the type of organization migrant work in. In addition, the authors highlighted that networking with colleagues gave the migrant workers a greater experience, in which language knowledge and training on it was a 'collective experience,' interfered with other workers.

Furthermore, Janta, Brown, et al. (2011) argued that the network improves the migrants' experiences in the host country. The authors also added that social networks play a significant role in developing socio-cultural competencies, which is vital to social integration. Also, it counters some of the negative impacts of migration, such as family and friends' loss, discrimination, and social exclusion in the host country. Indeed, diversity, equality, languages, traditions, rules, and other cultural competencies are developed through interaction with people. Although both previous studies were conducted on migrant workers, the input from both can significantly shape our understanding of refugee employees' networks in the workplace since migrants and refugees share common things. While conducting this study, I was interested to learn more about the social networks formed at the hotel and how such networks help empower and support refugees to stabilize their lives in the receiving country - Austria (Steimel, 2017).

Kingsbury (2017) noted that social networks are a significant social support source in which possessing access to any social network is vital to reach and achieve social support. However, this social support does not carry an individual away from their current circumstances. Furthermore, the concept of social support is culturally specific. This means that the group's perspective, of which the individual is part, does matter (Stewart et al., 2008). Furthermore, As Oner et al. (2020) noted, refugees' participation in social networks can reduce some of the outcomes of precarity (described in more detail below), and it can also open up opportunities for 'proactive mobilization' to respond to unexpected circumstances.

This section has discussed the importance of social support for refugees' employability and how social networks are understood to shape this support. Next, I will discuss precarity as a

concept associated with refugees and explore literature related to understanding how it impacts their employment.

### **2.1.3 Precarity**

The notion of precarity is linked to the lack of convenience, physical or mental well-being, the uncertainty and insecurity of conditions, and vulnerability (Ilcan et al., 2018). Waite (2009) related precarity to the lack of convenience, physical or mental well-being, the uncertainty and insecurity of conditions, and vulnerability. She defined the term ‘as referring to life worlds characterised by uncertainty and insecurity that are either thought to originate from a generalised societal malaise, or as a result of particular experiences derived from neo-liberal labour markets’ (p. 426). During the post-Fordism era, the term became popular to explain workers' status with insecure employment or those with temporary jobs. However, the use of the term is not new in which ‘Precarious workers are not a uniquely 21st- or 20th-century phenomenon.’ (Waite, 2009, p. 419). In that, refugee labourers are not the only workers in low-paid sectors of the economy who are experiencing precarity. Precarious working conditions may apply to non-refugees too.

The term precarity has been used in migration and refugee studies (Baban et al., 2017; Banki, 2013; Ilcan et al., 2018; Jackson & Bauder, 2013). Researchers have made clear that many refugees struggle to find full-time and permanent jobs or may face difficulties while employed, making them fall into the category of precarious employment (Jackson & Bauder, 2014). According to Ilcan et al. (2018), there are three different types of precarity: the *precarity of status*, the *precarity of spaces*, and the *precarity of movement*.

The *precarity of status* refers to refugees' socio-legal situation and how refugees may not be documented within the host country. Thus, they will be prevented from various services. For example, the lack of identity papers contributes to refugees' sense of precarity and may impact their employment opportunities (Turner, 2016). It is almost impossible to operate in any country today without proper identity-related documentation. Identity papers are essential for a wide range of activities: death and birth registration, obtaining employment, health care, contracting marriage, and qualifying for social benefits.

In most cases, refugees are forced to flee their homes, and many escape without any identification. This implies that once they enter a country seeking asylum, it is difficult to authenticate their refugee status. Therefore, they usually are subjected to detention and even, at times, deportation. Refugees are unlikely to get their home countries' identification documents upon request due to the already unstable conditions. As Scalettaris (2009) noted, this 'lack of documents provokes vulnerability and vulnerability induces onward movements' (p. 2). Therefore, refugees are at the mercy of their refuge country and humanitarian bodies like the UN, which may help them obtain new identification documents. Regardless, such documents are the key to accessing a legal labour market and then finding proper employment.

The *precarity of space* refers to the physical locations where refugees live and practice their daily activities, including areas subject to deportation. Accommodation is a crucial issue for refugees; however, they need a decent job to afford proper housing. Usually, refugees often have no choice but to embrace low-paying jobs (Åslund et al., 2017), and affording decent housing is difficult with a low income (Flatau et al., 2015). Further, and as Carter and Osborne (2009) noted, most refugees are also forced to live together as large families in noisy and stressful

environments. They are also vulnerable to exploitation from landlords. In most cases, their concerns are never addressed because they are typically unfamiliar with the host country's laws and are afraid of the repercussions that may result from reporting the violations of their rights (Fozdar & Torezani, 2008).

Sigona (2012) pointed out that refugees give birth to more children, so their numbers keep rising. Although in 2011, the UK managed to deport about 37000 people, there were still undocumented refugees and immigrants in the country (Sigona, 2012). As a result, these children will spend significant parts, if not all, of their lives in the host country despite not being considered citizens. In a broader context, public authorities have increased the demand for social services to report suspected undocumented refugees and immigrants (Campbell et al., 2014). Therefore, refugee families and children have been pushed away from these essential services, leaving them precarious, isolated, and vulnerable.

Additionally, the notion of '*precarity of place*' helps us understand how it can be challenging for refugees to plan a career or livelihood, which affects their day-to-day lives (Banki, 2013, p. 453). Refugees living in temporary shelters under the threat of deportation live in constant fear and uncertainty, which have significant psychological effects (Waite et al., 2015). The deportation element and the other similar elements all form what Ilcan et al. (2018) referred to as 'architecture of precarity,' which allows us to comprehend further how such factors contribute to the precarious employment of refugees.

The *precarity of movement* is related to limiting refugees from moving, leaving, relocating from one location to another. Freedom of movement usually depends on the refugees' host country. For example, the Lebanese government prevented Palestinian refugees from



owning lands, and it controlled their freedom of movement (Mahmoud & Roberts, 2018). In Bangladesh, the government added extra steps by recording the individuals' motility to restrict the freedom of movement of its refugee population (Kachkar, 2019). In some cases, refugees have no choice but to live in a camp inside the receiving country, and they are prohibited from leaving, thus disabled from working outside the camp boundaries.

Refugees may feel they are losing control over their identity (Rajaram, 2002). Such struggles to reshape their identity in uncertain conditions are challenging. Therefore, refugees live under temporary protection, and they are restricted from moving and experience challenges about receiving proper services (Iltan et al., 2018). Refugee employees may live this hybrid, double-consciousness and struggle between their previous and present identity. The prior discussion of precarity is mainly descriptive and analyzes the patterns and types of precarious conditions refugees go through. However, the question must be raised: how might such precarious conditions impact refugees in the workplace? And, how could such precariousness be reduced through employment? In the following section, we will move from presenting the issues affecting refugees and their employability to understanding the state of research assessing the hospitality sector and its role in supporting refugees in the workplace.

## **2.2 Understanding the Hospitality Sector's Support for Refugee Workers**

The North American Industrial Classification System categorized the tourism industry into five subsectors: accommodation, transportation, food and beverage, recreation and entertainment, and travel services (Nickerson et al., 2014). This distinction is essential to ensure that we understand how hospitality workers are an integral part of the tourism sector (Smith, 1994). This classification reflects the vast size of the tourism sector and how it is linked tightly to

other vital areas of the economy, creating numerous jobs based on various skills. For this research, I consider the hospitality sector a sub-sector of the tourism industry, as hospitality is an economic sector that continuously grows along with the tourism sector.

Due to travel restrictions, the United Nations World Tourism Organization's recent updates show that the number of international arrivals decreased by 74% in 2020. Besides, more than 100 million direct tourism jobs grew in jeopardy in small and medium-sized enterprises (UNWTO, 2021). Consequently, according to the World Travel & Tourism Council, the COVID-19 pandemic may result in the loss of 54 million jobs globally in the travel and tourism industry. While this is because of the prevailing pandemic situation, it is still true that the tourism and hospitality sectors employ many people. While I'm writing these lines, the World Travel & Tourism Council expects about 111 million jobs to be recovered in the global Travel & Tourism sector during 2021 (WTTC, 2021b).

According to the EU's pre-pandemic statistics, the tourism sector employs over 13 million people (Eurostat, 2018). Moreover, the UNWTO predicted that the tourism industry would provide direct and indirect employment opportunities to reach 328 million jobs by 2020, which widens the job market (UNWTO, 2014). Indeed, the tourism sector covers a broad scope of activities, which increases the volume of various types of job opportunities worldwide (Baum et al., 2016) while relying on a skilled workforce that facilitates the delivery of services offered to the customers in the different markets niches (Pratt et al., 2011).

A report suggested that the hospitality sector and the tourism sector's direct employment account for over 3.6 percent of global employment, generating a total contribution of 10.2 percent of the world's GDP (Rochelle, 2017). Furthermore, creating job opportunities has

facilitated an increase in workers who move to different parts of the world. The International Labor Organization (ILO) approximates the number of migrant workers, including refugees, to be 164 million worldwide (ILO, 2017). Among these labourers, there is a significant and increasing number of workers in the hospitality sector (Joppe, 2012).

Research indicated that refugees are attracted to work in the hospitality sector for several reasons, including the relatively low skills required and easy access to the industry (Faist, 2017; Newman & Selm, 2003). Also, refugees and other marginalized groups can be viewed as an alternative employment source when locals view hospitality jobs as having low status and pay (Baum, 2007, 2012; Walmsley, 2004). Furthermore, according to Riley et al. (2002), employment in the hospitality sector is attractive to many job seekers because it is relatively easy to access. Still, at the same time, this type of work is seasonal and associated with low wages, which can be less attractive for the local workforce. Treuren et al. (2019) added that the hospitality sector offers a wide range of jobs that require different levels of skills and language proficiency. In addition, some job opportunities have low barriers to entry, for instance, housekeeping.

Dincer et al. (2017) evaluated the impact of the refugee crises on tourism (including hospitality as a subsector) in Turkey, using Istanbul as a case study. The authors studied eight key individuals from the Turkish tourism sector (including the chief of the tourism unions in Turkey) using semi-structured interviews. According to this study, most refugees in Turkey were working in the tourism sector due to its high informal employment rate. Informal employment does not require the employee to provide documentation that is usually required in other sectors. The increase in informal employment in the tourism and hospitality industry means that refugees

can often find jobs more quickly in this sector than in other sectors. As suggested by previously reviewed literature, informal paths, in some cases, were more potent in pointing to positive employment results than formal support plans (Lamba, 2003).

Furthermore, research by Dincer et al. (2017) illustrated how most of this industry's jobs are considered 'grimy,' difficult, dangerous, and low-paying, which may not attract local job-seekers (Dincer et al., 2017; ILO, 2010). Therefore, when the local people shy away, the refugees can often easily obtain these jobs. This ease of getting jobs in hospitality due to the lack of competition with the native workers may encourage refugees to seek employment in the hospitality sector over the other economic areas. However, locals may feel unhappy when hospitality businesses informally offer refugees work, as in Istanbul (Dincer et al., 2017).

Before diving into what the hospitality sector offers for refugee workers, it is fair to shed some light on the value that refugee workers bring to the workplace in a broader context. Zetter and Ruaudel (2016) suggested that while the right to work is crucial for the refugees' dignity, the host countries can boost their local economy and make efforts towards their development by leveraging refugees' potential. Furthermore, Szkudlarek (2019) stated that the perceived benefits outweigh the challenges of hiring refugee employees. For example, employing refugees lets employers grow their customer base and enable workers to serve while using their native language. The author also indicates hiring refugees allows the employer to build a diverse workforce.

Moreover, as Reilly et al. (2019) mentioned, many employers found refugee employees motivated, hardworking and dedicated. For example, employers have reported positive experiences when it comes to hiring of refugees as the author stated: '[t]he addition of the

refugee population provides an opportunity to both drive positive business outcomes and help with one of the world's more pressing problems: the global refugee crisis' (p. 2). However, and as noted above, research shows that refugees face certain challenges. Thus, while their employment has several benefits for businesses, Reilly et al. (2019) argued that inclusion is the key to realize those benefits. The subsequent sections delve more deeply into exploring literature related to understanding refugees' opportunities working in the hospitality industry.

### ***2.2.1 The Hospitality Sector Offers Flexible and Diverse Jobs***

Researchers have long been interested in the nature of employment in the hospitality sector. The flexibility of jobs in the hospitality sector allows people to work and accommodate those looking for jobs that match their preferences. White and Smith (2013) noted that the hospitality sector accommodates people seeking full or part-time jobs and temporary positions. Thus, various options provide a flexible environment for job seekers. These authors mention that refugees may benefit from such flexibility and adjust their work schedules to match their uncertain residency status. Further, as Zampoukos and Ioannides (2011) denoted, workers in hospitality jobs are often mobile, allowing them to work in different areas and countries, wherever the work opportunities are available.

Functional flexibility is one of the benefits perceived by hotel employers regarding refugee employment. A study by Markova et al. (2016) examined the perspective of migrant/refugee workers in London's hospitality sector. The study used mixed methods, drawing on a survey of 155 hotel managers and 51 in-depth interviews with management stakeholders and non-managerial stakeholders of some small-scale hotels. The authors evaluated the results based on factors that promote the employment of migrants in the hospitality sector. They confirm

different ethnic groups doing diverse jobs throughout the studied hotels, which benefits the sector's flexibility and diversity.

White and Smith (2013) stated that tourism's diversified employment opportunities are classified into cultural, sports, recreational and conference activities, travelling, accommodation, and food and beverage services jobs. Hence, the broad scope of job opportunities could attract refugees to join the sector and support themselves and their families. The British Office of National Statistics listed the direct and indirect jobs in England's tourism sector. Sample job titles from the list include catering assistants and managers, waiters and waitresses, chefs, taxi drivers, sports officials and instructors, receptionists, musicians, leisure managers, travel agents, housekeepers, translators, and many more (ONS, 2013).

It is difficult to determine the exact volume of jobs that the hospitality sector creates, especially indirect employment opportunities. Still, it can be assumed on an approximate basis by relating indirect employment to direct employment. For instance, according to Baum (2012), one opening in the hospitality sector creates approximately 1.5 indirect jobs in other industries. Here, it must be noted that direct and indirect employment overlap and depend on each other, especially in the unorganized and informal activities present in the tourism and hospitality sector (UNWTO, 2014).

### ***2.2.2 The Need for Skills and Training***

In some cases, refugees bring skills and knowledge that benefit the host country. For example, in Nepal, refugees introduced a new technique for cultivating cardamom, an essential cash crop (Arnold-Fernández & Pollock, 2013). In Guinea, according to the authors, refugees have been credited with introducing swampland rice, an agricultural technique that was never

utilized in the region. However, these refugees need to understand the new country's context to sustain such initiatives. This highlights the importance of training and introduction programs for refugee employees. While Hurstfield (2004) emphasized the significance of the tailor-made refugee-centric introduction program in the hotels, Legrain (2017) mentioned that refugees could become employable in the flexible labour market through minimum training. Legrain further stated that training is essential for their growth and progress over the period. These can be expensive for employers, but on-job training, like language-related training, is crucial. So, in the beginning, organizations can provide language training as per their workplace requirements. As Legrain (2017) noted, there can be a vast difference in refugees' qualification levels (some can be illiterate, and others can have postgraduate degrees). Thus, the employer should consider tailoring training in relation to the employee needs and the local labour market requirements. In such cases, hiring and training refugees can be costly for the employer, but, at the same time, the returns can be high and quick (Legrain, 2017).

Lumley-Sapanski and Callahan (2019) studied the integration issues of refugees who participated in a vocational hospitality training program in Chicago, Illinois, between 2008 and 2012. These authors examined Bhutanese youth refugees' integration experiences who represented the largest country of origin in the hospitality sector in the studied area. Authors found that the refugees who took this vocational training had more stable employment, higher wages and experienced socioeconomic, which contributed to their ability to buy homes, continue school, and support their families. This study is an important study addressing vocational training's role and its impact on integrating refugees into host communities. However, Lumley-Sapanski and Callahan's study incorporated housing, education and employment and other

integration factors in one study. As is described in this dissertation, the Magdas Hotel's training program focuses explicitly on employment and its role in integrating refugees. Given the relatively limited scholarly reviews of training and development programs at workplaces for refugees (Lee et al., 2018), this dissertation should also add to the literature in this direction.

### ***2.2.3 Entrepreneurship***

Refugees may improve the receiving society by adding substantial macroeconomic gains and organizational maturity through involvement in the workforce and small business entrepreneurship (Alrawadieh et al., 2018; Freudenberg & Halberstadt, 2018; Kachkar, 2019). Alrawadieh et al. (2018) demonstrated that, in addition to employment, entrepreneurship could be a potential barrier or a facilitator for refugees working or seeking employment in the hospitality sector. Apart from employment in hospitality organizations, a ready market for services and goods in the industry makes it attractive for refugee entrepreneurs. Refugees with business ideas and skills can take advantage of this market to start their businesses and create income. The attractiveness of the hospitality industry's business environment, especially concerning the diverse niches that one can venture into and the low capital required to start certain businesses, has been an essential motivator for entrepreneurial refugees to venture into the sector. However, refugee entrepreneurs face key challenges reflected in 'legislative and administrative, financial, socio-cultural and market-related obstacles.' (Alrawadieh et al., 2018, p. 717).

Moreover, through an inductive theory-building approach, Pechlaner et al. (2012) signified that the tourism industry is ideal for minority entrepreneurs such as refugees due to the minimal barriers to entering the tourism sector. They added that the tourism sector leverages the



cross-cultural skills of refugees in marketing products and services. Indeed, research points to entrepreneurship as an essential option for refugees seeking employment in the tourism sector. Pechlaner et al. (2012) added that the interaction among entrepreneurs and tourism stakeholders in the market improves refugees' lives in the host countries. Furthermore, the interaction plays a vital role in learning the local language, picking up cultural values, adapting to the local environment, and initiating friendly relationships with the customers. Thus, entrepreneurship provides an opportunity for refugees to link with and be part of their new surroundings. The subsequent section discusses literature related to understanding social enterprises and focuses on those operating in the tourism sector.

### **2.3 Understanding Social Enterprises**

There is no one definition for social enterprise, social entrepreneurship, and social entrepreneur. Descriptions of these terms have been varied based on the author's terminology, purpose, and discipline (Alegre et al., 2017). Mair and Marti (2006) demarcated that the social enterprise is a firm involved in business projects for accomplishing social goals. In comparison, Kerlin (2006) viewed social enterprises as the application of nongovernmental, market-based procedures to approach social concerns. Other scholars referred to entrepreneurship as 'an innovative, social value-creating activity, that can occur within or across the non-profit, business or government sector' (Austin et al., 2006, p. 2). These definitions capture the social and economic dimensions of the social enterprise, which we can apply to this research's case study, Magdas Hotel. Yet, more can be added to these definitions to capture additional goals of such enterprises in the context of tourism. In the following section, I will discuss the literature related to tourism social enterprises.

Social enterprises are meant for specific social objectives hoping to help solve a problem faced by a community. For example, a portion of these enterprises aims to create decent employment and provide access to those excluded from the labour market to become financially independent (Bacq & Janssen, 2011; Defourny & Marthe, 2006; Sepulveda, 2015). Muhammad Yunus, the Grameen Bank founder in Bangladesh, proposed, promoted, and represented the social business and social enterprise model in management as a response to the failure of the free market to resolve poverty and share wealth more fairly. For that, he was awarded the Nobel Prize (Cornelius et al., 2008). According to Santos et al. (2015), a social enterprise is a hybrid model connecting for-profit and non-profit businesses. It focuses on social issues while capturing enough profit to be successful. While commercial firms aim for the shareholders' benefits and profits, social enterprises, on the other hand, seek social objectives as their primary intention, implementing social services and offering jobs for the marginalized. However, Pache and Santos (2013) revealed that the successful combination of for-profit and non-profit performance is challenging because such a hybrid model involves various stakeholders. Consequently, the social enterprise is continually threatened due to the challenge of balancing between the social and financial goals (Ramus & Vaccaro, 2017).

Social enterprises are established to provide 'supportive work environments that benefit workers' (Paluch et al., 2012, p. 63), particularly those experiencing unfavourable circumstances in the labour market (Defourny & Nyssens, 2010). Some empirical evidence from studies of social enterprises proposes that they do provide employees with sufficient support. For instance, qualitative confirmation from a study of a number of these enterprises shows that workers regarded their executives as 'very supportive at a practical and personal level' and 'co-workers

were friendly and cooperative.’ (Williams et al., 2012, p. 59). Moreover, Paluch et al. (2012) stated that ‘mutually respectful and beneficial relationships were a key factor in creating a supportive work environment’ (p. 70). Social enterprises also exhibited a substantial commitment to their employees' needs and provided a spirit of belonging and a supportive environment (Svanberg et al., 2010). However, these conclusions should be interpreted with some caution, given they stem from qualitative studies with a specific context (see, for example, Higgins-Desbiolles and Monga’s (2020) study in South Australia). Hence, further research is needed on whether social enterprises would suit other groups in a different setting.

Barraket (2007) classified social enterprises into three models. The first model, intended as the 'work integration social enterprises,' is a hybrid that combines paid training and social support for marginalized individuals. In this model, the enterprise offers its goods or services while addressing an important social issue. The second model, the ‘service model,’ is meant to create or maintain a new service based on community needs. Finally, the ‘income generation models’ aim to produce excess funds to support other not-for-profit ventures. Alter (2006) viewed social enterprises as varying from ‘social value making’ to ‘economic value making.’ That is in addition to ‘true’ social enterprises found in the middle of that spectrum. He also offered several models of social enterprises, one of which is the employment model. Alter's employment model is based on providing access to those who face barriers to employment and lack of job- training through joining enterprises that operate on the open market. Based on the previous classifications, the Magdas Hotel falls into Alter's employment model and Barraket’s first category, ‘Work integration social enterprise,’ to integrate refugees into the Austrian labour market through paid training (i.e., the hotel's internship program).

In the Austrian context, Leichsenring (2001) highlighted different forms of initiatives that form social enterprises. These are self-governed employment leads, socioeconomic enterprises, sheltered workshops, and active organizations in social services. According to Leichsenring's study, Austrian social enterprises concentrate on three central goals: (1) extending employment opportunities, (2) supporting integration through training, and (3) reaching a healthy economic fulfillment through a market-oriented strategy. For example, the Magdas Hotel has extended employment opportunities to the refugees and supports integration through training, which will be discussed further in upcoming chapters.

Perrini and Vurro (2006) suggested a conceptual framework incorporating three basics in a social enterprise model. These three significant basics include market requirements, stakeholder needs, and the social enterprise's structure. Indeed, it is crucial to understand how a social enterprise function and its business model to achieve its goals.

Alter (2006), as noted above, introduced the employment model as one of the operational models of social enterprises. In this model, a social enterprise helps those who lack access to the labour market, such as refugee job-seekers, by offering them employment and training. In addition, the employment model can enhance the integration of such groups into the host communities and provide them with financial and psychological benefits (Lundborg, 2013). These observations match Biddulph's (2018) appraisal, which also viewed social enterprises as 'socially inclusive' by creating meaningful employment for specific groups, enhancing their integration, and providing them with financial and psychological benefits.

In this context, Lee and Szkudlarek (2021) highlighted the importance of the collective efforts of various stakeholders when approaching refugee integration. The question here is how

these social enterprises support refugee workers and improve their integration, a gap this research aims to fill through focusing on the case of Magdas Hotel. With the limited models of businesses that actively integrate refugees into the labour market, the following section will discuss the social enterprises' initiatives to integrate refugees in the tourism and hospitality context.

### ***2.3.1 Tourism Social Enterprises***

The tourism studies literature has recently drawn attention to social entrepreneurship, entrepreneurs, and enterprises that drive social impact. Tourism social enterprises have become an influential research topic in the field of tourism (Boluk & Mottiar, 2014). Driven by social purposes, recently, social enterprises have found their way into the tourism sector (Mottiar et al., 2018). Aquino et al. (2018) described tourism social enterprises as a market-based approach that considers social issues while increasing the benefits and decreasing the negative impacts of tourism on host communities. P. J. Sheldon et al. (2017) provided a more comprehensive definition of Tourism social enterprises that might operate in different countries or locations as ‘a process that uses tourism to create innovative solutions to immediate social, environmental and economic problems in destinations by mobilizing the ideas, capacities, resources and social agreements, from within or outside the destination, required for its sustainable social transformation’ (p. 7).

Aquino et al. (2018) focused on innovative social enterprises' role in reducing the negative impact of tourism on destinations and using these creative efforts to empower local communities. The definition provided by P. J. Sheldon et al. (2017) contains the three pillars of sustainability: the human, environmental and economic dimensions in which the social change

occurs in the tourism and hospitality sectors' activities (e.g., accommodation services). What is relevant in this definition is that it captures the need for a prompt resolution for urgent social issues, such as the clear outcomes produced by social enterprises that address inadequate responses by governments and market gaps. For example, as highlighted in the study of Castellani et al. (2020), the outcomes of tourism social enterprises are characterized by providing an authentic tourist experience, enhancing the relationship with local communities, and enhancing business reputation, creation of new employment opportunities. As will be shown in this research, the Magdas Hotel is an innovative business model, which was formed as a possible mechanism to demonstrate how tourism social enterprises can help solve refugee employment issues while generating value for their stakeholders. More importantly, P. J. Sheldon et al.'s (2017) definition reflect how tourism social enterprises can be a rejoinder to market or government failure to fulfil its obligations. As such, tourism social enterprises surpass traditional businesses in the sector to give something back to the communities, they operate in, which may have a more powerful effect on a larger scale. In doing so, tourism social enterprises, as discussed later in this section, fulfill a moral commitment and 'caring for' ethics. As suggested by P. J. Sheldon et al. (2017), tourism social enterprises can function as a moral or ethical response to modern capitalism's market to resolve critical social problems impacting marginalized groups and vulnerable people. In addition, tourism social enterprises are a recognized part of social innovation in the search for new opportunities and alternatives to the existing models of businesses (Mosedale & Voll, 2017).

There is limited research that explored tourism social enterprises and fewer studies that considered the employment model's context (see Alter's models in the previous section).

However, the available research highlights some notable cases. For example, Carter-James and Dowling (2017) conducted a case study on Guludo Beach Lodge, an ecotourism project that provides income to the local community of the Cabo Delgado Province of Mozambique. The authors highlighted how the Guludo project empowers the local community socially, economically, psychologically and politically. The empowerment framework examined the influences that ecotourism enterprises have on local communities and underscored the significance of fairly distributing the profits won from such projects.

Furthermore, the framework discusses the consequence of communities exercising power and authority over ecotourism initiatives in their region and emphasizes the advantage of the host community participation in the planning and development of such projects. Thus, the authors concluded that the Guludo Beach Lodge confirms an empathetic empowerment framework, serving alongside the host community to fulfill their needs and interests of saving the surrounding environment and supporting development at the local level. Part of these findings harmonizes with other studies on tourism social enterprises that introduce ecotourism activities to reduce destructive wildlife customs like deforestation (Peredo & Wurzelmann, 2015).

In another example, Daniele et al. (2017) conducted a case study that explored Adventure Alternative and Moving Mountains Trust, a tour operator and a charity group that embraces the social enterprise's business model. The authors highlighted three dimensions for flourishing social enterprises operate in the tourism sector. 'Value networks' is the first dimension that refers to the capacity of a social enterprise to identify relevant networks and build influential relationships and partnerships to raise social capital. The second element is 'key resources' that

introduce the various means of revenue for enterprises. Finally, 'customer relationships' help produce income to sustain the continuation of a social enterprise, so it maintains its social goals.

Interestingly, the Adventure Alternative and Moving Mountains Trust model supports the tourist destination in tourism hindrances like natural disasters or political instability. The goal is to keep operating, save the jobs, and help the destination recover. This model is slightly different from Alter's (2006) employment model, which I discussed earlier. In addition to job creation, Adventure Alternative and Moving Mountains Trust's model used most of its revenue to support the destination and local community.

Furthermore, Biddulph (2018) analyzed five social enterprises in Siem Reap, Cambodia. This study aimed to examine the opportunities and constraints of social entrepreneurship to spread inclusive tourism. For example, it enabled underprivileged and marginalized individuals to access employment in the tourism sector, enabling the local community to represent themselves in tourism planning, development and distribution channels. The study confirmed that social enterprises generated valuable, innovative opportunities for disadvantaged and marginalized people and contributed mainly to energizing parts of Cambodian culture. In addition, social enterprises in Cambodia helped secure benefits to local people, rather than the leakage of revenue to foreign companies, as is often the situation in the tourism industry (Mao et al., 2013). In this context, when the local community in Cambodia and the majority of world countries have limited resources and experiences to start their own businesses and may lack government support, it's reasonable to suggest social enterprises as adequate stakeholders for creating the essential foundations and tools for local participation (Mottiar & Boluk, 2017).



Likewise, a study by Higgins-Desbiolles and Monga (2020) used a case study approach to explore a social business that creates employment for homeless people in South Australia. The authors highlighted how the GOGO Event model (a social business that re-engages vulnerable groups through work) had applied the ethics of care to connect various stakeholders and generate meaningful employment in events and festivals for vulnerable people. The authors applied feminist notions of ethics of care to analyze how the GOGO Event model, founded by Sarah Gun, can lead to social change and build an equitable community. According to this study, the efforts to employ marginalized groups exceeded typical expectations about corporate social responsibility. They implied that social enterprises could strengthen society, build links of care, and add to further sustainable and ethical approaches

Further, Higgins-Desbiolles and Monga's (2020) study presents an excellent example of the power of creative ideas. Sarah Gun is one person who noticed the increasing necessity to support vulnerable people. So, she acted and decided to take the initiative and afford homeless people in her region a paid employment. Higgins-Desbiolles & Monga's (2020) work is the first to use the ethics of care approach in understanding how/why social enterprises in tourism support communities. Such initiatives reflect the importance of ethics of care in an enterprises' approach to conducting business. However, while social enterprises generate employment and provide vulnerable people with access to the tourism labour market, employees at tourism social enterprises might receive fewer remunerations compared to those working in traditional or non-social companies (Peredo & Wurzelmann, 2015). The GOGO Event model emphasized what previous literature denoted - that there has been a shift in the focus of social enterprises operating in the tourism sector to prioritizing the 'care for people' while reducing the attention to 'caring for

things' (See Dianne Dredge's foreword to Sheldon and Daniele's book: *Social Entrepreneurship and Tourism*).

P. Sheldon et al. (2017) highlighted six overlapping areas of tourism social enterprises research. The first area concerned developing conceptual and theoretical inquiry since the research on tourism social enterprises is still relatively new. The second and the third areas are related to the operational aspects and how various stakeholders of tourism social enterprises communicate and interact. The fourth area of research can investigate a social entrepreneur's motives, insights, and peculiarities. The research that examines the existence of tourism social enterprises in different settings was highlighted as the fifth area of potential research. Lastly, the authors underscored the importance of research that assesses the overall value of Tourism social enterprises as an alternative strategy to traditional companies operating in the tourism sector. This study aims to serve the latter purpose by shedding light on the unique model of Magdas Hotel that seeks to support refugees and help them integrate into the tourism labour market. At the same time, this dissertation touches on the operational aspects of Magdas Hotel and how the initial focus of the hotel is to lead with a philosophy of care supporting refugee job-seekers within the hospitality sector.

Before discussing how tourism social enterprises can contribute to the ethics of care as a new approach to delivering tourism, addressing the argument that tourism has held and promoted neoliberal inequities and exploitation is legitimate in this context. Higgins-Desbiolles (2020) argues that including alternative and responsible forms of tourism are still insufficient approaches to achieving fair tourism. Further, there is a need for 'a community-centred tourism framework that redefines and reorients tourism based on the rights and interests of local

communities and local peoples' (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2020, p. 610). Carnicelli and Bulok (2021) suggested 'socializing' tourism for a more sustainable and just prospect to practically confront neoliberal governance, especially for marginalized and vulnerable people involved in and affected by tourism. The authors emphasized the importance of education regarding 'caring' tourism that considers social and environmental issues. They concluded that educating people about the capacity of caring tourism is the starting point to enhance communities' well-being, empower marginalized and vulnerable people, and protect the environment. In this context, P. Sheldon et al. (2017) cited that tourism social enterprises, which were initially introduced to care for people, respond to 'late modern capitalism and the impact of neoliberal strategies' (p. 322).

In linking to the ethics of care, scholars have emphasized tourism social enterprises' power to promote sustainable development, often exceeding what corporate social responsibility can contribute. For example, Dredge (2017) highlighted three characteristics embedded in tourism social enterprises. First, social enterprises operating in the tourism sector redefine social responsibility as it invites organizations to care for people more than things. Second, the social values of tourism social enterprises are fundamental for their mission and embedded into their foundations, thereby strengthening and solidifying social capital. Third, tourism social enterprises seek to disseminate social benefits through expanding their model into similar contexts. These features correspond to the three levels of business ethics: micro, meso and macro - individual, organizational, institutional (Freeman, 1984; Spence, 1999). The cited characteristics reflect the importance of ethics of care in tourism social enterprises at different levels. However, in tourism studies as a whole, theoretical links to ethics of care have been limited, particularly concerning discussions about fairness for vulnerable people and ethnic

minorities (Jamal & Camargo, 2014; Jamal & Higham, 2021). The Magdas Hotel, the case study for this research, focuses on helping refugee job-seekers access the hospitality labour market. As will be made clear in this analysis, the Magdas Hotel is a social enterprise. Specifically, the guiding focus of the hotel is to foster support for refugee job-seekers guided by an ethics of care. Further, the research presented here illustrates how Magdas translates this ethics of care on the ground, for example, through its corporate culture and operations.

Furthermore, previous literature linked tourism to broader discussions of community development. While there is solid knowledge that tourism can be a vehicle for sustainable community development (Mair & Reid, 2007), there is still limited understanding of how tourism social enterprises can serve the same purpose (see Aquino et al., 2018 as an exception). Altinay et al. (2016) argued that tourism social enterprises might participate in local communities' social and economic development of tourist destinations. A recent study (Lee & Szkudlarek, 2021) reinforced the argument of Altinay and his colleagues, demonstrating that social enterprises might participate in community development by supporting their refugee employees (e.g., developing on-the-job skills). This can be done if these enterprises meet their development mission through environmental, political, social, and financial support. For example, allowing tourists to participate in the local food consumption supports tourists' authentic and cultural experience promoting slow tourism, which can counteract the extreme maximalist consumption of food and encourage more sustainable practices (Clancy, 2014). In another example, Naderi et al. (2019) surveyed 168 employees working in social enterprises operating in the rural tourism context who confirmed the positive impact of social entrepreneurship shaping social value and social capital in rural destinations of Iran. Similarly,

building a 'caring' workplace in the hospitality sector enhances employees' skills and contributes to and promotes sustainability in the industry (Moskwa et al., 2015). In the context of this study, understanding tourism social enterprises' comprehensive support for the refugee population as part of Austria's local community is an important issue.

While conducting the literature review, I have noticed the consistent use of the case study. Most of the literature on social enterprises in the tourism scholarship has focused on case studies in most contexts. Therefore, this research utilized the case study methodology to explore refugee employment in a social enterprise from a developed side of the world. Consequently, to contribute a deeper understanding of refugee employment in the developed countries context, this study utilized the Austrian context to add to the content of the existing tourism social enterprise literature.

In this section, I have discussed the selected literature on social enterprises' definitions, objectives, and the role of such types of firms regarding employment. Also, I highlighted the available studies on tourism social enterprises. As 'there is to date no empirical study that documents the extent of social entrepreneurship in tourism and hospitality' (P. J. Sheldon et al., 2017, p. 12), and given the relative lack of research related to social enterprises as business models that focus on refugee employment in the hospitality sector (Dickerson & Hassanien, 2018), this research aimed to help fill this gap. In the next section, I will discuss corporate social responsibility and situated it in the context of this study.

## **2.4 Corporate Social Responsibility**

In academic literature, corporate social responsibility (CSR) has a long history dating back to the 1950s (Carroll, 1999). Bowen (2013) viewed corporate social responsibility as a

necessity for enterprises to adjust their policies and make decisions to answer society's objectives and values. Brown and Dacin (1997) defined corporate social responsibility as 'A firm's status and activities with respect to its perceived societal obligations.'(p. 87). Furthermore, corporate social responsibility suggests that businesses should meet their legal responsibilities and work towards their society and environment (McWilliams & Siegel, 2001). A common focus of all of these definitions is the desire to widen companies' responsibilities and exceed commercial commitments to include the social dimension. For example, companies should acknowledge and give further attention to their responsibility towards labour and employment matters (Nicolae & Sabina, 2012).

The interest and importance of corporate social responsibility research increased in the 1980s and 1990s (Lee, 2008). As a result, corporate social responsibility became an important research topic in various academic disciplines and crucial business practice across the sectors of the economy (Aguinis & Glavas, 2012; Carroll, 1999), including the hospitality sector (Rhou & Singal, 2020). Scholars studying corporate social responsibility in the hospitality context denoted that the sector's interest in such a critical initiative became apparent in the early 1990s (Bohdanowicz & Zientara, 2008). As stated in a recent study by Panigyrakis et al. (2020), the luxury hospitality industry is witnessing a groundbreaking shift. The guests want these properties to go beyond just being environmental-friendly. Instead, they want these hotels to be involved with NGOs or work for some social mission.

Researchers studied corporate social responsibility in the hospitality context for different purposes. For example, Boluk (2011) linked corporate social responsibility to value creation and consumer behaviour. She argued that corporate social responsibility could benefit a business's

reputation comparable to people's ethical approach in their consumption for a good or service. Graci and Dodds (2008) also found that the applications of economic, environmental, and socially sustainable initiatives may promote a hotel's brand image and thus build a competitive edge. Moreover, according to (González-Rodríguez et al., 2019), an organization's culture affects different aspects of corporate social responsibility. The study found that hotels that use corporate social responsibility practices related to employees and customers have a more robust business reputation, positively affecting these hotels' organizational (financial, market, and shareholder preference) performance.

Furthermore, hospitality scholars underlined the central part that stakeholders represent within a company's corporate social responsibility management (Font & Lynes, 2018). Several studies have assessed corporate social responsibility's stakeholder effects in the field of consumer behaviour (Becker-Olsen et al., 2006). For instance, Einwiller et al. (2019) analyzed the impact of activities initiated by OEGB (Austrian Federal Railways) on the company's stakeholders' perceptions. The study found that almost half of the participants recalled the OEGB's activities for refugees. Furthermore, they revealed a stronger intention of spreading positive words for its corporate social responsibility activities.

Moreover, they also recalled having a better image of the organization because of the corporate social responsibility initiatives. As Europe strives to find a solution to the migrant crisis, challenges continue to escalate in such a scenario. According to Einwiller et al. (2019), when in 2015 more than 1.25 million refugees arrived at the EU's borders, the public demand was focused on pushing the business sector to provide support for refugees. In response, some

companies organized relief actions. However, this ‘welcoming culture’ was immensely criticized by some groups.

Along with their desire to undertake corporate social responsibility activities and socially conscious initiatives, many organizations may look to the world's 25.4 million refugees as potential employees. While these initiatives would support the vulnerable population, they would also offer a new talent pool to employers and positive business outcomes. The benefits include low employee turnover and high recruitment, increased productivity, innovation, and a positive public image (Reilly et al., 2019). As Legrain (2016) reported, corporate social responsibility is one of the most significant motivators for companies to hire refugees, even greater than their labour needs.

According to Vallaster et al. (2012), corporate social responsibility obligations include how firms communicate with their stakeholders, who have interests in the corporation and its operations. For example, my work explores how the Magdas Hotel interacts and cooperates with its guests, managers, employees, and the communities in which they care about refugees' employment.

Saatci and Urper (2013) noted that although social enterprise and corporate social responsibility may seem to be the same, that is not the case. While corporate social responsibility is a reactive approach, a social enterprise model is proactive in its process. Doing good is the foundation of the social enterprise model, contrary to corporate social responsibility initiatives designed to impact current practices positively (WOS, 2018). The social enterprise model also adopts a more comprehensive organization of social obligations than those supported by corporate social responsibility (Saatci & Urper, 2013). Szkudlarek (2019) mentions corporate



social responsibility as a key driver of the initiative of hiring refugees. For the case of Magdas Hotel, as a social enterprise, corporate social responsibility forms the foundations for its fundamental strategic objectives that they considered in every phase of their service.

Recognizing corporate social responsibility at the foundation stage of Magdas Hotel presents an essential feature of differentiation from traditional hotels, where corporate social responsibility is treated as a marketing element (Moyeen & West, 2014). In this context, Cornelius et al. (2008) highlighted how social enterprises could face a challenge in managing, implementing, and fulfilling an internal corporate social responsibility for their employees and an external corporate social responsibility to customers and other stakeholders.

Page and Katz (2010) argued that social enterprises propose a reliable alternative to corporate social responsibility, even though its short-term social influence would probably be limited. At the same time, while there is substantial agreement that corporate social responsibility is concerned with the social commitments of the business, there is less certainty about the essence and reach of these obligations (Page & Katz, 2010).

This section has reviewed corporate social responsibility in the related literature. There are different definitions for corporate social responsibility, and I highlighted those related to the context of this study. I also addressed the difference between companies that embrace corporate social responsibility and social enterprises. The following section will undertake a brief discussion of stakeholder theory, which shaped the design and implementation of this study.

## **2.5 Stakeholder Theory**

Stakeholder theory is a conceptual framework or theory that highlights the interconnected relationships among an organization's stakeholders while improving practical, productive, and

ethical means to manage a business (Harrison et al., 2015). There is no single definition of who the stakeholders are in every case. Instead, the stakeholder concept has been utilized differently based on researchers' interests and focus (Miles, 2015). For instance, the stakeholder has been defined as 'any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization's objectives' (Freeman, 1984, p. 76), or 'directly affected by the operations of the firm' (Lea, 2004, p. 207). Also, a stakeholder(s) is a 'group that the firm needs to exist, specifically customers, suppliers, employees, financiers, and communities' (Dunham et al., 2006, p. 25).

The stakeholder approach was introduced by Edward Freeman (1984), who outlines how management can satisfy stakeholders' interests in a business (Freeman, 1984). Thus, the stakeholder theory suggests that a company aims to create value for all involved in the business, like its clients, suppliers, employees, local community, shareholders, and others. However, Sundaram and Inkpen (2004) criticized Freeman's proposal for adding complexity to businesses' management by making them accountable for a wider group of stakeholders. Thus, embracing this broader approach may create conflicting interests.

The question remains why businesses should consider implementing this approach. First, Freeman suggested that organizations need to think beyond financial stakeholders. Various interest groups should be considered when thinking about the success of a business. Second, Freeman argues that we need to view stakeholders as a whole and start thinking of collaborating and building positive relationships with direct and indirect stakeholders. Third, he highlighted the need to identify the organization's stakeholders- know who is involved and in what way—in other words, knowing who the direct stakeholders (directors, managers, and other employees)

and indirect stakeholders (suppliers, clients), as well as community stakeholders (local host community, all levels of media), and government stakeholders (local, state, and national) (Freeman, 1984).

Further, stakeholders have also been classified based on their attachment and relationship to the organization. For example, a stakeholder can be divided into internal or external to the organization (Sirgy, 2002), or can be classified as primary or secondary stakeholders (Savage et al., 1991), voluntary or involuntary (Clarkson, 1995). Also, stakeholders have been sorted into more than two types to include institutional, organizational, and social stakeholders (Vazquez (Vazquez-Brust et al., 2010), regulator, controller, partner, passive, dependent and non-stakeholder (Wagner Mainardes et al., 2012).

Business researchers have used stakeholder theory as a tool to promote effective ways to manage organizations (Harrison et al., 2015). The effectiveness of such an approach is exemplified in the contribution of stakeholders towards the organization's goals. For instance, in the case of the Magdas Hotel, stakeholders include refugee employees (trainees), non-refugee employees (official trainers), hotel guests (individuals, corporate), government authorities, volunteers, financial supporters, media, community groups, a not-for-profit organization, and other stakeholders. These stakeholders work together to promote the integration of refugees in Austrian society by offering them an opportunity to join the labour market through employment in the field of hospitality.

Moreover, stakeholder theory advances all the stakeholders' concerns and needs and includes them in the profit circle (Harrison et al., 2015). For instance, employment for refugees should benefit them, normalize their lives and support efforts to integrate these refugees into

Austrian society (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2007; Lundborg, 2013). Also, employing refugees should address a portion of the labour shortage across the hospitality sector (Lucas & Mansfield, 2008).

Jones et al. (2017) reviewed the major uses of stakeholder theory across various business components, such as corporate social responsibility, accounting, business ethics, and general management issues. They noted that stakeholder theory considers three points, usually existing in businesses: first, how value is created and exchanged, second, the relationship between capitalism and ethics (ethical business matters) and third, how managers should think about creating value and applying ethics to businesses. These three points or issues can be better understood by directly or indirectly recognizing all of those involved. The management of stakeholders follows this and seeks to understand how they interact and communicate to create value for everyone (Freeman, 1984). On top of that, the ethical implications of stakeholder relationships must be considered through all communication levels among a business's stakeholders (Freeman, 1984).

Burga and Rezania (2016) conducted a case study of social entrepreneurial business to explain stakeholder importance through using a stakeholder salience model and the stakeholder social issue management model. A semi-structured interview method was employed to identify the business's stakeholders' importance and social issue management valence. Then, the authors draw a map containing various stakeholder groups. Each of these stakeholder groups occupies a specific point in the map based on the stakeholder's group's importance and priority. The mapping strategy helps in visualizing how the position of stakeholder groups changes at critical times. Thus, social entrepreneurs implementing this mapping strategy can balance the allocation

of their time and efforts to stakeholders while simultaneously sustaining their social mission (Burga & Rezania, 2016).

Indeed, each firm prioritizes a particular group of its stakeholders based on its values, vision, and business approach. For instance, organizations that care about profit are customer-centric. While a firm initially founded for social purposes, such as the Magdas Hotel, may take action to please its donors and volunteers first. It may also prioritize its employees since the hotel was founded to integrate refugees into Austrian society by offering refugees employment opportunities. As will be discussed in the following chapters, developing a clear understanding or map of the Magdas Hotel stakeholder groups and their importance was part of this research.

One of stakeholder theory's limitations is that it has an organization-centric approach, making the theory dominant from managers' viewpoints and not all stakeholders' perspectives (Friedman & Miles, 2006). Also, not all scholars view stakeholder theory as an alternative to the shareholder approach if used in the social enterprise context in which 'stakeholding theory and social enterprise may both be worth testing as solutions to the problems of shareholder capitalism - but they cannot be tested together in the same organisation' (Griffith, 2009, p. 78). To further clarify, social enterprises usually have a clear vision of their main objectives and their central beneficiary stakeholder. Griffith's argument highlights the difficulty that social enterprises may face meeting their commitment to all stakeholders while initially the focus was already granted to one specific stakeholder. Therefore, Griffith saw the combination of a social enterprise with a stakeholder approach can be contradicting if employed in one business model.

Mansell (2013) criticized stakeholder theory in his book *Capitalism, Corporations, and the Social Contract: A Critique of Stakeholder Theory*. The author's main concern was whether

any goals could be pursued by a corporation in a market-based economy that is not reducible to the shareholder's interests (Mansell, 2013, p. 3). He criticized corporate ownership for all stakeholders claiming such ownership exists in companies' current regulations. Also, viewing stakeholder theory as a 'social contract' weakens the principles on which a market economy is built. The author further argues that Friedman's shareholder theory is more reasonable to run corporations (Mansell, 2013). In contrast to stakeholder theory, a company advocates and favours maximizing profit for shareholders, with less attention to the rest of those interested in the company - stakeholders.

Lee et al. (2020) investigated the perspectives of two stakeholders that contribute to refugee employment: the employers and organizations supporting refugees in resettlement. The authors pointed out the necessity for these stakeholders to commit to inscribing the difficulties of refugee workforce integration. Furthermore, studies urged recognition to advance employees as key stakeholders for businesses while maintaining financial benefits for them and their local community (Cornelius et al., 2008). What is significant in this study is the authors' note on the lack of empirical evidence that examines the stakeholders' perspectives as they 'urgently call for the current knowledge gap in the field to be addressed' (p. 209). In line with Lee et al. (2020) study, I argue that we lack a comprehensive understanding of how different internal and external stakeholders view refugee employment, particularly the role of a social enterprise, like the Magdas Hotel, to support refugees. Also, there is a need to understand if the hotel considers its refugee employees a participating stakeholder and their voice is heard.

## 2.6 Summary

The reviewed literature for this study established that most refugees struggle to secure a meaningful job, and they face complex barriers that prevent them from obtaining and maintaining suitable employment, which places them in precarious conditions (Fasani et al., 2020; Jackson & Bauder, 2014; Zetter & Ruaudel, 2018). As refugees face multiple barriers while seeking work or during their employment, they find it difficult to stabilize their job. Research also indicated that refugees are attracted to work in the hospitality sector for several reasons, including the relatively low skills required and easy access to the industry (Faist, 2017; Newman & Selm, 2003). However, many jobs in this sector are seasonal and associated with low wages, which can be less attractive for the local workforce.

Social enterprises in the tourism and hospitality sector operate under different models. One of these models provides essential employment for vulnerable people and marginalized groups. However, the literature reviewed showed a lack of empirical research that documents the scope of social entrepreneurship in tourism and hospitality (Day & Mody, 2017). In particular, there is a lack of research related to social enterprises as business models that embrace the ethics of care and focus on supporting refugees employed in the hospitality sector. Therefore, this study has sought to fill this gap by utilizing stakeholders' lenses to explore refugee employment experiences and perspectives in the tourism social enterprises context.

In this chapter, I reviewed the literature related to refugees and their employability in the hospitality sector. Then, I reviewed related studies investigating the different types of refugees' challenges for employment integration (legal, social, cultural, and health). I also addressed studies related to social support, social networks, and notions of refugees' precarity that help us

better understand refugees' employment when they move to a new country. I also reviewed selected literature that has covered how refugee employment is beneficial for the refugees themselves and their employers, focusing on the hospitality sector. Lastly, I checked the literature related to social enterprises and tourism social enterprises, followed by corporate social responsibility and stakeholder theory. The next chapter will present an overview of research design, methodological approach, and methods to collect the information and draw findings.



## **Chapter 3**

### **Research Methodology and Design**

This chapter presents the methodological approach and methods used to understand refugee employment from the stakeholders' perspectives at the Magdas Hotel, a tourism social enterprise in Vienna. This chapter discussed the research's epistemological stance, the interpretivist paradigm, followed by the research purpose and questions. Next, I elaborated on the qualitative case study methodology and the design rationale, followed by clarifying the selected case and its settings. The chapter also highlights the recruitment process and methods used to collect the data. Finally, the chapter outlines data analysis procedures and addresses ethical matters relevant to this research.

#### **3.1 Epistemological Stance**

This research is positioned within the interpretive paradigm, which adopts a relativist ontology (Scotland, 2012). This means that reality is interpreted by people based on their ideology and culture. Thus, it is believed that every reality is complex, and it has multiple layers and interpretations. Multiple interpretations mean numerous realities, which further implies distinct realities as the number of people (Levers, 2013). Hence, researchers have to understand humans by looking at various contexts and cultures (Crotty, 1998).

#### **3.2 Research Purpose and Research Questions**

As stated earlier, the purpose of this research was to understand refugee employment at the Magdas Hotel from a stakeholders' perspective. The following questions guided the research.

1. What are the experiences of the Magdas Hotel's stakeholders regarding refugee employment?
2. How do stakeholders view the employment of refugees at the Magdas Hotel?
3. How do stakeholders see the Magdas Hotel's future as a social enterprise operating in the hospitality sector?
4. What are the implications of the Magdas Hotel project on the employment of refugees?

### **3.3 Methodology**

#### ***3.3.1 Rational for the Research Paradigm and Design***

Within a qualitative framework and an interpretivist paradigm, this thesis is concerned with understanding refugee employment at the Magdas Hotel from a stakeholders' perspective. I found interpretivism a suitable paradigm because it facilitates a deeper understanding of the participants' views and perceptions. Hence, by embracing the interpretivist approach, I endeavoured to generate meaningful interpretations of various views, perspectives, and experiences of different stakeholders about refugee employment at the Magdas Hotel.

Under the interpretivism paradigm, this research uses a qualitative exploratory case study as its design. It is appropriate to adopt the qualitative approach when the researcher relatively knows little about it (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Patton, 2005). Also, employing a qualitative approach facilitates an in-depth study and allows the researcher to capture detailed human knowledge (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

According to Greene (2010), 'Interpretivist knowledge comprises the reconstruction of inter-subjective meanings, the interpretive understanding of the meanings humans construct in a

given context and how these meanings interrelate to form a whole. Any given interpretive reconstruction is idiographic, time- and place-bound; multiple reconstructions are pluralistic, divergent, even conflictual' (p. 68). While I am interested in drawing comprehensive findings by understanding the views of different stakeholders in Magdas Hotel, I was able to get deeper insights, as indicated by Greene above, by getting interrelated findings. In this thesis, I endeavoured to relate the different meanings that different stakeholders reveal and present them as an aggregated insights.

The case study methodology is among the primary qualitative designs that adopt the interpretivist philosophical approach (Easton, 2010). This methodology is based on qualitative, subjective information and adopts qualitative methods such as interviews, observation, focus group discussion, and other methods. The qualitative case study provides an essential basis for assessing complex phenomena in their natural setting (Simons, 2014; Starman, 2013). Therefore, enabling the researcher to explore a phenomenon through a mixture of lenses produces greater comprehension of the manifold aspects of a case (Baxter & Jack, 2008). A case study is also a flexible approach that allows the researcher to study the phenomenon as a whole or divide it into parts according to its focus and needs (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

There are several views of case studies. For instance, Crowe et al. (2011) described the case study as a multifaceted in-depth approach for evaluating complex phenomena in their social context. In comparison, Gerring (2006) referred to the case study as a single unit focusing on using the insights gathered to generalize across a larger group. Merriam & Tisdell (2015) focused on the nature of case studies, as the investigation object, with less attention paid to its process. They add that case study research examines a particular matter and that its outcomes

should be descriptive. They stated that ‘a case study is an in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system’ (p. 40).

Stake (1995) divided case studies into three types: intrinsic, instrumental, and collective. The intrinsic type focuses on understanding an authentic case considered unique and has no similar cases, with no attention paid to developing a theory. In this type, the case study's boundaries must be identified and acknowledged before the study (Stake, 1995). The instrumental type is used to generate a theory from the studied case with less focus on the case itself, whereas the collective type deals with multiple cases.

Stake’s description befits my subjective ontological and interpretivist epistemological views. Thus, my choice was to explore the Magdas Hotel as a single (intrinsic) case consisting of complex stakeholder groups. I aimed to get their perspectives on refugees' employment dilemma, as Stake expressed that ‘the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances’ (p. xi). Consequently, the case study allows me to *explore* and better *understand* refugees' employment in tourism social enterprises. Alternatively, I would have used phenomenology to *comprehend* (Wassler & Kuteynikova, 2020), grounded theory to *explain* (Kornilaki & Font, 2019), ethnography to *describe* (Cubero, 2018), or narrative enquiry to *investigate* the experience of an individuals’ life (Dimmock et al., 2019).

Also, the case study facilitates exploring the research phenomenon in its natural context (Gerring, 2004; Stake, 1995). The case study also supports answering open-ended questions using multiple data collection methods and provides a detailed description of this research's case (Yin, 2013). By employing the case study method, I explored the participants' experiences and

views along with their associated meanings. This choice reflects my belief that multiple realities exist with different meanings, in addition to my interpretations of these meanings. Accordingly, within the intrinsic exploratory case study, this research aims to understand refugee employment from stakeholders' perspectives at the Magdas Hotel, a tourism social enterprise in Vienna (Stake 1995).

According to Beeton (2005), case study methodology is among the different designs that have been adopted by researchers focusing on the various issues in tourism. She added that researchers need no justification to use case studies in tourism research. Also, adopting a case study approach in hospitality has contributed significantly to its legacy and scholarship (Xiao & Smith, 2006). Beeton (2005) adds that tourism case studies can be adopted when researching a specific issue in a particular location during a defined observation period.

The use of the case study approach in the social enterprises' research context is warranted. However, social enterprises are unique, as each has a unique story, specific characteristics, and various goals. In the following section, I highlight the usefulness of the case study approach in the context of the tourism social enterprise of Magdas Hotel.

Crowe et al. (2011) described the case study as a multifaceted in-depth approach for evaluating complex phenomena in their social context. A researcher might choose to employ a case study methodology for several reasons. First, the interpretivist paradigm believes that reality is complex, and a case study is an excellent research tool that deals with complexity (Simons 2014; Starman, 2013). That is in addition to the fact that the qualitative case study provides an indispensable basis for assessing complicated phenomena in their natural setting (Simons, 2014; Starman, 2013). Second, as noted by Merriam and Tisdell (2015), it is appropriate to adopt a

qualitative approach when the researcher knows relatively little about it, thus helping the researcher explore what is new and generate new ideas. Third, case studies allow for the use of different principles of reasoning. For example, a researcher can use it deductively to demonstrate causal connections among concepts and variables or inductively to build a theory (Crowe et al., 2011; Dooley, 2002; Stake, 1995). Fourth, as Stake (1995) highlighted, the case study can be divided into three types: intrinsic, instrumental, and collective, which gives a researcher more independence. In an intrinsic case design, the focus is on the case itself because it acts as a unique site with its sole characteristics (Stake, 1995). Finally, as Beeton (2005) argued, tourism case studies can be adopted when researching a specific issue in a particular location during a defined observation period.

Based on the previous discussion, and because this research aims to discover the meaning associated with the research participant's inputs, the qualitative interpretive approach best suits this study. A qualitative approach can yield a rich understanding of a participant's perception by employing the case study methodology. Thus, the case study methodology is an adequate option for this research.

### **3.4 The Case**

#### ***3.4.1 The Austrian Context***

Austria is a democratic republic country consisting of 9 territories. It has been recognized as a neutral state since 1955 (IOM, 2015). There are different political parties represented in the Austrian Parliament. The most significant ones are the Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ), the Austrian People's Party (ÖVP), the Social Democratic Party of Austria (SPÖ) and the Austrian

Green Party (Grüne) (Merhaut & Stern, 2018; Müller, 2019). The following is a brief outline of these parties' general attitudes towards immigration.

The Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ) is a political party that embraces strict immigration restrictions and has sharp rhetoric against migrants, particularly those from Muslim countries. The Austrian People's Party (ÖVP) is a Christian Democratic party that has been recently branded as an 'anti-immigrant actor,' able to attract anti-immigrant votes' (Hadj Abdou & Ruedin, 2021, p. 1). The Social Democratic Party of Austria (SPÖ) is a centre-left social democracy that is more open to immigration and recently called for keeping asylum laws as they were during 2017. However, although people should be granted asylum, the SPÖ is against the open borders strategy. Lastly, the Austrian Green Party (Grüne) campaigns for peace, social justice and protection of the environment. However, in 2020, the Austrian Green Party aligned with the anti-immigrant party - People's Party (ÖVP), which put both parties in power. For further discussion on the political parties of Austria, see Müller (2019).

The country's history is full of events that reflect how Austrians helped many refugees fleeing conflicts and searching for safety. For instance, about 180,000 Hungarians crossed the border to Austria in 1956, seeking asylum. In response to the influx of refugees during the 1960s, the Austrian government passed the first asylum act (IOM, 2015). Such an act was meant to organize the influx of refugees and 'guest workers' attracted to Austria to make up for the labour market shortage due to the lost domestic labour supply. The significant emigration of Austrian labour to other European countries with higher wages and better working conditions was the leading cause of the Austrian labour market shortage (IOM, 2015).

In 1968, Austria received another 160000 refugees from Czechoslovakia, followed by

another 13000 from Bosnia during the Balkan war in 1990 (UNHCR, n.d). During 1987, aliens' policies (Policies regarding undocumented immigrants) became the Austrian Federal Ministry of Interior's duty to become the primary source for migration policies (MCA, 2016). In 1990, the Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ) launched a system that organizes work permits for refugees and other immigrants. Consequently, Austria developed a new immigration policy during the 1990s in response to the European political situation, such as the Yugoslavian civil war.

As of January 2014, the Federal Ministry of the Interior established the Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum. This office is responsible for the legal status of refugees and asylum seekers in Austria. Additionally, this office deals with any exceptional circumstances and can grant a residence permit to refugees. The Migration Council for Austria consists of academics and other experts who help shape migration strategies. Also, police administrations of the Austrian provinces and police officers enforce the laws of migration and asylum issues. The Federal Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs funds integration programs and communicates with UNHCR. The Austrian Integration Fund assures the implementation of integration programs and contracts or agreements. The Public Employment Service of Austria controls work permits for those entering the labour market, including refugee job seekers (MCA, 2016).

According to Austrian statistics, employees with migration backgrounds comprise 18.8% of the Austrian labour market as of October 2016 (Asamer et al., 2018). In December 2017, Federal President Alexander Van der Bellen appointed the government of Austria. The government was then divided between the centre-right Austrian People's Party (ÖVP) and Austria's far-right Freedom Party (FPÖ), and, as noted above, both parties have strict perceptions



toward immigrants and refugees (Hadj Abdou & Ruedin, 2021).

There are multiple governmental levels at work when dealing with refugee employment in Austria. At the top institutional level, the affairs of refugee issues fall under the responsibility of the Federal Ministry of Interior and the Federal Ministry of Social Affairs (Josipovic & Reeger, 2020). Each of the nine provinces in Austria shares the federal government's responsibility for integrating refugees and other immigrants. Likewise, the Administrative High Court, the Constitutional Court and the Federal and Provincial Courts are committed to asylum and migration matters (MCA, 2016). Hence, the institutional policies of immigration stem from the Austrian federal system. For example, the provincial governments are committed to establishing yearly quotas for residence claims to be distributed for a specific province. In contrast, the Municipalities and District Commissions perform integration rules and steps at the local level (MCA, 2016).

In addition to government organizations, headquarters and regional offices for international organizations deal with asylum and migration issues. Examples of these organizations are the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the International Centre for Migration Policy Development. Furthermore, the Austrian Red Cross, Caritas Austria, and Helping Hands are examples of NGOs that have a vital function in implementing and managing refugee reception policies in Austria (Josipovic & Reeger, 2020). The Magdas Hotel operates under the umbrella of the non-profit Catholic and charity group Caritas, which I will address in the following subsection.

Austrian migration policies are getting more complex from a legislative perspective due

to several changes in the last few years and as a result of the shift in the current political climate toward refugees in Austria (MCA, 2016). As detailed in the International Organization for Migration (IOM) report, the changes include Aliens Law Package 2005, Act Amending the Aliens Law 2009, Act Amending the Aliens Law 2011 and Act Amending the Aliens Law 2015. Thus, from the mid-1990s, immigration and asylum policies shifted distinctly to become considerably more restrictive (Jestl et al., 2021).

Apart from the legislative side, the hostility toward refugees has increased since the far-right government took power (Feroz, 2018). For example, in May 2019, a change to welfare benefits was associated with the refugees' ability to speak German. Thus, those who can't articulate using the language suitably would receive fewer benefits than those who have better German language skills (Bathke, 2019). Also, during the year 2018, Austria's government started deporting people with refused asylum status, even as some of these refugees were engaged in training and education programs (Vytiska, 2019).

In this context, the asylum seekers' statistics in Austria reflect the obscure framework of the country's policies in this regard. For example, there were around 100,000 positive decisions from 170,000 asylum applications (mainly from Afghanistan and Syria) between 2015 and 2018 (Eurostat, 2019). In addition, the waiting time for court decisions rose to take longer for asylum applicants in Austria, which restricts them from accessing employment while waiting (Eggenhofer-Rehart et al., 2018). As a result, there were loud voices against preventing asylum seekers from participating in the Austrian labour market, calling such an act legally illegitimate and politically questionable (Josipovic & Reeger, 2020).

According to the recent report prepared by the Migration Council for Austria (MCA)

(2016), migrants or refugees should not be seen as a solution to the labour shortage. Instead, the authors claimed that this shortage is a great motive for innovation and can be compensated by technology through job digitization and higher productivity. However, they argue, if migrants and refugees are still needed as labour, the focus should be on migrants from Europe<sup>6</sup>. The report highlighted the recommendations for facilitating access to the labour market only for ‘documented’ asylum seekers (MCA, 2016). These recommendations correspond to the latest studies that confirm the continuation of refugees' labour market restrictions they encounter upon arrival to Austria (Jestl et al., 2021).

Consequently, Amnesty International inferred that the number of asylum seekers decreased, and the number of rejected applications increased. The Austrian authorities, for example, have deported over 60 refugees (rejected applicants from Afghanistan) and are still deporting more. (Amnesty, 2018; Infomigrant, 2021). In short, Austria welcomed and hosted many refugees during the past seven decades. However, it seems that the public and governmental mood about hosting more refugees has been changing. As a result, securing a constant legal status and accessing the labour market became two significant problems for people seeking refuge in Austria.

### ***3.4.2 Magdas Hotel***

A group of refugees and tourism professionals run a social enterprise project named Magdas Hotel in Vienna, Austria. The Magdas project brings the dilemma of labour market integration for refugees to the surface as the project aims to integrate refugees through

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<sup>6</sup> The available data dented that most of Austria’s refugees are coming from Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq, Somalia, Iran, and Russia. For further information visit: <https://www.worlddata.info/europe/austria/asylum.php>

employment and training in the hospitality sector. This project views the refugee workforce as a compliment to the hospitality sector. They have multicultural experiences, often speak multiple languages, and can deal with international tourists. As stated in the hotel slogan, the Magdas Hotel supports the idea of ‘staying open-minded’ for its staff and guests (Magdas, n.d). Furthermore, the Magdas Hotel has been identified as a unique world project (Chaboud & Caseau, 2018). It is a tourism social enterprise that aims to ease the access of refugees’ jobseekers to the hospitality sector.

The Magdas Hotel started in February of 2015 and was initiated by the Catholic charity group - Caritas Austria. The name ‘Magdas’ originates from the German words ‘Ich mag das’ (I like that) (Archilovers, 2015). Magdas is a three-star hotel located in Vienna's 2nd district and is within walking distance from the city centre (see Figures 1-8). It consists of 78 bedrooms, including suites and large rooms that accommodate four or more guests. Unlike other traditional three-star hotels, its facilities consist of renewable and recycled elements and up-cycling furniture. Also, there are other amenities in the hotel, including 24-hour reception, free WiFi service, bicycle rental, a small library, a meeting and events area, and a garden facing the cafe. Furthermore, the hotel has a kitchen located on the ground floor overlooking the meeting/events area and provides guests with international dishes. In addition, there is a small dining room in the kitchen where employees meet to eat and chat during their break time.



Figure 1. Magdas Hotel's location map. Photo source: Google maps



Figure 2. Magdas Hotel - outside view. Photo credit: Thabit Alomari



Figure 3. Magdas Hotel - entrance. Photo credit: Thabit Alomari



Figure 4. Magdas Hotel-entrance Hall. Photo credit: Thabit Alomari



Figure 5. Magdas Hotel - lobby desk. Photo credit: Thabit Alomari



Figure 6. Magdas Hotel - bar and cafe area. Photo credit: Thabit Alomari



Figure 7. Magdas Hotel - bar desk. Photo credit: Thabit Alomari



Figure 8. Magdas Hotel - backyard. Photo source: <https://theculturetrip.com/>



AllesWirdGut, an international architectural firm based in Vienna, developed the design for the Magdas Hotel. With a limited budget, AllesWirdGut turned the previous retirement home, built in the 1960s, into a hotel that won the 2015 Austrian State Prize for Design (Architonic (Architonic, n.d). The charity organization Caritas invested around 1.5 million Euros for this project (Chaboud & Caseau, 2018). Through a crowd-funding event, donors added another 57,000 Euros to the existing fund. The hotel employees, community members and volunteers, local firms, and some students from the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna worked together to refurbish the building (Chaboud & Caseau, 2018). For instance, the prior large dining room on the ground floor was renovated to the lobby and reception area and included a small library for visitors. The team also converted a portion of the old building's vast space to shared living rooms that temporarily accommodate unaccompanied minor refugees.

The Magdas Hotel is the first social enterprise hotel in Austria (Planeterra, n.d). As stated on the hotel website, 'A hotel like no other,' and guests should 'stay open-minded.' The Magdas Hotel aims to bring people together to enjoy a unique work and leisure experience. One of the Magdas project's objectives is to help refugees access the labour market and find decent employment through an internship program. In addition to the hotel's aim to successfully integrate and train people with a migration background, the Magdas project aims to simultaneously provide a remarkable degree of job satisfaction for its refugee employees and guests (Unceta et al., 2020).

At the time of conducting the interviews, about twenty refugees from different cultural backgrounds and ten hospitality professionals worked at the Magdas Hotel. Refugee employees work in the hotel's various departments, including Food and Beverage Service, Housekeeping,

and the Front Office. Refugee employees receive on-the-job training under the supervision of hospitality professionals at the hotel. Once refugee employees have developed their skills, they choose to keep working at the hotel. They may also train new refugee employees, or they can even seek jobs in other hotels.

As mentioned earlier, the Magdas Hotel was chosen as the case study for this research because it is a social enterprise established to help solve refugee employment in Austria. At the hotel, refugees work under the supervision of qualified managers who have extensive experience in the hospitality sector. The hotel's mission is to address labour market access and integration for refugees by providing employment and training (Magdas, n.d). There are different stakeholders involved in the Magdas project: refugee employees, management, non-management groups, and hotel guests. Conducting interviews with stakeholders helped me get deeper insights into solving the refugee's employment issue and understanding how these refugees may become part of the solution to the shortage of labour in the hospitality sector.

### **3.5 Methods and Data Collection**

This study employed participant and non-participant observations and semi-structured interviews as the primary data collection methods. In preparation, I developed an observational model and a semi-structured interview guide (Galletta, 2013; Whiting, 2008).

I started the data collection process on July 18, 2019, after receiving the ethics clearance from the Office of Research Ethics at the University of Waterloo. Before beginning the data collection stage, I visited the hotel numerous times during the summer of 2017 and volunteered for different hotel activities from April to mid-July 2019. I mainly worked in the kitchen and helped in cooking and cleaning activities. I did not collect any data during this period but

familiarized myself with the hotel and its staff. In the following sections, I outline the methods used for data collection.

### ***3.5.1 Observation***

Observation provides the researcher with a clear idea of the setting of the selected case. For example, observing some research participants before interviewing them allowed me to check their non-verbal expressions and how they communicate and interact (Schmuck, 2006). For example, when I volunteered in the hotel kitchen, I had the opportunity to discern who is a good listener and understands things correctly, which indicated their ability to understand the languages used around them. In addition, I observed how potential participants used eye contact to reflect their engagement and passion. Thus, their reactions gave me an idea of who to target for interviews and what to expect from them.

Moreover, observing participants in their natural atmosphere and understanding their context provided me with an opportunity to enhance the interview guide and the sampling process (Musante & DeWalt, 2010). Also, this observational data helped me validate information gathered through interviews at a later stage. When I obtained the ethics approval, I started documenting observations using field notes. I also kept volunteering at the hotel during the last two weeks of July and the month of August. I had full access to the backends in the hotel, with consent from the hotel management. I mainly observed the operations in the hotel and how employees interacted with each other. For instance, I watched how refugee employees interacted with non-refugee employees and guests. This observation helped me better understand the context of the workplace and enlighten my path for the interviews.

It should be noted that the hotel employees were all aware of my presence in the hotel as a researcher collecting data for an academic project. The hotel's CEO introduced me to the departments' managers, and I introduced myself to most of the employees and many of the hotel guests. In addition, I have obtained written consent from those who agreed to be part of the participant observation activities. A copy of the observation guide is displayed in Appendix E.

### ***3.5.2 The recruitment processes***

Recruitment for this study started in April of 2019. The selection criteria involved recruiting any stakeholder who was currently or previously engaged at the Magdas Hotel and could speak about refugees' employment. Since the total number of the study population is small, I recruited these study participants through a purposive sampling technique (Ishak et al., 2014). Participation in the study was voluntary, and I recruited participants through advertising for the project among hotel employees via email and by approaching guests and employees directly or through management. Promotion for this study used English and Arabic, which I speak, languages to ensure the content's inclusivity, including the Arab refugees working in the hotel.

To determine the study's interviewees, I identified the potential participating groups by creating an overview of all the stakeholders involved in the site of this study. Thus, based on the stakeholder theory, I made a stakeholder map for the Magdas hotel to use as a guideline for organizing the interviews (see Figure 9 below).

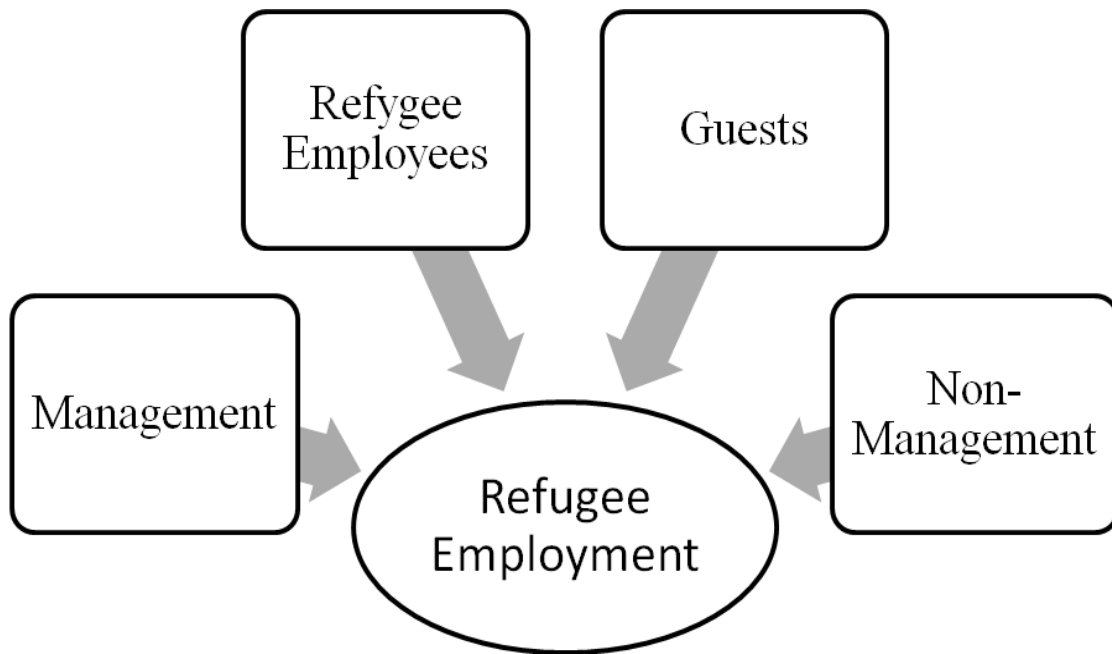


Figure 9. Stakeholders (interviewees) map

I interviewed participants among the four groups of stakeholders individually at mutually accepted locations inside and outside the Magdas Hotel. Primarily, the participants were interviewed at the hotel premises. Since most participants were familiar with the premises, I feel they felt encouraged to express their experiences related to their role at the hotel. Furthermore, to encourage participants to speak freely, I gave them the option of when and where to meet (Kabranian-Melkonian, 2015).

I interviewed all four guest participants in the hotel lobby. One of the two non-management participants was interviewed in a quiet cafe in Vienna's 1st district, while I interviewed the second participant through Skype. The refugee and the management groups interviews took place in the lunchroom or the hotel lobby. I made sure to schedule their location and timing appropriately to avoid any confidentiality issues for all interviews.

I audio-recorded all interviews after obtaining consent from each study participant for later transcription and analysis (Whiting, 2008). Only one guest participant was concerned about the audio recording; therefore, I wrote her comments in my notepad and transcribed them immediately at the hotel within a few hours.

### ***3.5.3 Interviews***

I have collected the data for this research using 20 semi-structured interviews. I chose semi-structured interviews as they provided me with a complete description of the participant's opinions; simultaneously, it helped me keep open to ideas I hadn't thought to ask about before the interview (Arendt et al., 2012). I was always open to any new ideas or reflections that catch the participant's interest.

Each interview started with a general question about the participant's experience concerning refugees' employment in tourism social enterprises. An example question for refugee employees was: 'what is your experience being an employee at the Magdas Hotel? Other questions explored the non-refugee stakeholders' perceptions of employment for refugees in Austria and, more specifically, the hospitality sector. At the end of each interview, I thanked the participants for their participation and assured them that their responses would be kept confidential.

I divided the participants of this study, consisting of 20 stakeholders, into four groups. The first stakeholder group consisted of 10 refugees and is referred to as refugee participants. The second group included four participants who work as management in the Magdas Hotel. The third group, i.e., the non-management group, consisted of two participants; one of them is the operation manager at the charity organization of Caritas, while the other is a senior policy

consultant on refugees' employment in Austria. Finally, the last group included four hotel guests.

Table 1. presents additional information about stakeholder participants.

Participant's Pseudonym	Stakeholder group	Interview location	Interview duration	Interview date
Fatima	Refugee employee	Magdas lobby	45 minutes	19/07/2019
Alexandra	Refugee employee	Magdas lobby	40 minutes	23/07/2019
Salem	Refugee employee	Magdas lobby	53 minutes	23/07/2019
Jasim	Refugee employee	Magdas lobby	40 minutes	26/07/2019
Alia	Refugee employee	Hotel lunchroom	45 minutes	27/07/2019
Abdullah	Refugee employee	Hotel lunchroom	70 minutes	30/07/2019
Fiona	Refugee employee	Hotel lunchroom	40 minutes	02/08/2019
Malek	Refugee employee	Hotel lunchroom	45 minutes	03/08/2019
Lola	Refugee employee	Hotel lunchroom	50 minutes	05/08/2019
Fares	Refugee employee	Magdas lobby	45 minutes	08/08/2019
Cristina	Management	Magdas Garden	40 minutes	15/07/2019
Anna	Management	Magdas lobby	50 minutes	22/08/2019
Sara	Management	Magdas lobby	45 minutes	19/08/2019
Sebastian	Management	Magdas Garden	45 minutes	19/07/2019
Robert	Non-Management	Skype	60 minutes	10/09/2019
Flex	Non-Management	Nearby café	70 minutes	17/08/2019
Alex	Guest	Magdas lobby	30 minutes	22/08/2019
Dan	Guest	Magdas lobby	25 minutes	04/08/2019
Lori	Guest	Magdas lobby	25 minutes	25/07/2019
Kim	Guest	Magdas lobby	25 minutes	12/08/2019

Table 1. Stakeholder participants

The interviews with participants among all four groups went smoothly. I felt that the refugee group was the easiest to interview and provided me with the most in-depth information, especially those who spoke Arabic. This is maybe because I speak their language and share with them some cultural values. On the other hand, participants among the non-management group had a busy schedule, and I had to reschedule their interviews more than once.

The most profound information, I felt, came from the management group participants. They were delighted to answer my questions and provided me with additional perspectives about refugees' employment in the hospitality space. On the contrary, I did not interact deeply with guest participants, as most of them were not aware of the Magdas Hotel's project, and I did not want them to be uneasy or anxious. The interviews with the guests were crisp and limited. Copies of the interviews' guides are displayed at the end of this thesis (Appendixes F, G, H, and I).

### **3.6 Participants in the Study**

As noted above, and following stakeholder theory, I decided to take a stakeholder approach to interview the study participants and analyze their interactions. The hotel's founders, employees, and guests are all essential for such a project's success. Therefore, I endeavoured to investigate each group's perspective as it is vital to have their viewpoint to get comprehensive insights.

In the subsequent sections, I present the profile of the study participants. As mentioned earlier, all stakeholders are involved in the Magdas Hotel's project and are divided into the following four groups: refugee employees, management, non-management, and hotel guests.



### ***3.6.1 The Refugee Employees' Group***

The refugee employees group included five females and five males, ranging in age between 19 and 31. There were four participants of African descent, while the remaining six participants were from Asia. All refugee participants carried official documentation (their asylum applications had been approved) to work at the Magdas Hotel. Table 2 summarizes this group's socio-demographic attributes, and I briefly describe each participant in this group.

**Fatima** is an African refugee who arrived in Austria in the year 2015 with her mother and sister. She joined the Magdas Hotel during the first quarter of 2019. She works mainly in the Front Office and goes to school as part of her internship with the hotel. I met with her for the interview and had many informal chats within the hotel premises.

**Albika** is an Eastern European refugee from Chechnya who arrived in Austria in 2012 by herself, and she joined the Magdas Hotel in July 2016. She lived and worked in Romania before arriving in Austria. She works in the Housekeeping Department, as she has previous experience in the hospitality sector, including stewardship roles. Albika seems cheerful and comfortable when dealing with hotel clients. I chatted with her multiple times during my volunteering period in the hotel and interviewed her on the hotel premises.

**Alia** is a refugee female from Iraq who arrived in Austria in 2017 with her family, but she joined the Magdas Hotel in September 2018. She works in the Front Office Department as part of her internship. Alia has also worked in various departments within the hotel. However, she had no previous work experience as she had been a student in Iraq and Austria. Like the rest of the interviews, I met with Alia twice, one time for the interview and another time, after transcribed the conversation, to authenticate the information she provided.

**Nafisa** is a Sudanese refugee female who arrived in Austria in the year 2014 by herself. She applied to the Magdas Hotel through email and joined the hotel after a successful interview in February 2017. Nafisa had previous experience in the hospitality sector as she worked in Hamburg for a short period with Germany's Movenpick chain. She has a Bachelor of Computer Science degree from Sudan. I met with Nafisa multiple times at the hotel, one time for the formal interview and the other times for informal meetings.

**Rima** is a Syrian refugee female who arrived in Austria in early 2016 with her family of 7 members. She had no previous experience in any job, and her German language skills are still minimal. She applied to Magdas Hotel through a friend and joined the hotel after a successful interview in March 2018. Rima is doing well in the kitchen and learning new skills. She has limited interaction with the hotel clients, but sometimes she helps the waiters when there is a special event in the hotel. I worked with Rima in the kitchen and met with her for an official interview.

**Salem** is a Syrian refugee male who arrived in Austria from Turkey in June 2016 with his sister. He worked in Turkey for a year and a few months in restaurants, as he had previous cooking experience from his home country. Salem knew about the Magdas Hotel from a settlement worker in Vienna and came to the hotel looking for a job. The hotel manager asked him to come back in two weeks or so, and he ended up joining the hotel in February 2017. Salem is a team member of the kitchen, and he seems to handle multiple tasks accurately. He has limited German language skills but is learning quickly. I enjoyed working with Salem in the kitchen, and he taught me new culinary secrets.

**Jasim** is an Iraqi refugee male who arrived in Austria in the year 2013 with his family. Before moving to Vienna, he lived in Jordan for seven years, where he finished high school and did some part-time jobs in sales. For instance, when he was in grade 10, he worked for a water purification company in Amman, and his task was distributing filters to clients around the city using his back-bag and a bike. Jasim heard about the Magdas Hotel's jobs from another Syrian refugee in Vienna and joined the hotel in early 2018. At the time of our interview, he was learning the German language and already had good knowledge of English. I observed Jasim, who worked mainly at the bar/cafe section, interacting confidently despite his limited German language skills.

**Kajaly** is a refugee male originally from the Republic of the Gambia who arrived in Austria in 2009 by himself, leaving his wife and two kids behind. His trip to Europe took over two years and involved struggles in different countries. The journey started from the Gambia to Libya by bus through Mali and Niger. After spending over 13 months in Libya, he left for Italy, then onto Germany, ending up in Austria. Kajaly did odd jobs to cover his travel expenses. He is currently married to an Austrian woman, and he stated that his wife's strong network helped him find work at the Magdas Hotel. I found Kajaly to be a hilarious guy, and all the staff members seemed to love his sense of humour. I worked with him in the kitchen, and I noticed his excellent work abilities, including his good hold of the German and English languages. My interview with Kajaly took over an hour, and I enjoyed every minute of it.

**Beenzu** is a participant from Zambia who unofficially entered Austria in August 2014, when he applied for refugee status. After a long journey through the court's prolonged process,

he became a ‘legal’ refugee, which took over two years. While he was waiting for the court’s decision, he struggled to maintain proper living conditions, as he was not permitted to work in Austria. He joined the Magdas Hotel immediately after he received his legal refugee status in October 2016. I worked with Beenzu in the hotel's kitchen, and we had many chats while washing dishes. Beenzu speaks good English and can also communicate in German.

**Malek** is a Syrian refugee who arrived in Austria with his wife and three kids in mid-2015. He lived in Jordan for over three years, but he decided to go back to Syria as his parents were ill. But when his father had died, and his mother relocated to Beirut to live with her sister, Malek left Syria with his wife and three kids and moved to Turkey. In Turkey, he could not register in the United Nations refugee programs as previously registered in Jordan. As a result, most of his money went to smugglers to secure transportation to Greece. They took buses from Greece and walked through Bulgaria, Serbia, and Hungary and then entered Austria. It was not easy for Malek and his family to get legal status in Austria without assistance from the Islamic Centre and church. Malek joined the Magdas Hotel through an Austrian friend who works at a Catholic church in Vienna. His main challenge is the language barrier. He does not speak English or German, but he takes German language classes offered through the hotel. I met with Malek many times during my volunteering period at the hotel. See table 2 for more information about the refugee employees’ group.

	<b>Participant Pseudonym</b>	<b>FATIMA</b>	<b>ALIA</b>	<b>ALBIKA</b>	<b>NAFISA</b>	<b>SALEM</b>
<b>Socio-demographic attributes</b>	<b>Gender</b>	F	F	F	F	M
	<b>Age</b>	19	22	25	26	24
	<b>Education</b>	High school	College student (ongoing)	College degree	Bachelor degree	Less than high school
	<b>Country of origin</b>	Africa-South Sudan	Asia -Iraq	Asia- Chechnya	Africa-Sudan	Asia-Syria
	<b>Previous experience in the tourism and hospitality sector</b>	No previous experience	No previous experience	Worked as a waitress in Eastern European countries for one year	Worked in a hotel in Germany for six months before arriving in Austria	He worked multiple jobs in restaurants in Turkey (his first asylum country) for 15 months.
	<b>Job in the country of origin</b>	A student in South Sudan	Student	Worked in a school as a substitute teacher	Worked as a data-entry clerk in a transportation company	Worked as a line cook in Damascus
	<b>Department</b>	Front Office Department	Front Office Department	Housekeeping Department	Front Office Department	Food and Beverage Service Department
<b>Socio-demographic attributes</b>	<b>Refugee</b>	<b>JASIM</b>	<b>BEENZU</b>	<b>MALEK</b>	<b>RIMA</b>	<b>KAJALY</b>
	<b>Gender</b>	M	M	M	F	M
	<b>Age</b>	24	26	27	24	31
	<b>Education</b>	High school	High school	Less than high school	Less than high school	Less than high school
	<b>Country of origin</b>	Asia-Iraq	Africa-Zambia	Asia-Syria	Asia-Syria	Africa-Gambia
	<b>Previous experience in the tourism and hospitality sector</b>	No previous experience	No previous experience	He worked in a restaurant and a café in his first asylum country, Jordan for three years	No previous experience	No previous experience
	<b>Job in the country of origin</b>	Worked in sales of the retail sector	He worked in the agriculture sector.	Owned a retail business in Aleppo, Syria	No official job.	No official job.
	<b>Department</b>	Food and Beverage Service Department	Food and Beverage Service Department	Food and Beverage Service Department	Housekeeping Department	Housekeeping Department

Table 2. Socio-demographic attributes of refugee employees

### ***3.6.2 The Management's Group***

The second group consisted of four non-refugee employees who hold management positions at the Magdas Hotel. The socio-demographic description that follows these four participants includes gender, education, country of origin, previous experience in the hospitality and tourism sector, roles in the Magdas Hotel, and their respective departments. See table 3.

**Cristina** is a creative director and senior consultant who joined the Magdas Hotel in mid-2015 as a manager. She has extensive experience in the non-profit, tourism, and media sectors. In addition, she has worked inside and outside Austria in the business context.

**Sebastian** is the manager of the Food and Beverages Department at the Magdas Hotel. It is his first opportunity to have a close encounter with refugees. Previously, he worked in hotels and restaurants in Vienna, where he held team-leader positions. As I observed him, Sebastian does not seem to speak much, and he is always cheerful and active in doing his assigned roles. I interviewed Sebastian over a coffee in the hotel lobby.

**Sara** joined the hotel in the mid-2016s as a manager of the Housekeeping Department. Sara is a well-trained individual, and she has a degree in tourism and hospitality marketing. She has a strong personality and is an amiable person. I met with her in the hotel's garden for a formal interview and other informal chats on the hotel premises.

**Anna** is the fourth member of this group, and she works in the Front Office Department. Anna comes with previous experience in the non-profit sector, and she also worked in the hospitality sector in Germany and Austria. In addition to her role in the Front Office Department, Anna works closely with the sales and marketing manager of the Magdas hotel. I had many

informal chats with Anna, and I met with her in the hotel's garden for the formal interview. See table 3 for more details about the management group.

### ***3.6.3 The Non-Management's Group***

This group consists of two participants. One of them (Flex) worked directly in the launch process of the Magdas Hotel, and the other participant (Robert) had lots of official experience and was able to share details about Magdas Hotel.

**Flex** works as a senior manager at Caritas. He was involved in the Magdas project beginning in 2012 and was among its founders. Unfortunately, during the fieldwork period, I had difficulty interviewing Mr. Flex due to his busy schedule. Nevertheless, I kept communicating with him through email and interviewed him over Skype in the second week of September 2019.

**Robert** works at the Austrian Public Employment Service (AMS), an organization specializing in Austria's labour market services. Robert is a senior consultant who works on enhancing the process of matching job-seekers with job openings. Robert's expertise includes, but is not limited to, Austrian labour law, immigrants' and refugees' employment in Austria, and employment in the hospitality sector. I met with Robert for an interview at a cafe in the 1st district of Vienna. More details about this group's participants are displayed in table 3.

### ***3.6.4 The Hotel Guests' Group***

This group consists of 4 guests. All of them stayed in the hotel when I conducted the interviews.

**Alex** is a young German guest who arrived at the Magdas Hotel with a group of colleagues from Frankfurt on a business trip. He graduated about ten years ago from the Technical University of Darmstadt with a civil and environmental engineering degree. He

selected the Magdas Hotel because of its proximity to his corporation's branch in Vienna. Before I met with Alex, he had no idea about the hotel being a social enterprise established to enhance refugee access to the Austrian labour market and was amazed by the hotel's concept and design.

**Dan** is a young Belgium guest who holds an Arts degree and works as a painter. He arrived at the Magdas Hotel with his girlfriend for a short trip to Vienna to network with art galleries where he markets and sells his artworks. Although this is his fifth visit to Vienna, it was his first time at the Magdas Hotel, and he told me he chose it for its proximity to the city's downtown. Dan and his girlfriend were surprised to learn about its mission.

**Lori** is an Australian physician who arrived in Vienna with her mother for the first time. She selected the hotel for its location close to the major tourist attractions of the city. Lori and her mother were unaware that the hotel was a social enterprise employing refugees but endorsed the idea when we spoke. Lori is familiar with the global refugee crisis as she works closely with refugees at her clinic in Melbourne.

**Kim** is an Italian tourist in her mid-30s who works as a graphic designer and lives in Naples. She has a friendly personality and loves chatting with people from different cultures. Kim arrived at the Magdas Hotel to visit friends in Vienna. She was excited to hear more about the Magdas project as she was also unaware of the hotel's mission. See table 3 for more information about the guest group.



<b>Socio-demographic attributes</b>	<b>Participant</b>	<b>CRISTINA</b>	<b>SEBASTIAN</b>	<b>SARA</b>	<b>ANNA</b>	<b>ROBERT</b>
	<b>Group</b>	2	2	2	2	3
	<b>Gender</b>	F	M	F	F	M
	<b>Education</b>	Masters	College degree	Bachelor degree	College degree	Master degree+ culinary school
	<b>Country of origin</b>	Austria	Austria	Austria	Austria	Austria
	<b>Previous experience in the tourism and hospitality sector</b>	She has extensive experience in marketing and communication programs in the social sector and the economy (Vienna Tourism, Caritas, Ketchum Publico, and more).	Has fair experience in operation within the hospitality sector	Has extensive experience in sales and marketing within the hospitality sector	Has fair experience in operation within the hospitality sector	Has excellent background and diverse experience within the hospitality sector
	<b>Stakeholder role</b>	Manager	Manager	Manager	Manager	The Austrian Public Employment Service (AMS)
<b>Department job at Magdas</b>	CEO of Magdas Hotel	Food & Beverages	Housekeeping Department	Front Office Department	NA	
<b>Socio-demographic attributes</b>	<b>Participant</b>	<b>FLEX</b>	<b>ALEX</b>	<b>DAN</b>	<b>LORI</b>	<b>KIM</b>
	<b>Group</b>	3	4	4	4	4
	<b>Gender</b>	M	M	M	F	F
	<b>Education</b>	Bachelor degree	Bachelor degree	Bachelor degree	Bachelor degree	Bachelor degree
	<b>Country of origin</b>	Austria	Germany	Belgium	Australia	Italy
	<b>Previous experience in the tourism and hospitality sector</b>	Fair experience	NA	NA	No previous experience	No previous experience
	<b>Stakeholder role</b>	Advisor to Magdas and Caritas operation department	Visitor	Visitor	Visitor	Visitor

Table 3. Socio-demographic attributes of non-refugee employees

### **3.7 Data Analysis**

The collected data for this study was analyzed utilizing thematic analysis, which is ‘a method for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns (or themes) embedded in data’ (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79). The analysis involves searching through the data set repeatedly to find patterns (themes) or meanings that can be linked to the research question (Creswell, 2009; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2015). For this research, I have followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) six steps to conduct the analysis. These steps include:

- Becoming familiar with the data
- Generating initial codes
- Searching for themes
- Reviewing themes
- Defining themes
- Writing the report

This study's unit of analysis is the individual stakeholders involved in the Magdas Hotel project (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Becoming familiar with the data by establishing the general perspective of the study was the first step. Next, I aimed to build a holistic view by identifying the general sense of the Magdas Hotel's stakeholders' experiences about refugees' employment. Repeatedly, I carefully read the collected data line-by-line and word-by-word. All words, such as repetitive ones that have meaning to the refugee's employment, were coded and organized accordingly. Although I have used NVivo to identify the codes throughout the interviews'

transcripts, I manually highlighted the codes and their relationships throughout the interviews' transcripts using different colours. At the beginning of the analysis stage, I spent significant time setting up the NVivo software and only used it to generate the codes.

Consequently, I decided to go with hand-coding, and I used the codes produced by the software to compare with the manual codes, and both were similar. The main reason that I relied on manual coding is that I do not have expertise in NVivo. Also, since I did not have many interviews, it was safe to rely on manual coding. Following the coding stage, I created the categories to organize the collected codes using coloured markers. Next, I highlighted all significant or interesting codes connected to the research question and grouped them as themes. Then, I reviewed all themes to make sure everything made sense and that the data supported these themes. It was essential to review themes as sometimes data may overlap into the generated topics, or I might have missed generating ideas in the data set (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). Below is an example of how I defined the themes produced from the created codes (see Figure 10 below).

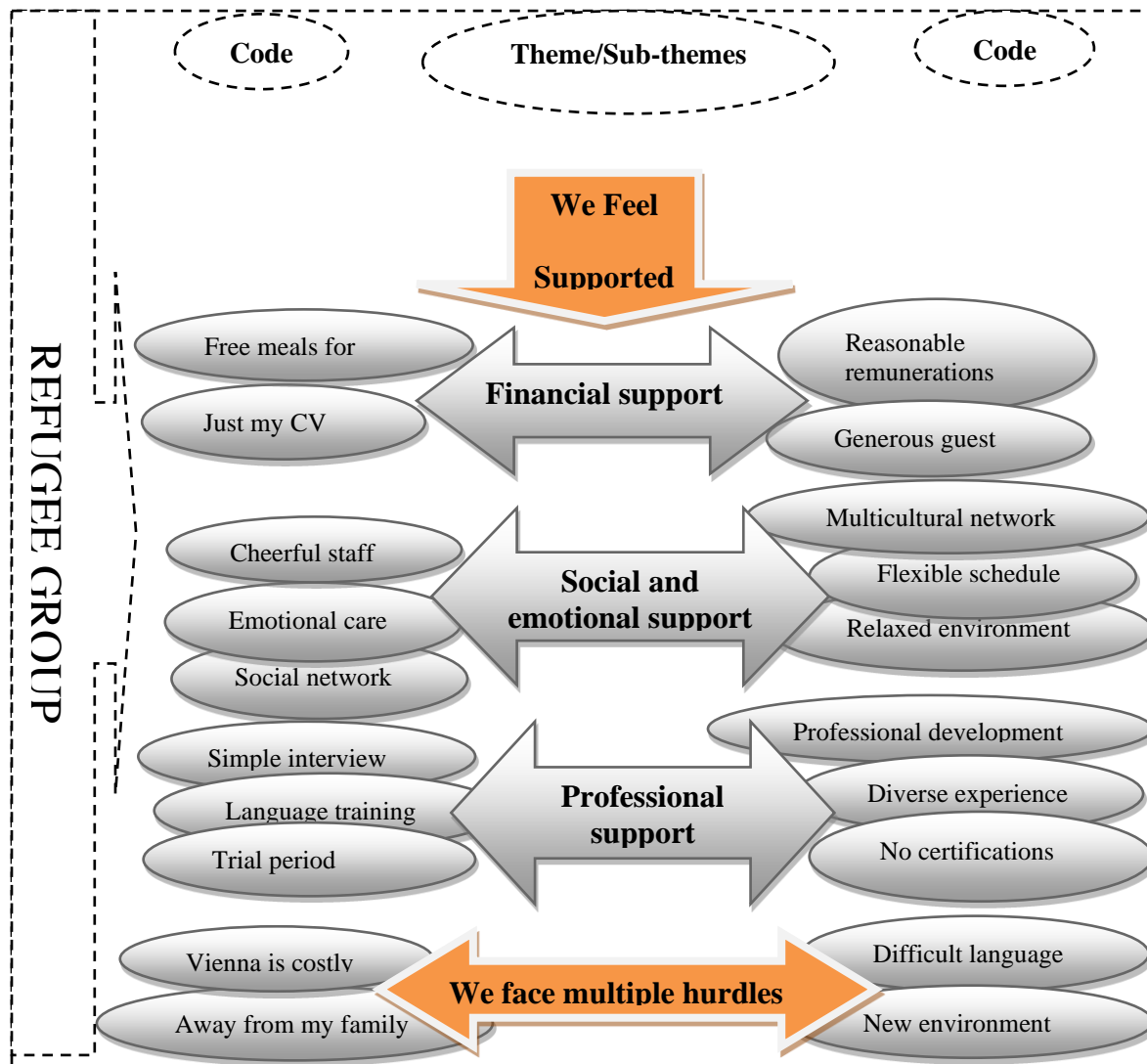


Figure 10. Produced themes for the refugee group

Under each theme, in the next step, I developed the content of the participants' experiences, and I used their quotations to convey the experiences and reworded them while incorporating insights from the stakeholder's theory. Paraphrasing was organized in memos to help compare and contrast the various themes (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). I have analyzed the

hotel website and other online publications about the hotel to supplement the interviews and observation information. For example, the notion of *refugee support* appeared as the central theme extracted from interviews. An article in the New York Times titled: Support Refugees in Austria highlights the Magdas Hotel is a source of support for refugee employment (Mohn, 2018). I should note that I have used some available online sources as references to access secondary data, mostly to gather details about the hotel (see table 4).

<b>Type of secondary source</b>	<b>Link</b>	<b>Date accessed</b>
Magdas Hotel Website	<a href="https://www.magdas-hotel.at/en/">https://www.magdas-hotel.at/en/</a>	Nov. 15, 2016
Media article - New York Times	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2018/08/31/travel/europe-an-hotels-social-issues.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2018/08/31/travel/europe-an-hotels-social-issues.html</a>	Sep. 10, 2018
Media article - Condé Nast	<a href="https://www.cntraveler.com/story/two-years-on-viennas-refugee-run-magdas-hotel-is-going-strong">https://www.cntraveler.com/story/two-years-on-viennas-refugee-run-magdas-hotel-is-going-strong</a>	Mar. 18, 2017
Media article – Reuters	<a href="https://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-refugees-business/european-consumers-back-businesses-supporting-refugees-idUSKCN1TL2F8">https://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-refugees-business/european-consumers-back-businesses-supporting-refugees-idUSKCN1TL2F8</a>	Aug. 15, 2019
Media report- BBC	<a href="https://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-europe-33929939/vienna-hotel-run-by-refugees">https://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-europe-33929939/vienna-hotel-run-by-refugees</a>	Dec. 19, 2016
Media article – The Guardian	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/travel/2015/may/21/vienna-madgas-hotel-staffed-asylum-seekers">https://www.theguardian.com/travel/2015/may/21/vienna-madgas-hotel-staffed-asylum-seekers</a>	Dec. 19, 2016
Media article – The Local (Austrian news in English)	<a href="https://www.thelocal.at/20190127/austrian-employers-woo-refugees-amid-labour-shortage">https://www.thelocal.at/20190127/austrian-employers-woo-refugees-amid-labour-shortage</a>	Jun. 23, 2019
Case study-Project	<a href="https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/intpract/magdas-hotel--refugee-integration-through-hospitality-training">https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/intpract/magdas-hotel--refugee-integration-through-hospitality-training</a>	Dec. 11, 2016
Press release – Info migrants	<a href="https://www.infomigrants.net/en/post/14877/austria-turns-to-refugees-amid-labor-shortage">https://www.infomigrants.net/en/post/14877/austria-turns-to-refugees-amid-labor-shortage</a>	Feb. 10, 2019
Media article – Equal Times	<a href="https://www.equaltimes.org/the-trend-setting-vienna-hotel-run?lang=en#.XjRZ3MhKjIU">https://www.equaltimes.org/the-trend-setting-vienna-hotel-run?lang=en#.XjRZ3MhKjIU</a>	Jan 05, 2017

Table 4. Data secondary sources

As Yin (2013) noted, using multiple methods to collect the study data from different sources should help triangulate this study, thereby enhancing case analysis reliability. The selected methods enabled me to answer the research questions surrounding refugees' employment in the tourism social enterprises of the Magdas Hotel.

Finally, I organized the analysis and the results of this study according to the themes generated. The results were supported using personal observations, document analysis, and quotations from the interviews with participants.

### **3.8 Ethical Concerns**

Prior to their participation, participants of this study received the necessary information about this study and signed the consent forms approved by the University of Waterloo's Office of Research Ethics (ORE) (Appendixes A, B, and C). Participation in this study was voluntary, and participants were free to withdraw from the study at any time with no penalties. All participants received the necessary information and forms before they participated in the study. In addition, I provided each participant with the required information letters, consent forms, confidentiality statements, and participant feedback letters.

During this research, I acknowledged that the privacy of the study participants is crucial. Moreover, I understood that interviewing refugees might include sensitive information, bring up traumatic experiences and personal issues. Thus, I communicated proactively to participants that the research is solely for academic purposes, and I will not share their responses commercially. I have assured all participants that I will not be using their actual names in this research product.

Furthermore, there was no physical risk associated with this study and participants had the right not to answer any of the interview questions. However, in the end, the participants shared no concerns about the study's questions. Many refugee participants would likely prefer not to speak about their traumatic experiences back home, political standpoints, and issues related to their faith, and so these issues did not come up. Moreover, participants had the choice to withdraw and not discuss any topic sensitive to them.

Another ethical consideration is preventing data modification, loss or theft, unauthorized access, or use. Consequently, I stored all the collected data separately, and I back it up in an external hard disk away from public locations. I took the precaution of keeping the provided information safe and secure by keeping the collected data in password-protected folders on my laptop. Also, I have not used the participants' real names in this thesis; therefore, allowing the participants' personal information to remain confidential. Instead, I replaced their names with pseudonyms. The participants of this study had the full right to control information about them. They had the choice to validate their initially provided data by offering them a review of their recorded experiences (Cohen et al., 2013). Thus, I considered all of their feedback and added new updates to this study's final report.

I strived to build harmony with the study interviewees to obtain reasonable and permitted responses. During all interviews, I summarized information and double-checked with the participant to determine the correctness of what was said. I shared the study findings with whom I could among participants and gave them a chance to analyze and comment on them critically.



The participants affirmed that the summaries reflect their views, feelings, and experiences. I assumed that this feedback should decrease the appearance of incorrect data or the mistaken interpretation of data and produce reliable findings.

### **3.9 Reflections on the Fieldwork**

I spent over six months in Vienna, living my everyday life between the fieldwork (Magdas Hotel) and an Airbnb apartment, seeking to collect the needed data for my research. Most of my active time was at the hotel, allowing me to be close enough to perceive the general atmosphere of this project. Apart from the reserved times for interviews, I spent most of my time volunteering and observing at the hotel premises.

Researching the case of Magdas Hotel often generated mixed feelings of failure, worry, stress, uncertainties, pleasure, and comfort. As expert researchers recommended, I kept a record of such feelings in my field diaries, which later should help me consider the influence of such emotions on the final result of this research (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Patton, 2005; Tufford & Newman, 2012).

Although the management secured my access to the fieldwork, I was worried about not completing the data collection within the planned timeframe. Unfortunately, as I mentioned in the Methods and Data Collection section, there was a delay in the ethics clearance from the Office of Research Ethics at the University of Waterloo. To overcome this obstacle, I restructured the data collection schedule in a way that helped me to achieve my goal on time. For example, I met with some interviewees just before the beginning of their night shift. My daily

schedule was busy with interviews, observation, volunteering and some data transcribing. Even though with such a busy schedule, I used to escape to enjoy the Prater amusement park located across from the hotel since keeping active and healthy was one of my top priorities. Also, I have not forgotten to allocate a weekly short visit to Vienna's historical centre, which gave me a break from whatever stress was associated with fieldwork activities.

Indeed, the way researchers encounter field study depends on who they are. At the time I started the fieldwork process, I was optimistic about how I would handle this project. This confidence is due to my identity as an immigrant, my previous experience working with refugees, and my long career in training and development in tourism. I was aware of the sensitivity when dealing with the employees with refugee backgrounds as they are 'very vulnerable groups who most of the time have been subjected to immense physical, psychological, and emotional suffering' (Kabranian-Melkonian, 2015, p. 717). Consequently, I took the necessary steps to reduce potential harm, as highlighted in the Ethical Concerns section of this chapter. For example, when I interviewed members of the refugee group, I limited the conversation to their employment-related experiences, and I emphasized the confidentiality of their responses.

My first impression of this hotel was positive. The comfortable atmosphere and the lively multicolour faces all over the place made me judge that this hotel is different. This impression was confirmed after I collected the data for this research. Indeed, the hotel aims not only to provide employment to refugees and help them integrate into Austrian society but also to create

awareness about the advantages of refugee workers for businesses and receiving countries.

Magdas Hotel's model proves that things can be done creatively in which economic fulfillment and social engagement are mutually compatible. This model is a working example of social enterprises operating in the hospitality sector that focuses on solving social problems while keeping their financial system sustainable (Santos et al., 2015).

At some point in the fieldwork, I felt worried about the diverse nature of participants of this research. For example, refugees are marginalized, while the rest of the participants were, arguably, from non-marginalized groups. In addition, participants were culturally mixed and possessed different intellectual capabilities. On top of that, I had to deal with the employees and their managers simultaneously. Thus, I had to carry out a balanced approach to establish and secure trust among potential participants. I was fortunate as I initiated the communication with the hotel's gatekeeper as early as November 2016. This person assisted me and was my bridge to most participants. Also, I felt lucky to find that the potential participants were comfortable speaking English and even my mother tongue, Arabic.

By showing an ability to understand and share feelings, I was perhaps emotionally affected and influenced by the hotel atmosphere, which had been created by refugee workers, guests, and the hotel management. The feelings that brought me to this project, that refugees can be practical and distinguished individuals into their new communities (Haan et al., 2017; Lee et al., 2018; Legrain, 2016; Zetter & Ruaudel, 2016, 2018), were reinforced throughout my work.

### **3.10 Conclusion**

This chapter started by framing the philosophical position I used to understand refugee employment from stakeholders' perspectives at the Magdas Hotel, a tourism social enterprise in Vienna. Initially, I listed the guiding questions for this research. Moreover, apart from providing the relevant details regarding the research design and the related rationale, I have also covered the socio-demographic sketch of the participants of different stakeholder groups, which were part of my sample. I have a dedicated section of this chapter to emphasize that I followed the ethical norms, prioritized the participants' dignity, and obtained their full consent. In the subsequent chapters, I present the findings, analysis, and implications of the study.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Findings**

This chapter presents the results of the thematic analysis of data collected in my effort to understand refugee employment from stakeholders' perspectives at the Magdas Hotel. As mentioned in the methodology chapter, the stakeholder approach was used to shape how I collected and analyzed the data. Consequently, I have organized the findings by the stakeholder groupings I used for the interviews.

The first set of findings is linked to the guests who revealed no difference between dealing with refugee and non-refugee employees and were satisfied with the service provided by refugee employees. I related two themes under the guest group: 1) Differentiating refugee and non-refugee employees, and 2) Focusing on service.

The second set of findings is linked to the non-management group, which illustrates the significance of employment as a major priority in a refugee's life and how trained refugees could help fill the labour shortage of the hospitality sector. Under this group, there are two themes: 1) refugee employment is more than a job, and 2) skilled refugees are a solution if supported by flexible market and employment policies.

The third batch of findings is connected to the management group - Magdas Hotels managers. This group emphasizes the role of Magdas Hotel in easing refugee job-seekers access to the labour market and integrating them into the Austrian community. Also, this group urges other hotels to consider employing and training refugee workers. I have created three themes

under this group: 1) a unique project supports and integrates refugees, 2) needy, motivated but semi or unskilled, and 3) a call for the hospitality industry to take refugees into account.

I linked the last set of findings to the fourth group - the refugee employees. This group mainly featured the financial, social and professional support they perceived while working at the Magdas Hotel, whereas they revealed the various challenges they face. I organized the findings under this group into two themes: 1) on-the-job support and assistance. 2) we face a few challenges, and language is our main hurdle.

Overall, 'employment' in this study is a two-way avenue – the refugees need skills to counter labour shortages. Still, the market and employment policies need to be flexible to support them. This study also denotes that refugee employees presented a high-grade service level, and guests did not distinguish from non-refugee employees. Furthermore, the findings point to the broader implication that social enterprises operating in the hospitality sector provide financial, social, and professional support for refugees. Moreover, the results also raise a call for the hospitality sector to embrace strategies that support refugee employment, strategies based upon an understanding of the refugee workforce's role as a part of the solution to the industry's labour shortages.

#### **4.1 Guests Views about the Employment of Refugees**

Guests, of course, are key stakeholders in the hospitality industry, and so the present research considers their perspective on refugees' employment. As is shown below, the guests expressed having had a positive experience at the hotel, and they were satisfied with the refugee

employees' performance. Also, these guests were mostly not aware that refugee workers run (under industry professionals' supervision) the hotel.

Initially, I asked guests general questions that pertained to the Magdas Hotel. The first question was, 'How did you hear about Magdas Hotel'? Both Dan (the Belgium guest) and Alex (the German guest) came as part of a group to conduct a business gathering at the hotel. The remaining two guests selected the hotel through an online reservation system. When I asked about their motives for choosing the hotel, only Dan referred to travelling for social purposes - he wanted to travel and do something that adds value to his trip. Kim (the Italian guest) came with a group of colleagues for a small gathering at the hotel and did not know about their mission or its nature as a social enterprise. She only wanted to meet with her colleagues and visit the city of Vienna. To her, the hotel's prices, location, services were reasonable. Both Kim and Lori (the Australian guest) selected this Hotel based on its positive online rating. In the following sections, I will discuss two themes that emerged from my analysis of the guest interviews. The first theme is differentiating refugee and non-refugee employees, and the second focuses on the service that refugee employees provide.

#### ***4.1.1 Differentiating Refugee and Non-Refugee Employees***

As noted above, the guests who didn't know about the program at the hotel were surprised to hear they were dealing with employees who come from a refugee background. Guests were impressed by the professionalism of the hotel staff, including the refugee workers,

and that opinion had been formed before becoming aware that Magdas Hotel is a social enterprise intending to hire and train refugee job seekers. As Kim, Alex and Lori stated:

*'The check-in went smooth and fast. The room service is quick and just perfect. I didn't know if this hotel run by refugees. You just told me now.'* [Kim]

The German guest made further remarks, *'Before we arrive at this Hotel, I didn't know that the hotel has refugees working in it. I think this is a good idea.'* [Alex]

The Australian guest added, *'I didn't know about the refugee's program at this Hotel...But I am happy to be here, and I am looking forward to learning more about this novel idea.'* [Lori]

Only the Belgium guest knew a little bit about the program, while the rest of the guests had no idea. The Belgium guest stated, *'I heard about the hotel from a friend of mine who works at the European Policy Centre [non-for-profit organization based in Brussels] ...It is nice to travel and do a good thing at the same time'.* [Dan]

The excerpts from the interview responses highlight that most guests are unaware of the refugee program running in the hotel. Moreover, the respondents also admitted that they were satisfied with the services offered. As there was no difference in guest services' quality, they did not realize that the hotel has refugee employees. It is unclear whether the guests assumed that refugees could not be professional and qualified workers because they are refugees, so the training program at Magdas Hotel may also be challenging to such assumptions. I will further touch on this issue in the discussion chapter.



#### ***4.1.2 Focusing on the Service***

I asked all the guests the general question, ‘What is your overall experience of the refugee workers at the Magdas Hotel?’ The responses were similar; all described having had a positive experience while staying at the hotel. When I asked the guests about their opinion regarding dealing with employees with a refugee background, their answers described a friendly and sociable staff. As Alex said, ‘... *and the staff is cheerful, nice and seems to be helpful*’ (Alex)

Throughout my interview with Lori, she expressed her satisfaction with the services. While she highlighted other attributes, like location and affordable prices, she also mentioned amiable employees and how she could communicate with them without any hassle.

*This is my first visit to the hotel. My mother and I came from Australia, and we decided to select this Hotel because of its convenient location. It is not too far from the Prater [Prater is a large community park in Vienna’s second district]. I think this is the right place. I have looked online and compared it [Magdas Hotel] with other hotels. The prices are competitive comparing to the hotel's location. The food here is cheap too, and the staff is amiable. But I wished the hotel has a larger restaurant with a varied selection of food, so I don't have to walk my mother to other places’. [Lori]*

Kim had a similar opinion about the hotel employees when she added, *'The hotel is quiet, and the service is good, and the staff here are so friendly. If I come back to Vienna, I would stay here again'* [Kim].

Moreover, in my interview with Alex, he emphasized an excellent experience dealing with one of the refugee workers at the hotel's front desk.

*'The service at this Hotel was always exemplary. These people [refugee employees] work hard to understand the guest's needs and accommodate them. I asked one of the front desk employees about the directions to downtown and the easiest way to get there walking. She [the refugee employee] accompanied me to the hotel entrance and gestured me the direction to the city centre and tried hard to give me the shortest way, exceptional guidance!'* [Alex]

Relatedly, highlighting the guests' perceptions about refugees' employment is communication between guests and refugee workers. Although the hotel guests could face what might be a barrier in terms of employees' language abilities, this was not a significant issue for the guests. As I discussed previously, Kim, who speaks German and English, was unaware that the employees she was dealing with at the hotel were coming from a refugee background. While she noticed that they were speaking German with an accent, she also mentioned that she did not find any issue. In addition, the respondent revealed how there was no difference in dealing with

the refugee workers, and she described how she valued humanity and tolerance over race and creed.

*When I arrived at this hotel, I did not notice that the people working here were refugees. But if I were made aware that they were refugees upon my arrival at the hotel, I would still not have any issues. They speak with an accent, but it's not an issue for me. Back home in Italy, I go to a restaurant in Naples where two gentlemen are working there that recently moved to the city from Africa. They are very lovely, and I am happy to always deal with them. To me, it makes no difference where you come from or how you look. We are all humans and are all the same. [Kim]*

This quotation reflects the hotel guests' sympathetic side, which reflects a positive perspective towards refugee employees. Even with the refugee employees' limited language skills, guests communicated with refugee employees without major issues. Similarly, the following quotation by the Belgium guest reiterates what the previous two guests expressed.

*I don't have any problems with people of colour, different religions, or cultures. Usually, when you deal with people, you deal with them face to face, where language can be expressed through gestures. I assume these people [refugee employees] will improve their language skills as fast as they need to work and succeed. You should appreciate them and respect who they are, no matter if they*

*are local or coming from abroad. By the end of the day, they [refugees] are supporting themselves and serving the communities surrounding them [Dan].*

Thus, an interesting dimension is highlighted here: communication with these employees was mainly face-to-face, and a mix of verbal and non-verbal gestures, it is not tough to understand and communicate. Alex's opinion was also in line with the other guests in the following quote:

*'With this being my first visit to the hotel, I have noticed that the employees may not speak the language perfectly, but I am still able to understand them and interact with them.'* [Alex]

Similarly, Lori highlighted the issue of refugee employees' accents when communicating in English.

*I think I mentioned that we [Lori and her mother] didn't even realize that refugees run this Hotel. However, we were wondering about the accents of the different employees who spoke to us in English, but we were overall satisfied with the service.* [Lori]

The guests' responses suggested they did notice employee accents when speaking in both English and German. However, they mentioned that it was not an issue that had a negative impact on their experience or evaluation of the service.

Overall, the guests' responses indicate prioritization of service over the race, creed, or status of the hotel employees. Moreover, on questions about the refugee employees, their response was compassionate, just and empathetic, despite the language barrier.

## **4.2 Non-Management Perspectives about Refugee Employment**

In this section, I present the results of the analysis of interviews from the non-management group. This group consists of two participants, and they mainly highlighted the vital role of social initiatives in the hospitality sector, such as the Magdas Hotel, in supporting refugee employment. They highlighted key issues relevant to refugees' employment, which, in their view, need further attention. I have organized these key issues into two themes. The first reinforces the notion that refugee employment is more than a job, and the second theme illustrates how refugee employment is viewed as a two-way avenue. The refugees need skills to respond to labour shortages, but the market and employment policies must adapt to support refugee needs.

### ***4.2.1 Refugee Employment is more than a Job***

I first asked both the participants about their views of the Magdas Hotel in general and then explored their perspectives concerning refugees' employment. The core idea behind this approach was to understand how these participants view refugee employment and how they related it to the Magdas project. Flex, one of the founding members, spoke about the Magdas Hotel's roots and how it began. Then he highlighted the importance of the project for refugees. He stated:

*The CEO of Caritas* [Caritas is a Catholic relief organization that is the founder of Magdas Hotel] *and I attended a conference with Muhammad Yunus* [a Bangladeshi social entrepreneur who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize] *in*

*Vienna, who did a keynote on social business. We liked the idea and started the Magdas Hotel. I think this model [Magdas Hotel] is important to refugees but not an alternative to other companies or training programs...It's [Magdas Hotel] a step for the imperative issue of employing refugees and enhancing their professional skills. [Flex]*

The other participant in this group, Robert, worked in the Austrian Public Employment Service (a government organization specializing in providing labour market services in Austria). Robert stated:

*I heard about the Magdas Hotel, and I have learned that it is doing well. This is an excellent initiative toward integrating refugees through employment...I believe such initiatives are important for refugees to learn and work at the same time. As I said, the hotel efforts to engage refugees through internships, which is important for the refugee job-seekers in Austria. [Robert]*

Initially, what can be understood from Flex's quotation is the importance of the search for creative ideas to help refugees find employment. Such ideas can be created by consulting with experts through conferences. Flex further mentioned that social enterprises are not an alternative to traditional NGOs; hotels and conventional firms should continue to hire and train refugees - further discussion about this point will follow in the discussion chapter. Also, both participants highlighted employment and job training as concerns for refugees.

The responses of both participants of this group highlight the need for countries hosting refugees to give more attention to their employment. They revealed how finding a job is a priority for refugees as they move to their new homes and find it difficult for many of them to get employment. In the following quotations, we can see how both Flex and Robert felt that receiving countries should take refugee employment more seriously, confirming that employment is essential in helping refugees make a living and integrate faster. They also noted that while it may be a long process, it is important to help refugees prepare to compete with others in the Austrian job market.:

*In my view, the refugees' employment should be taken more seriously. It's important for them to live a normal life, and it's important for Austria to stimulate the integration of these newcomers. In my opinion, the faster way to integrate newcomers [refugees] is through employment [Flex].*

*Employment is very important for refugees and non-refugees. The number of refugees who hold a job is way less than those who have no job. We always look at those who have difficulties in finding a job. We try to help them through the process of finding a job by preparing them to be able to compete and join the Austrian labour market. Preparing refugees might be a long process, but we have no other way [Robert].*

Participants emphasized the importance of jobs for refugees as a way to attain a normal life. As it appears in the excerpts from Robert's response, it is remarkable that Austria has

specific strategies and programs to assist refugees in the recruitment process. The aim is to equip refugee job seekers with the necessary skills to compete in the Austrian labour market. In parallel with these efforts, Magdas Hotel aims to help refugees access the labour market and have sustainable employment opportunities. As Flex noted:

*There is a high level of underemployment encountered by refugees entering Europe, including Austria, on humanitarian permits. With these permits, refugees may secure a part-time job, just not sufficient hours of employment, or they may work in areas irrelevant to their background and learned experience. The Magdas Hotel initiative as a social enterprise focuses on offering full-time employment through internships, which creates a career path for the participants. [Flex]*

Flex's quotation highlights the Magdas Hotel's role in creating sustainable employment opportunities for refugees. The hotel's internship program allows refugees to pursue a profession instead of insecure employment. It is more than just a job but a job that leads to full-time assignments and even a career. So, the class of job is important too.

Refugees might find this vocational training attractive as they develop their skills while making a living, and this is what Robert affirmed by saying:

*Emerging social enterprises can be an avenue for refugees to accomplish something they are enthusiastic about if they could not obtain a job with existing businesses. If this Hotel offers them the right training, including the German language, then this should be good. [Robert]*



However, Robert also noted that social projects, like Magdas, may require longer durations than expected to achieve and maintain their goals. As is indicated below, he expressed concern about companies hiring refugees because they aim for a better marketing reputation. Hence, having a social enterprise is an innovative idea for hiring refugees and presents an opportunity to have a good image in customers' and other stakeholders' eyes. He states:

*Still, such projects might take some time to become sustainable. And let's not forget that some businesses choose refugees to employ not for their abilities and talents, but the rank that might be added to the company's reputation through media. [Robert]*

Participants stated a need for a more flexible labour market (and policies) to help support refugees and incorporate them into the employment system to help meet labour shortage issues.

#### ***4.2.2 Developing Skilled Refugees***

Refugee workers can help fill the labour shortage in the Austrian labour market, but they need training in a flexible Market that follows stable employment policies. As described by the participants, labour shortages in Austria should be a strong incentive for employment policymakers to consider refugees a potential solution. Indeed, as Robert expressed, refugees are an asset for the country and can significantly contribute to supporting the labour market.

*There are over 150,000 job openings here in Austria, with unemployment expected to fall in the coming years. There is a compelling necessity for more workers in about every sector, including tourism and hospitality. Refugees and other immigrants to Austria could solve the labour shortage, not only in the hospitality sector but in other sectors of the economy. But this needs the creation of specific training programs for the targeted group to achieve the required measures and qualifications. [Robert]*

What is significant in Robert's statement is the necessity for specific training programs that prepare refugees to enter the labour market. All sectors of the economy may benefit from qualified refugees, including tourism and hospitality, as Flex mentioned:

*Although I don't work in the industry directly, I believe that refugees can help in solving the issue of labour shortage in Austria. We are a tourist country, and we have many hotels and restaurants. But we need to think of the barriers, such as language skills that are essential for most jobs in the market. Refugees need to work hard at the beginning to be able to compete and enter the market. Around ten years ago, we [Caritas] started a restaurant as a social enterprise, and we have learned a lot about the importance of training and development for our employees. When we started at the Magdas Hotel in 2015, we were more precise*

*about the training. Today we have training programs that accommodate and serve our employees. [Flex]*

The response given by Flex highlights the significant need for staff in the hospitality industry of Austria. As a major tourist destination, the country will always need trained labour to join the sector. He believes the refugees can fill the labour market shortage if they receive proper training. He further highlights that training and development are given utmost importance in social enterprises like Magdas Hotel. Paying attention to the employment of refugees is associated with labour market policies and regulations. In Austria, these policies are not stable, and the country's political climate impacts these policies. Both participants reflected on Austrian labour market policies:

*Immigration policies are the charge of the federal government here in Austria. But the crowd of migrants in cities like Vienna influences the regional market for employment and other services that local authorities should control. Employment policies must address the main challenges that refugees face to develop appropriate plans. Our immigration policies keep changing in Austria due to the political system. Here at AMS [The Public Employment Service], we implement labour market policies determined by the federal government, and we present the needed information for job seekers, including recognized refugees. [Robert]*

*I'm not too involved, but what I mostly hear from others that employment policies are restrictive market policies, especially towards refugees during the last ten years. Also, the general social atmosphere toward refugees has changed during 2015 and 2016, and since then, it's really hard for refugees to find jobs in the labour market to stabilize themselves. So I think, in general, it's still very challenging. Employment policies are very selective in terms of their hiring strategy. So we need to be selective. Otherwise, we would not be able to run the hotel in a proper way. So we can't hire those who are the most in need, but we have to hire those who have the highest chances to succeed in the labour market.*

[Flex]

As indicated by the above statements, all policies should equally recognize refugees and pay attention to their specific needs to join the labour market. With the challenges that refugees face, the labour market must include some flexibility to overcome such hurdles. Government policies represent a major hurdle for refugees seeking employment. These hurdles and possible language barriers can add to the challenges that refugees face, as both participants noted:

*I see the challenges varying from the uncertainty of the employment policies as well as the right to access the job market. Also, the level of demand in the market for certain jobs depends on specific qualifications and skills, which include the*

*German language. Usually, refugees who have higher qualifications and have the right network of people will be able to find a job faster [Flex].*

*I would say language is the most challenging factor for refugees in Austria. If they don't speak the German language, then it's very hard for them to know others and be recognized, which profoundly impacts their job chances. I believe the firms are attracted to employing refugees; still, it's hard to find somebody with the abilities these firms need. Companies are always interested in those who are ready to work [Robert].*

In this section, I have presented the views of two participants from the non-management group. Both participants highlighted the hotel's role as a social enterprise operating in the hospitality sector regarding refugee employment. I have organized the views of both participants under two themes. The first theme addresses how refugee employment is more than a job; it spurs refugees' integration into Austrian society. The second theme highlights how refugee employment act as a two-way street. The refugees need skills to counter labour shortages in Austria, but, at the same time, the market and employment policies must accommodate refugees. The participants mentioned the importance of the employment of refugees in the Austrian context. These details helped me gain a non-managerial perspective concerning refugee employment. In the next section, I will discuss insights from the management group

### **4.3 Management Insights about the Employment of Refugees**

In this section, I will present the views of four interviewees who make up the management stakeholder group. My analysis of their responses can be organized into three themes: Magdas is a unique project that supports and integrates refugees; refugees are motivated individuals but are often semi or unskilled, and a call for the hospitality industry to take refugees into account.

#### ***4.3.1 A Unique Project Supports and Integrates Refugees***

The uniqueness of Magdas Hotel reflects an eco-friendly model that supports refugee integration through employment. Due to the limited fund and tiny budget when renovating Magdas Hotel, upcycling most of the hotel contents was done. As a result, the hotel serves as a model that reused discarded objects or materials to build its furniture and decorations. The entrance hall (figure 4), lobby desk (figure 5) and bar and cafe area (figure 6) are examples of the reuse of collected objects. According to the hotel's website, 'Architect Daniel Büchel did a superb job with individual design elements and color concepts and equipped the rooms with recycled furniture including hand-knitted lampshades, vintage armchairs, and wardrobes that could previously be found in the compartments of the Austrian Federal Railway trains (Magdas, nd).

Like the non-managerial group, members of the managerial group also described Magdas hotel's approach as unique and thoughtful. Cristina, a manager at the hotel,

elaborated on the primary goal of Magdas when I asked her about the purpose of Magdas hotel. She stated:

*We have social enterprises in different contexts. Yeah. We are looking at a huge, unique project because it's the only, I guess, very unique in the hospitality sector.*

*Well, I mean, the main goal is to integrate people.* [Cristina]

What makes Magdas' project unique is that it is a social enterprise operating in the hospitality sector, as Cristina mentioned. It is clear that the hotel's mission is connected to refugees' integration in Austria and allows them to contribute to their community. And this is what the Front Office Manager, Anna, emphasized: *'This Hotel is an impressive example of how to include people in-need to participate positively in the community they live in.'* [Anna]

The above quotation also supports Robert's point in the non-managerial group, where he linked the hotel's process with its reputation. This is evident as both internal (managerial) and external (guests) stakeholders have taken it as a positive move.

Throughout my interview with Sebastian, a Food and Beverage (F&B) manager, he expanded on the hotel's role in benefiting refugee workers as a marginalized group spread all over Europe. He told me:

*Today, our model [Magdas Hotel project] is like that gives the second assist in which Hotel project thriving [ Magdas Hotel is the second initiative by the Catholic relief Caritas to help integrate refugees into the Austrian labour market] Hotel shows how it benefits the people of less chance, and we have a lot of these potentials [refugees] in Europe.* [Sebastian]

As the participants made clear, host countries must support refugees, and a decent job helps them live. In the following section, I highlight management's experience regarding selecting refugees and other related hiring processes.

#### ***4.3.2 Needy, Motivated but Semi or Unskilled***

There is a specific procedure for recruiting refugees at the hotel. Various refugee candidates who apply for a job at Magdas Hotel were often highly motivated in the first place. However, Hotel management was careful in selecting the right people to fill the required positions. When I asked management about the selection criteria, they were clear about the method they follow to hire refugees, but it comes with difficulties. As Christina indicates below:

*When we started [Magdas Hotel's project] four years ago, we didn't have a clear concept of what this means. So, we said, okay, let's recruit people. What do we need? We have all these classic departments, we have a team leader for each department, and then we will recruit the refugees or maybe with a refugee background, and then we trained them, and then they will do the work. Sounds easy, but the first thing we found out, not everybody who is motivated is the right person to do the job. Yeah. So, because everybody is highly motivated, though, they would do everything, [Cristina, imitating what an applicant said] Ah, ah, I [the refugee applicant] work in the kitchen, I work in the service. Yeah. So, this high motivation covers the talents [Cristina].*



Christina highlighted that the motivation of refugee employees could hamper the assessment of their talent and knowledge. If everyone is motivated to work in all the departments, it is difficult for management to assess their strengths and give them a suitable role. Another participant, Anna, expressed a similar opinion when asked how to decide who is the best individual for the job. She replied:

*Not all candidates are able to do what we are looking for. Initially, we are looking for young individuals who are willing to learn and have the patience to do the job. Our plan is to educate and train but only for those who are capable to achieve. We have several people [among refugee job seekers] who came in and left within a week or so. We thought of other steps of what can be done differently to solve this problem. The management team decided on a new interview process to fix this issue. [Anna]*

The hiring process is a crucial issue that the management discussed when they spoke about refugees' employment, and I heard how motivation could often not be enough to ensure success. The hotel management participants described their ways of hiring and how that had to change. Initially, the process was limited to interviews and only based on these interviews, the hotel management hired the neediest or motivated applicants. However, management realized that not all accepted interviewees could do the job and continue with the hotel. Cristina provided an example:

*So, because in the first run when we opened the hotel, we had lots of highly motivated people, but then we found out that not all of them could work with us. For example, we had a mathematician who applied for a washing-up [dish-washer] job. We accepted her because she said, 'I wanted to work, and I have not worked for two years, I need to work. I don't care what I work', but after six weeks, she and we found out that she is not challenged enough because she's an intellectual person and washing up is a very unhandsome job. You have to do all the time the same things that she was completely bored with. Yeah. So, this is an extreme example.... Yeah. We wanted to work, but they [refugee employees] were very shy to talk to guests to ask and deal with. They were shy and reluctant to make mistakes in their speaking because they wanted to be perfect. So, we thought, okay, this does not work... So, even if the person doesn't have different qualifications, yes, you need to find out, can the person kind of develop in this direction? And this is the tricky thing in recruiting [Cristina].*

Like the one in the previous example, this result made management think of another hiring process method. Cristina added:

*Since the findings vary in the first phase of our business, we thought of how can we find out? Is the person [applicant] the right person to the top [can continue in the job] or not? So, we changed their interviews. Then we said, okay, we asked the person to work with us for two days. So, it is a trial period. So, if you work*

*here for two days, then we get a little bit of a feeling, and the candidate gets a little bit of feeling too. After these two days, we decide [the management determines], okay, could this work hard or not? And then, the first month, the person who's working with us is really in the trial period, and you look very closely and watch them. The gifted person fits the bag [suitable for the job]. Is this the right person? Yeah. So, the first phase is really important to find out if we have a personal level of qualification [ability to continue in the job]. Could this worth train the person or no? [Cristina]*

We understand from the above that Magdas management allowed refugees to prove themselves through a creative hiring process. This strategic thinking made the hotel prioritize the right refugee candidate among all applicants. Such a process necessitated close attention to the applicant's abilities and talent. In the end, Hotel management aimed to hire candidates who were the right fit for the internship.

The hotel management participants believed that refugees are an asset and add value to the hotel's services. The management group emphasized the refugees' suitability for the tourism and hospitality sector. Although the employees were not fluent in English and German, the management group highlighted that the hotel employees speak over 15 languages, which is a significant strength for the hospitality sector. I ask Christina if she sees refugees adding value to the Magdas hotel. She stated:

*We have people who speak multiple languages. One of our staff spoke six or seven languages, and this is extremely meaningful for the hotel...Many refugees have been to different countries and exposed to different cultures. Also, many of them come from countries that have hospitality in their nature. I think this is a bonus for us when we employ them.*

Cristina's statement highlights three crucial aspects. Knowledge of multiple languages, and the varied cultures that these refugees bring to the organization, make the workplace tolerant and adaptable. She noted that this is a bonus for the organization, especially the hospitality industry, as tourists of distinct cultures and places keep staying or visiting the hotels. These aspects, according to Cristina, make the employment of refugees more meaningful. Anna added:

*I speak German, French, Italian, and English, and I know how you would feel when you speak other languages. When someone speaks my language or a language I know, it's very different. In our Hotel, there are multiple languages, mainly because of the refugee staff, and this is helpful for us. [Anna]*

Anna, who speaks four languages, and has previous experience in the hospitality sector, believes that when you can communicate in your guests' tongue, it leaves a different and positive impression.

The hotel management participants believed that they have a unique concept in the hospitality sector with this social enterprise, and they aim to transfer this concept to other Hotels. I explore these ideas more in the next section.

#### ***4.3.3 A Call for the Hospitality Industry to Take Refugees' Needs into Account***

The management group participants stressed the importance of creating awareness for other Hotels about the Magdas model. The management felt that the hotel is achieving its goals. The following statement by the general manager of the Magdas Hotel explains the efforts of the hotel administration.

*We want that every Hotel opens the door for refugees. If the number is correct, currently, 18,000 people have this background [experience in the hospitality sector] who is already a good target group for many others [Hotels]...We have a small number of refugees. We just want to make the industry aware of the topic... But I've had a lot of conversations with different Hotels that are interested in it, and that's actually the right moment to act on the market; we want them [Hotels] to learn from our project. [Cristina]*

The management of the Magdas Hotel believed that it is offering a role model for the hospitality sector. Sebastian, the Food and Beverage manager, denoted how this project can benefit both the refugee workers and their employers. Similar social enterprises or standard Hotels may take part and look at hiring refugees. The following was his response when I asked him: How do you see other Hotels embracing this model?

*The refugees have great chances to get into the models [Magdas project and similar social enterprises]. Here, the hotel has set aside the measures to take, which could be wrong, or it would be great. It's about the coming-off from the blocking of others [blocking refugees from entering the labour market] and finds the use of them... This model is an example in which Austrian companies should follow. [Sebastian]*

Sebastian's comments referred to the approach that Magdas has initiated: to give a chance to those who are obstructed from entering the labour market. The idea is to create a placement for those people and allow them to participate in the local businesses.

Anna also talked about the potential for such a project to be implemented by other businesses/Hotels in other European countries. Running such a project is a model that works in Vienna, and it can work somewhere else. She stated:

*This Hotel is an impressive example of including people in-need to participate positively in the community they live in. I believe other Hotels may do the same thing and hire immigrants or refugees and give them the chance to be active members of these communities. Maybe it is a bit challenging to handle such a group at once. Still, suppose each Hotel takes a few [refugee workers]. In that case, the administration issue should be easier, taking into account that Hotels have a lot of resources to help these people work and learn about the industry. I personally wish that all European Hotels copy this example [Magdas Hotel] and*

*see how this works for them. Maybe they learn something different; we don't know*

[Anna].

The above statements underscore Magdas Hotel's importance as a potential role model for the hospitality industry. The Magdas project's management described it as a great model and an open opportunity for the hospitality sector to emulate. The industry's hotels should consider such projects' shared benefits for both the employees and their employers.

In this section, I presented the experiences of the interviewees among the management group. The group consisted of four participants who shared their views, divided into three themes. The first theme highlighted the Magdas project's uniqueness and how it helps support and integrate refugees in Austria. Under the second theme, the management indicated how refugee employees are highly motivated but not always capable. At the same time, refugees are ideal participants for the hospitality sector in which they speak multiple languages. The last theme initiated a call for other businesses in the hospitality sector to implement the Magdas hotel model. Next, I present the experiences of the last stakeholder group, the refugee employees.

#### **4.4 Refugees' Insights about their Employment Experiences**

This section will present my analysis of interviews with 10 participants who make up the refugee group. I organized the findings into two main themes. The first theme highlights the support the refugee workers felt they receive during employment at the

Magdas Hotel. I further divided this theme into three sub-themes: financial, social and emotional, and professional support. The second theme reveals the sundry challenges that the refugee workers faced, with the language being the key challenge.

#### ***4.4.1 On-the-Job Support and Assistance***

This section highlights how on-the-job support influences refugees' experience working in the hospitality sector. Refugee employees working at the Magdas Hotel described the different types of support they receive. The following subthemes unpack these types of support and highlight their importance for members of the refugee group.

##### **4.4.1.1 Financial Support.**

Participants' comments denoted that financial well-being is essential in stabilizing their lives and a crucial factor in job satisfaction. Part of this well-being can be achieved through the employer's support. Most participants, among the refugee employees' group, were satisfied with the wages and overall earnings during their employment at the Magdas Hotel. But some participants identified some challenges that disrupt their financial well-being. Take, for example, the following quotation from my interview with Alia, who stated:

*The money I make here is not too bad. If I work for another Hotel, I would be making the same money or so. Currently, I only get half the salary due to the training I do with the hotel. They pay for my school and give me enough money to*



*live. I am so excited to finish the training and get the certificate, after that, I will be able to make more money...some days I earn extra money from customers who leave me a Euro or two, some customers give me US dollars. I remember a customer who gave me 50 Euros and another gave me 50 US dollars, but that is not always the case. Overall, the money is not bad, but it can be better one day, I hope...I live in shared accommodation with my friends in the 7th district here in Vienna. I can't afford living close to the hotel as it's so expensive when you live close to the city centre, but transportation in Vienna is good and not that expensive. I pay 51 Euros for a monthly pass, and I can use it for most types of transports...As I said, the money I make is enough for me, but I am hoping to finish the training and make more money. [Alia]*

Despite Vienna's expensive lifestyle and the nature of the employment at the Magdas Hotel, as Alia indicated, the money she makes is enough for her. Alia believes that she will make more money and enhance her financial well-being once she finishes the internship with Magdas Hotel. Another significant point to be taken from Alia's quotation is the extra income she earns from the hotel's guests, which can be viewed as additional financial support. Still, Alia is looking forward to making a better income to help overcome Vienna's expensive lifestyle even with her current acceptable income level. The following presents a similarly positive experience about the wages in which

Nafisa felt satisfied with the basic salary she earns. She also expressed how she was grateful for the extra tips she receives.

*Yes, I have worked in a four stars Hotel in Germany before I relocate to Austria...The money I make in this Hotel is similar to what I used to make in Movenpick, even sometimes I am making more money here [At Magdas Hotel], the guests are so generous, especially when I chat with them, and they know I am a refugee in Austria. [Nafisa]*

It is clear from Nafisa is that she has previous work experience at other Hotels, which allowed her to compare wages. She talked about good wages and extra benefits, such as free meals and the additional training offered by the Magdas Hotel. In her words, she considered these things as 'good support' that helps her to have 'peace of mind.'

#### **4.4.1.2 Social and Emotional Support.**

Consistently, participants among the refugee employee group expressed how their social competencies were developed by initiating new social networks during their employment at the Magdas Hotel. More specifically, members of this group of employees described how the Magdas Hotel was a suitable space to build social networks with colleagues and Hotel clients. The following quotations provide examples of how the refugee employees socialize and network at the workplace.

*Working in this Hotel provides me with an opportunity to network with colleagues who are from different countries...During break-time, we talk about our goals and*

*challenges at work, issues that interest us in Austria, life problems, and dreams...For me, some of these colleagues are like family, and I rely upon them.*

[Fatima].

*I have made new friends through my job at the front desk...I always love to chat with customers about their interests and how they feel about their stay at this Hotel...I feel so good when customers interact with me and share their opinions... There is no specific topic, sometimes we talk about the food or the customer visit to Vienna and so on...Some of them [the hotel clients] speak to me in English, others only speak German. It's always good practice for me. [Jasim]*

The participants highlighted how they love to communicate and interact with people, among work colleagues or customers. This passion projects their social needs for acceptance, belongingness, and friendship. Refugee employees from different ethnic backgrounds can find solace and can confide in each other by sharing their life stories and experiences. The interaction occurs during the employee's breaks that usually takes place in a small dining room close to the kitchen. Indeed, as I observed during my time in the hotel, it is usual for employees to discuss life or work issues while having lunch. During my volunteer period in the kitchen, I would hear the conversations coming out of that room. Work issues are also a common topic for discussion. I could often feel the impact of this small room in shaping the relationships among the hotel employees. I would describe that room as the 'passion salon' in which employees exchange their

pleasure and pain. It seemed to me to be a safe place to talk about work and everyday stresses.

Moreover, another participant shared how they love interacting with the customers, but the most noteworthy point was their mention of English and German communication as ‘practice.’ Refugee workers express that they appreciate the chance to further develop their language skills in the natural everyday environment of Magas Hotel.

In addition to socializing with the hotel customers, the hotel offers another type of social and emotional support for its refugee employees. A social worker serves the hotel's employees by supporting them as they work to solve everyday obstacles. Below is an example of the social worker's emotional support for Kajaly, who, before his employment, went through a tough refugee journey.

*Before I arrived in Austria, I was struggling in multiple countries in North Africa...For almost four years, I have been trying to cross to Europe with no money in my pocket most of the time...I went sick multiple times. I am far away from my family...I felt miserable and was almost depressed for a year or so. Now, I feel so good...The lady [the social worker] who comes to the hotel has helped me a lot, and I am able to do my job better. [Kajaly]*

Along with the social worker, the hotel employees offer remarkable emotional support to new or struggling staff. For example, the following is a quotation from the

interview I conducted with Fatima, who described feeling a little bashful as a result of being new at the hotel.

*Working at the Magdas Hotel is fun for me. But for some reason, I sometimes feel afraid to deal with customers, maybe because I am new here and not used to the hotel environment, or maybe because of my limited German language skills. All the staff at the hotel encourages me all the time to engage actively with customers, especially the social worker at the hotel, who provides me with excellent ideas to get rid of the fear I have once I deal with customers. Every day I feel I am doing a much better job. [Fatima]*

The following quotation from Albika is another example of how the Magdas Hotel managers offer a lot of support for their employees, which can be understood as emotional support.

*The management of this place is a great one. All managers treat you with respect, and they always make things easy. One time I was carrying a tray full of glass cups and dishes, I don't know what happened at that moment, and I slipped on the floor, you don't want to see how many glass pieces were spread around and all over the cafe area. At that moment, I wanted to cry because it was such a busy day, and I had so many orders to do. At that point, one of the managers ran to me and asked if I am okay...I was OK but a bit confused. The manager asked me to*

*take a break, and he hands me a drink... Working at Magdas makes me feel good.*

[Albika]

At this point in our interview, I became more connected with Albika's experiences. I could see how she felt about this experience. Her gestures, voice, and how she was telling the tale reflected her appreciation for that manager. She continued by saying:

*To me, this was an astounding incident that stayed in my memory. The people at this hotel are so nice. Not only the managers but also everyone who works here is nice too, and this is why we are always smiling. I am so happy to be here.*

[Albika]

In addition to Albika's example, I observed how employees interact with each other, which I see as social support. I also observed Sebastian, the Food & Beverage manager, interacting with the workers, which I interpret as emotional support. These interactions appear in the following part of my observation:

*I have been sitting here for three hours, writing some notes and observing how employees interact. There is one manager (non-refugee from Austrian) and two other employees (two refugees: an African male and a male from Iraq). All of these employees work on multiple tasks with no specific duty designated to a specific one. I can see the perpetually cheerful Austrian manager washing empty cups, preparing orders behind the counter, and serving multiple clients. At the*

*same time, he gives some instructions to the two guys trying hard to engage themselves in each role but has been distracted multiple times- one of them went for a smoke (I can see him smoking outside) twice during my observation period. The other guy (the Iraqi) keeps talking to certain clients while others stand beside the counter, waiting for someone to take their order. Also, both of these guys keep checking their cell-phones constantly. [Observation #3- 02. August. 2019]*

According to the above observation, the manager could be stricter with both employees. Still, I guess he decided to lead by example and show his employees how to simultaneously execute multiple tasks. The manager was so polite as, for example, he did not hint to any of his employees about the overuse of their phones while working. I can assume he might keep his notes to talk about it with his employees in a more private setting. Nonetheless, Sebastian's level of understanding reflects his respect for his employees' feelings and is a form of emotional support.

The social worker's support, as illustrated in earlier quotes by Kajaly and Fatema, reflects how refugee workers felt supported doing their time at the hotel, which fosters their social experiences in this new environment. It is evident that the refugee workers receive both social and emotional support.

#### **4.4.1.3 Professional Support.**

Professional assistance is necessary to assist refugee workers in learning and developing their skills. The uncomplicated application process is the first step the hotel

provides in terms of offering professional support to refugees applying for a job.

Throughout my interviews with various refugee employees, I asked them: ‘How did you join this Hotel?’ The answers are captured in the following quotations:

*‘I sent them [the hotel] an email that has my CV and nothing else...I didn't have to prove any certifications or academic credentials, but I had to do some tests after the interview and before I commit to this internship.’ [Nafisa]*

*‘My friend who works at Magdas helped me interview with them, and I got the job...I didn't even know what a CV is...I think they accepted me because I show them that I know how to cook’ [Malek]*

*My wife learned about the hotel from an African friend...she sent the hotel my resume, and they contacted us...they asked me about my previous experiences and if I have been to school or if I had any training in Hotels or restaurants. In my country, Gambia, I only studied close to high school, and I had no experience in the hospitality sector...I worked in several jobs in farming and construction as a helper [Kajaly].*

It's clear from the above statements that it is relatively uncomplicated to get an opportunity to be hired at the hotel. For instance, Hotel management does not require official documentation from the refugee applicants. However, as described above, the management requires an interview with each job-applicant, and those hired may need to go through a probationary period before signing the employment contract.



Flexible employment is another type of professional support that can be identified in this case. I interviewed a few participants who were working at Magdas on a casual/part-time basis. Some employees were also able to go to school as part of their internship program—for example. The following comment from Alia illustrates her part-time role at the hotel.

*I only come to work here [Magdas Hotel] for a few shifts every week, and all of them are evening shifts. I am lucky to work here because I can go to college to continue my education in hospitality management. Also, I can do my own stuff [Alia].*

Salem added:

*My wife goes to language training in the morning, and we have a volunteer who visits us home twice a week, usually evening... The kitchen manager allows me to rotate my shifts the way that suits my family schedule...the work at Magdas is great [Salem].*

The quotations above refer to a form of flexibility, where the employee is seeking full or part-time jobs or temporary positions—giving refugee employees options such as these shows how the hotel offers a supportive working environment.

There is another form of flexibility that has to do with skill development in which the employee has different roles in different departments of the hotel. Several refugee

participants indicated how they rotate among various departments at the hotel doing several tasks. The following quotations include examples of such rotation:

*'Before my current role in the kitchen as a helper, I was working the room service department'* [Jasim].

*I did work between the Food and Beverage Service Department and the Housekeeping Department for about a year, now I am learning at the Front Office Department...It is an excellent chance for me to learn many things in one place.*

[Alia]

The above statements show how skill development is viewed by refugee employees. Switching refugee employees between departments demonstrates how the hotel strives to train and develop its employees' skills in different areas, thus achieving its social mission.

At the Magdas Hotel, the refugee staff expressed their gratitude regarding the formal (e.g., Magdas's internship) and informal training and development they receive. As I observed, refugee employees achieve informal training through interactions with other employees and between employees and Hotel guests. As a social enterprise, the Magdas Hotel's goal is to help refugees access the labour market and develop their skills while working, thereby strengthening their abilities and enhancing their performance. Language training is one of the key professional assistance that refugees receive at the Magdas Hotel. As stated by Beenzu:

*Since I am working at this Hotel, I have had an opportunity to learn the German language... Yes, they [Hotel management] allow us [refugee employees] to search for German language training outside the hotel, and they will pay for that. If the hotel does not pay for that, I can't afford it, and I will have no permission to leave the job and go to school...I think this training will improve my skills and let me better do my job. In this great Hotel, I am so pleased to work here. [Beenzu]*

This quotation gives another example of the professional support provided to refugee employees, especially in regard to supporting their efforts to enhance their German language skills. Beenzu didn't have the funds for language training, but management allowed him to search for language training and would have covered the cost. So, he went for an external language provider, and he started the German course. At the time of our interview, Beenzu was optimistic about the course and thought it would help him develop his professional skills.

As a result of these different support types, some refugee employees were comfortable working at the Magdas Hotel. Beenzu and Rima make this clear:

*'Certainly, I am happy; otherwise, I would be looking for another job in another Hotel or restaurant ...Every day I am learning new things in this Hotel'. [Beenzu]*

*'For the time being, I am serving as a cleaner at Magdas Hotel, and I am pleased to have this job, and I am looking forward to improving my skills while working in this Hotel ...So glad to be here' [Rima]*

While I highlighted the different types of support refugees receive at the hotel, it is also important to address the challenges they shared.

#### ***4.4.2 We Face a Few Challenges, and Language is our Main Hurdle***

During my interview with the refugee group members, I asked them about the challenges they faced while working at the Magdas Hotel. Their replies pointed mainly to the language barrier. Although most of these employees go to school and attended vocational training, they stressed their difficulties in learning the German language. The following quotations illustrate some of these experiences.

*'To me, German is a very hard language. I have been taking German classes for over a year now. I am still learning. I think this is the only challenge I face during my job.'* [Alia]

*'For over two years, I am still going to school to learn the German language. I am not sure how long it is going to take me to be able to deal with customers confidently. German is not easy'.* [Rima]

*At Magdas, we learn English and German...sometimes we learn from each other...When I can't read something or can't interact with a customer, I ask my friends here [the hotel], and they usually very helpful. But that's only if you have someone close to you and can speak German.* [Jasim]

*There are different challenges that I face here. The first and foremost is the language. I am still struggling to learn the names of many things in the kitchen.*

*They ask me for a spoon, and I bring them a plate. It sounds funny, but when we are busy in the kitchen, you need to be quick. Another important thing for me is my family back home. My heart is always with them. I miss home so much. The thing is that I can't bring them [his family] here [Austria], and I can't go back. We only chat through this phone. [Salem took his phone from his pocket and started showing me photos of his mother and father in Syria] ...But anyway, I am lucky that I have my sister here in Vienna. [Salem]*

In addition to the language issue, it was interesting to hear additional facts from Salem. Similar to other refugees, Salem is away from home, and he missed his family. When Salem started showing me the pictures of his family on his phone, I watched his watery eyes and how his brain has left the interview space back to Syria. Such a challenge impacts Salem's work and performance in the kitchen, and I observed this many times when I volunteered at the hotel's kitchen.

Furthermore, some participants reflected on the new environment they are working in, and some saw it as a challenge. Most refugees working at the hotel are coming from Africa, and Asia, in which adapting to European culture can be challenging. For example, Malik lived in Syria and Jordan, and both countries share Arabic culture. Consequently, it seemed hard for him to adjust to the European culture, as he expressed in the following quote:

*It is my first time living in a European country. Everything is different here, the language, the food, the people, and the lifestyle. I am happy I work in the kitchen. Otherwise, I am not sure if I am going to eat anything at this Hotel. You know, I am a Muslim, and I can't eat pork. But, once it's my shift, I cook beef for other Muslim colleagues and me at the hotel. [Malek]*

The following quote expresses Kajaly's concern about the new culture; he added:

*It is an entirely different culture. People don't laugh here [Austria]; they are sober and very punctual, which is not me. I love to laugh loudly and make people happy. Also, this country is cold and not a lot of sun like in my country...sometimes it's hard to quickly change to this culture [Austrian culture]. [Kajaly]*

When I interviewed participants among this group, I asked if they experienced any discrimination at the Magdas Hotel. There was no mention of discrimination, which in and of itself is interesting. The following is part of my interview with Malik replying to the question about facing any discrimination at the hotel:

*Since I arrived at this Hotel, I have never faced any problem related to discrimination. The management treats me right, and they respect me all the time...All the guys here are fantastic. We work together for long hours, which might create some tension, but I never had someone who discriminated against*

*me...The guests, too, are so good to me. Maybe sometimes you have an annoying client but never felt discrimination of any kind. [Malik]*

This section presented the refugee employees' experience concerning their challenges while working at the Magdas Hotel. The primary problem that most refugees face is the language barrier. Some participants also refer to alienation -in terms of being away from their families- as a contributing challenge that disturbs the refugee's lives, including their work. Finally, and perhaps surprisingly, none of the participants described having experienced any challenges related to any form of discrimination.

I should note that I was interviewing the refugee group on the hotel premises, and some may not have felt entirely open about sharing all negative or challenging things they may have experienced. To counter this issue, initially, I clarified to these participants that this is academic research, and it has nothing to do with their performance. I described how their opinions would not impact their employment or role at the hotel in any way whatsoever. I also gave each participant a choice as to the interview location. Thus, all participants had the option to pick the interview place and time that matches their conditions, and there were no restrictions or demands from my side.

I made sure to keep an open mind and to be focused on the participants' perspectives without putting any pressure on them. In the first place, my main interest when I conducted the interviews was to build rapport with the interviewees that allow them to be comfortable and open as much as possible. Building a rapport with the refugee group was a bit different - with most of

these participants, there was a natural connection, which made it simple to build rapport. While with others, I had to work on establishing a comfortable and easygoing environment. I tried to be open-minded and natural in my dress, vocabulary, eye contact, and I made sure not to talk too much about myself. If the participant offered me a coffee cup, which was the case many times, I accepted it and thanked them. I believe I established a good rapport with all participants, reducing the risk of influencing their answers.

During all interviews, I was able to frame and guide these interviews because I always kept in my mind it is a professional context. As participants spoke, I always noted down any questions that pop into my head. I tried to control myself as much as possible and not interrupt their ideas. In most cases, my interview guide's questions were not followed in order but flowed from the conversation naturally. I mainly used this guide to check any missing points and to make sure I was still on track.

#### **4.5 Summary**

This chapter presented the results of the thematic analysis I utilized to understand refugee employment from stakeholders' perspectives at the Magdas Hotel. Following Freeman's approach (1984), I divided the participants into four groups and presented their experiences and views from within that group. I started by presenting the guest group's insights, who did not realize that the hotel is employing refugees. They were satisfied with the level of the refugee workers' service even with their language deficiency. This section addressed two themes: 1) differentiating refugee and non-refugee employees and 2) focusing on service.



Subsequently, I highlighted the non-management group's views and how they noted that employment could help integrate refugees into Austrian society. This group emphasized the importance of flexible market and employment policies that suited the refugee job-seekers. I presented their perspectives under two themes: 1) refugee employment is more than a job, and 2) developing skilled refugees.

Next, I presented insights from the management group, who viewed the Magdas Hotel as a unique project, which supports and integrates refugees. They also saw the refugee employees as motivated individuals but not always qualified for working at the hotel. However, the management thought refugees could be ideal associates for the hospitality sector as they speak multiple languages. Thus, management appealed to the hospitality sector to consider refugees a compelling labour force option. There are three themes under this group: 1) a unique project supports and integrates refugees, 2) needy, motivated but semi or unskilled, and 3) a call for the hospitality industry to take refugees into account.

Lastly, I presented the refugee employees' experiences, who mainly felt supported at Magdas Hotel. They viewed the support as financial, social and emotional, and professional. The refugee group also revealed the few challenges they face at work and how learning a language is their main hurdle. There are two themes in this section: 1) on-the-job support and assistance. 2) we face a few challenges, and language is our main hurdle. In the next chapter, I discuss and analyze these findings in light of the relevant literature.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Discussion**

Refugee employment is a paramount concern given the large numbers of refugees seeking employment in receiving countries. The International Labor Organization (ILO) approximated the number of migrant workers to be 164 million worldwide (ILO, 2017). Amongst these workers, there is a significant and growing number of migrant workers, including refugee workers, in the hospitality sector (Joppe, 2012). Recently, tourism social enterprises have been viewed as an avenue for creating meaningful employment for several groups, including marginalized groups (Biddulph, 2018). With the absence of empirical studies that document the extent of social entrepreneurship in tourism and hospitality (Sheldon & Roberto, 2017), this thesis sought to help fill this gap by understanding refugee employment in one tourism social enterprise.

As stated earlier, the purpose of the research was to understand stakeholders' perspectives of refugee employment at the Magdas Hotel, a tourism social enterprise in Vienna, Austria. Based on an analysis of data collected through observation and interviews conducted with various stakeholders, I found that the stakeholders, by and large, view refugee employment at the Magdas Hotel positively. They view the hotel's social enterprise model as innovative, inspiring, and accommodating, especially as it provides financial, social, and professional support to its refugee employees. However, stakeholders who participated in this study also mentioned prevailing concerns and issues. Hence, this chapter aims to situate and discuss the

study's findings within a framework that helps us understand refugee employment and to consider what we know about refugees' employability in light of extant literature.

The chapter starts by discussing how the Magdas Hotel creates a supportive corporate culture for its refugee employees. Next, the chapter discusses the various forms of support that the hotel provides to refugee workers. Following this discussion, the chapter highlights how refugee workers can benefit the hospitality sector by creating a satisfying tourist experience and improving the enterprise's reputation. The chapter also discusses the challenges that shape refugee employment experience, including language obstacles, cultural gaps and discrimination, employment policies, and retention. Next, the chapter acknowledges the innovative idea of the Magdas model as a social enterprise that operates in the hospitality sector. Finally, the chapter closes with a description of Magdas Hotel's model and distinguishes it from other tourism social enterprises.

### **5.1 Building a Supportive Corporate Culture.**

The emphasis on the value of building a supportive corporate culture in this study is consonant with the literature regarding studies related to refugee employment. According to a survey by Zetter and Ruaudel (2016), the right to work is one of the most critical aspects of refugees' lives. The authors see this as necessary because employment helps refugees overcome vulnerabilities and create a more secure life. As the findings clarified, at the Magdas Hotel, refugees believed that they are supported by employment significantly.

Also, other stakeholders agreed that employment for refugees is more than a job. For instance, throughout my interview with Robert, he expressed how employment for refugees could be a learning gateway as he stated, *'I believe such initiatives are important for refugees to learn and work at the same time.'* While Flex viewed refugee employment as more than a path for learning but a shorter way to integration when he affirmed, *'In my opinion, the faster way to integrate newcomers [refugees] is through employment.'* Another important stakeholder, the Magdas CEO, also emphasized that refugees' employment at Magdas Hotel is an effort toward smoothing and accelerating their integration into the Austrian context. Thus, the Magdas project cares about refugee integration in Austria, making this one pillar of its corporate culture. According to Groyberg et al. (2018), these organizations are perceived to have a caring corporate culture as their culture shapes attitudes and behaviours. Indeed, employment is a central guide in the integration process of refugees into their new homes. This is supported by Lundborg's (2013) study, which emphasized employment relevance during refugees' integration into Sweden's workforce. Based on this discussion, for companies that hire refugees, their corporate culture is important to refugees' integration into the host country. The awareness of these firms and other stakeholders about the pillars and process of refugees' integration should help provide a more supportive culture.

As I have discussed in the literature review section, the Magdas Hotel is a hybrid model that combines paid training and social support for marginalized individuals. Barraket (2007), in his study of the Australian context, calls such a model a 'Work integration social enterprise,' as it

aims to integrate refugees into the Australian market through its internship program. Fostering a corporate culture that provides inclusion initiatives for refugee employees lets them learn and grow and helps businesses leverage the value these employees bring into their organization (Reilly et al., 2019). Likewise, the refugee employees talked about their perspectives and experience and shared that employment at the Magdas hotel has given them holistic support. Along with the financial backing, their job in the hotel provides them with social, emotional, and professional support.

There were different ways that refugee workers at Magdas Hotel felt supported by its management team. Albika, for example, highlighted the emotional support when she slipped on the hotel's floor *'I wanted to cry because it was such a busy day, and I had so many orders to do. At that point, one of the managers ran to me and asked if I am okay'*. Another example of the hotel's supportive culture is the appointment of a social worker who helps employees overcome everyday difficulties or concerns.

The comprehensive support that Magdas Hotel offered to its employees is part of its corporate culture. Previous studies referred to this supportive corporate culture as an alternative to corporate social responsibility (Page & Katz, 2010). For the Magdas Hotel, as a social enterprise, corporate social responsibility is the basis for its corporate culture. Managers who participated in this study emphasized the hotel's role in integrating refugees and allowing them to contribute and participate positively in their workplace and the hospitality sector. For instance, throughout my interview with Cristina, she stated: *'We have social enterprises in different*

*contexts. Yeah. We are looking at a huge, unique project because it's the only, I guess, very unique in the hospitality sector. Well, I mean, the main goal is to integrate people'. In addition, the non-management study participants thought that the hotel internship program contributes to refugees' future, offering them a career path. This was also clear through my interview with Flex, who noted: 'the Magdas Hotel initiative as a social enterprise focuses on offering full-time employment through internships, which creates a career path for the participants.'*

These examples highlight the contributions of Magdas Hotel to its mandate of social responsibility. Yet, it was not clear if Magdas Hotel has successfully fulfilled its social commitments to all stakeholders. For instance, it was surprising that the guests I spoke to revealed a lack of awareness about the hotel's mission and its nature as a social enterprise. For example, Kim stated, *'I didn't know if this hotel was run by refugees. You just told me now.'* And Alex added, *'Before we arrive at this hotel, I didn't know that the hotel has refugees working in it. I think this is a good idea.'* This lack of awareness opens the debate about the social enterprise's ability to distribute its attention and focus to all stakeholders. Guests' responses may support the conjecture that the hotel may have overlooked some of its stakeholders, such as its guests. Such belief is supported by Griffith (2009), as he hinted at a potential contradiction when combining the social enterprise and stakeholder approach in one business model. However, the recent update in Magdas Hotel's website reflects a greater focus on creating awareness to potential guests. Notwithstanding, since the emphasis of Magdas' project is directed toward hiring and training refugees in the first place, it's expected to be strenuous to concentrate on all

stakeholders at once and achieve corporate social responsibility for all of them (Cornelius et al., 2008).

Biddulph (2018) referred to the tourism social enterprises as ‘socially inclusive’ as they help create essential employment in the tourism sector for disadvantaged groups, such as providing refugee workers with financial and psychological benefits. In this study, refugee participants acknowledged that the hotel not only helped them by supporting them financially and professionally but also helped them cope with their traumas. Such inclusive support should reduce refugees’ precarious conditions while employed, which was cited earlier (Jackson & Bauder, 2014). In the following section, I will discuss the financial, social and emotional, and professional support refugees receive at Magdas Hotel in more detail.

### ***5.1.1 Financial Support***

For refugees, having dependable financial support is a priority. The responses by the refugees reflected that monetary stability is highly significant for them. This is because a decent job can help them sustain themselves. The refugee employees’ responses reflected that most of them were satisfied with the wages they earned at Magdas hotel. However, Vienna’s high cost of living seemed to be a substantial challenge for Magdas’s refugee workers in managing their expenses. Biddulph’s findings, which view social enterprises as enhancing refugees’ integration into the hosting communities and providing them with financial benefits, support this context.

Apart from the direct salary that refugee employees receive, they described the additional benefits like free food and complimentary training, making employment at Magdas promising

and satisfying. For example, part of my conversation with Nafisa reflected these other gratis benefits when she expressed satisfaction: *'...I can't complain: the free food and the training'*. She also mentioned that the hotel customers tip her well. She added, *'The money I make in this Hotel is similar to what I used to make in Movenpick, even sometimes I am making more money here.'* Such comments may reflect refugee workers' preferences to serve in the hospitality sector, which Janta, Ladkin, et al. (2011), highlighted in their study on Polish migrant workers in the UK hospitality sector.

### ***5.1.2 Social and Emotional Support***

Although this section's title may indicate a difference between social support and emotional support, social support may include the emotional when it assists recipients in coping with stressful conditions in their daily experiences (Cohen et al., 2004). In general, employment supports mental health and well-being, as having a job helps refugees build self-confidence and a sense of importance in their new society (Van Der Noordt et al., 2014).

In terms of providing social and emotional support, the refugee employees stated that interacting with guests and peers was delightful and meaningful. Participants shared how communicating with people and sharing a relationship based on mutual respect fulfills their social needs, such as acceptance, developing friendships, and creating a feeling of belonging. In addition, the refugees enjoyed interacting with guests and colleagues. This builds on work by Lugosi et al. (2016), who found that social network is a crucial determinant of social support for migrant workers in the hospitality sector, mainly relations formed in workplaces.



Many participants among the refugee group of this research expressed their positive feelings about being employed at Magdas Hotel. For instance, Fatema, who was scared to deal with customers, had progressed after receiving some guidance from the hotel's social worker as she expressed, *'I feel so good when customers interact with me... Every day, I feel I am doing a much better job.'* Kajaly, who had a challenging experience before becoming an employee at Magdas, revealed, *'I felt miserable and was almost depressed for a year or so. Now, I feel so good.'*

While offering social and emotional support, the hotel's model also focuses on taking an empathetic approach. This is why, as was described by a refugee employee, a social worker has been regularly visiting the hotel. The social worker's engagement or presence is another critical aspect. Refugees may witness severe trauma when they leave their home country and struggle to survive in the host country. In such a scenario, they must have a sort of counselling, like the social worker at the hotel, to ensure an efficient working environment. The social worker's presence at the hotel premises is a vital inclusion initiative described as an assurance to the refugee employees' well-being (Reilly et al., 2019). As noted in the literature review, well-being was one of the important domains for inclusion for the corporation, as suggested by Reilly et al. (2019), and this is reflected in Magdas Hotel's corporate culture. Therefore, the social worker visits Magdas Hotel to help the employees with their daily barriers and issues, ensuring their well-being. This was similar to work by Newman, Bimrose, et al. (2018), who found that social support increases social capital and enhances refugees' well-being in the workplace.

Furthermore, similar to what Campbell et al. (2018) and Colic-Peisker and Tilbury (2007) affirmed, participants stated that social and emotional support helps refugee workers cope with stressful conditions during their job. This finding shows how social enterprises influence refugees' social support, which has not been covered in past studies (Ateljevic & Page, 2017).

Refugees working at Magdas Hotel interact and form social networks with many different individuals, like peers, management, and social workers. Also, they have the opportunity to further network and interact with guests in addition to their peers and the hotel staff. Thus, the hotel provides them with an interlinked network through their working environment (Janta, Brown, et al., 2011). Such networks play a significant role in developing socio-cultural competencies (such as determining facial expressions and gestures) to help social integration. For example, one of the hotel guests, Dan, noticed that some of the workers might have weak language skills but that still he could understand and deal with these workers through gestures *'you deal with them face to face, where language can be expressed through gestures. I assume these people [refugee employees] will improve their language skills as fast as they need to work and succeed.'* Unlike Koyama's (2017) study, the current study's network is limited to the social network and has not considered materials like job contracts, documentation, temporary permit, etc.

### ***5.1.3 Professional Support & A Suitable Work Environment***

As discussed earlier in the literature review section, developing job-seekers' and workers' skills is essential and enhances employability (McQuaid & Lindsay, 2005). The case is not

different for refugee employees, as studies emphasized that refugees arriving in a new country require training and introduction programs (Alrawadieh et al., 2018). For example, language skills are not only essential for refugees' employment, but it has been highlighted as crucial for their overall integration process. Based on the findings of this study, it seems that employing refugees in the hospitality sector is a bonus for them, as they may develop their skills in an interactive environment. This was clear when refugee participants detailed their interaction with each other and the hotel guests. They reflected that using the language while working is a chance for them to practice their language skills. For instance, Jasim mainly works as a helper in the kitchen but does other duties at the hotel, stated *'I feel so good when customers interact with me and share their opinions...Some of them [Magdas Hotel's clients] speak to me in English, others only speak German. It's always good practice for me...When I can't read something or can't interact with a customer, I ask my friends here [at Magdas Hotel], and they usually very helpful.'*

No doubt practicing in such an interactive way helps refugee workers enhance their conversational skills. As confirmed in the literature review, the language barrier has been cited as the most critical factor that impacts refugees' employability (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2007; Haan et al., 2017; Lamba, 2008; Verwiebe et al., 2019). Although hospitality has low entry barriers to specific jobs, the sector offers a wide range of jobs requiring different skills and varying language proficiency levels (Treuren et al., 2019). Previous studies mentioned the

benefits that the hospitality sector may provide to migrant workers, including language benefits and professional development (Janta, Ladkin, et al., 2011).

Furthermore, various stakeholders acknowledged that the Magdas Hotel is committed to hiring and training refugees. I found the refugee workers at Magdas Hotel receive extensive training for language from external sources, for which the hotel pays. This result supports existing literature regarding the importance of language training as a priority for refugee employees. For example, Hurstfield (2004) underlined the significance of tailor-made refugee-centric introduction programs for the hotels. Also, Legrain (2017) stressed the importance of customized training as per the refugee employees' skill gap. The Magdas Hotel management allows refugee employees to search for additional language training outside the hotel, and these employees highly valued this opportunity. Further discussion about the language dimension's significance will follow in the 'Challenges and Hurdles' section, which is provided later in this discussion.

While assessing the professional support provided in the hotel, all stakeholders expressed that professional support was crucial for employees with a refugee background. Such support offers employees a chance to develop skills and further encourage them to learn more. Previous studies highlighted the significant role social enterprises play in supporting their employees' integration through training and development (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2007; Lundborg, 2013). In this context, Magdas Hotel appears to be a training venue for refugees aiming to join the hospitality labour market. As I stated earlier, corporate social responsibility is rooted in the

foundations of Magdas Hotel's mission. As a tourism social enterprise, the hotel's commitment is to deliver value to internal and external stakeholders (Smith et al., 2013; Tracey et al., 2011).

As described in the findings chapter, the hiring procedure in the hotel is unique yet simple. Like the previous study by White and Smith (2013), which was introduced in the literature review, this study's participants acknowledged and shared that a flexible work environment is for their betterment as they get time for other part-time jobs or for pursuing their education. Also, refugees noted that employment at the hotel followed a flexible approach with part-time or full-time job opportunities. Some employees mentioned that they could either spend time with their family or pursue their interests by accessing certification courses and degrees in their spare time. The employees also reflected that the hotel had pursued an inter-departmental switching system, which helped the employees learn extensive skills and build expertise in various areas. This inter-departmental switch expands the network of refugee employees. This strategy allowed them to interact with new faces and learn new things. As previous studies lacked the role of peers and colleagues of refugees' social networks in the workplace, the current research suggests that the refugees working at tourism social enterprises are content, satisfied and excited to learn about new cultures while interacting with their colleagues and peers.

This section has reflected on insights generated by the study regarding its supportive corporate culture. In addition, we have learned about the hospitality sector's contribution to refugees' employment and how the sector facilitates and supports this group, particularly in the tourism social enterprises context. In the following sections, I will discuss the insights related to

understanding the significance and the advantages that refugee employees may bring or add to the hospitality sector.

## **5.2 Refugees are Beneficial to the Hospitality Sector**

Based on the reviewed literature and the findings of this study, it is clear that refugee workers contribute to the hospitality sector in three ways: (1) they may help create a satisfying tourist experience, (2) they help in building enhanced business reputation /brand image, (3) they are an asset for their employer. Below, I will discuss each of these areas separately.

### ***5.2.1 Creating a Satisfying Tourist Experience***

Another finding of this study was that the guests who participated in this study acknowledged that they found the service to be courteous and satisfactory. If the refugees had not served Magdas Hotel's guests properly, these guests would have noticed that refugee workers were unskilled. This highlights the importance of training refugee employees (Alrawadieh et al., 2018). Previous studies emphasized that investing in refugee training and development is important for refugees' integration (Lumley-Sapanski & Callahan, 2019) Still, there is a lack of studies that consider the importance of such training for a business and whether trained refugees impact its growth and continuity. This study's findings suggest that trained refugees working in tourism social enterprises can contribute to customer satisfaction. As presented in the finding chapter, Magdas Hotel customers were happy with the service and its delivery.

At the time of research, the guests of Magdas Hotel were satisfied with its services. However, they were surprised when they learned that refugees were serving them. Guests' observation perhaps not be expected since it is common to deal with people from migrant backgrounds in the hospitality sector, as they are vital to the sector's labour force (Joppe, 2012). The question here is how much hotel guests know about this fact and that the hospitality sector relies heavily on workers from a migrant background. The guests' comments may also indicate the training program at Magdas is successfully achieving its goals with training and development of its employees' professional skills. These findings build on previous studies, highlighting that hiring refugees creates positive business results (Reilly et al., 2019).

### ***5.2.2 Enhanced Business Reputation /Brand Image***

One of the non-management participants' views suggested that refugee employment is beneficial for the host country's economy and businesses. This finding is supported by earlier research that suggested refugees add advantages to the business (Powell & Osborne, 2020; Reilly et al., 2019; Szkudlarek, 2019). A reasonable explanation for this finding is that refugee employment helps a business create a reputation in the market, leading to further attracting more clients (González-Rodríguez et al., 2019). In addition, it is worth noting that sustainability has become a trend in the sector. For example, some hotels use their social or environmental initiatives to build a competitive edge (Graci & Dodds, 2008).

Furthermore, the current study found that refugee employment can enhance a business's reputation, which was evident in some stakeholders' perceptions. For instance, the guests reacted

positively when they were told that the hotel employees were refugees. Moreover, the non-managerial participants responded that training refugees could enhance the reputation of the business. And lastly, the refugee employees were observed talking about the hotel with a great sense of respect. However, Robert, a non-management participant, was concerned that some companies might hire refugees to have a positive image in customers' and other stakeholders' eyes, thus boosting their reputation. In Robert's words: *'Still, such projects might take some time to become sustainable. And let's not forget that some businesses choose refugees to employ not for their abilities and talents, but the rank that might be added to the company's reputation through media.'*

Boluk (2011) proposed that corporate social responsibility can benefit a business's reputation is comparable to people's ethical approach in their consumption for a good or service. Boluk's argument makes an interesting point that is relevant to the context of this study. If we were to apply this argument to Magdas Hotel, the hotel might attract guests who wish to appear ethical in their consumption choices. Thus, Magdas's positive reputation, based on their social commitments, may reshape customer awareness and fruitfully lead to greater values and benefits the hospitality sector. Simultaneously, the hotel guests may demonstrate their importance in supporting social enterprise through consuming while being responsible. Such an approach can be a changing point in the industry.



### ***5.2.3 Refugees as an Asset***

Previous studies revealed the hospitality sector's benefits to refugee workers, including language benefits and professional development. In addition, Alrawadieh et al. (2018) noted that the hospitality industry had been one of the most appealing sectors for refugees to venture into as entrepreneurs. However, limited studies considered the benefits refugees bring to enterprises operating in the hospitality sector.

The interviews carried out with managerial staff reflected their positive views about the refugee workers and offered further insight into refugees' utility in the hospitality industry. These perspectives are supported by Szkudlarek's (2019) previous work, which stated similar outcomes in her study. The employers acknowledged that the refugee employees' diverse culture and knowledge of numerous languages help them better serve their clients. As the refugees are needy, motivated, and ready to learn, the managerial staff believed that refugees are indeed assets to the organization. Their diversity in culture, race, and language can be leveraged and used to build relationships with international visitors.

Moreover, as highlighted by the management staff, many refugee employees were aware of several languages, which was beneficial to the hotel's business. Indeed, I learned that staff members know 15 languages in total, and some of the employees were well-versed in 6 or 7 languages. This is an advantage in the hospitality business. Although the extensive knowledge of different cultures made a strong impression, some refugee employees lacked German and English fluency. Nonetheless, study participants shared that multilingualism and awareness of

diverse cultures made employees adaptable, flexible, and tolerant. In this case, hiring refugees can be viewed as an added value in addition to the value that should be maintained to all stakeholders (Freeman, 1984).

Furthermore, according to the International Labour Organization (2010), the hospitality sector keeps expanding regularly. Employment in this sector is based on seasonal recruitment and flexibility in their recruiting process associated with a great need for staff. The hiring is usually based on temporary contracts, in which refugee workers seem to be an apt labour force for such conditions and characteristics. The nature of many jobs in this sector is laborious, including difficult night shifts and no holidays on the weekends, making these jobs less attractive for the local population. Hence, the refugees have greater opportunities to find employment in the hospitality sector (ILO, 2010).

This section presented three possible areas of contributions of refugee employment to the hospitality sector: satisfying tourist experience, enhanced business image, and refugees being useful resources for businesses. The following section will discuss the challenges and hurdles that refugee workers face in the hospitality sector.

### **5.3 Identifying Challenges and Hurdles**

Each participant stakeholder shared their experiences and included issues related to employing refugees in the hotel. They mentioned specific areas of concern, which they thought could be obstacles to refugee employment. Various stakeholders acknowledged that if these

challenges are addressed, other hotels could replicate the Magdas model. Below are the challenges they highlighted, and each will be discussed in light of relevant literature.

### ***5.3.1 Language/Communication Barriers***

The literature review discussion made clear that poor language skills may reduce refugees' ability to join the labour market and directly impact their employability (Hussein et al., 2011). Furthermore, when addressing the importance of language for already employed refugees, the earlier work of Legrain (2017) underlined the importance of language training in the workplace for this group. Also, other scholars suggested that an enterprise's corporate culture and employees' skill levels will necessarily help develop language learning quality within the workplace (González-Rodríguez et al., 2019; Reilly et al., 2019). Indeed, these two factors operate in parallel, as it is not enough for the refugee employee to either have the skills or just the workplace's support.

My research showed that one of the management strategies at Magdas Hotel is to move refugee employees around to different departments while learning new language skills. Switching jobs in this way may foster this learning by adding new vocabulary to the learner's dictionary, albeit in a practical way. For Jasim, the interaction with other employees from the various other departments was also a learning method: *'At Magdas, we learn English and German...sometimes we learn from each other.'* As reflected in the following comment from Beenzu, *'every day I am learning new things in this hotel.'*

The guests mentioned a slight difference in the accent of the refugee employees compared to the locals. However, this points to a crucial challenge concerning language barriers. Still, as the communication most often was face-to-face, non-verbal communication, such as gestures, helped them understand.

Language, as a critical barrier to refugees' employment, is also highlighted by several authors (Auer, 2018; De Vroome & Van Tubergen, 2010; Haan et al., 2017; Lamba, 2008; Tayfun, 2021; Verwiebe et al., 2019) but not from the customer's (or guest's) perspective. For any business, the customer is an essential stakeholder because it is the primary revenue source. This study's findings highlighted how some of Magdas's guests had noticed an accent in refugee workers' language, even though these guests could communicate with these workers. In this context, Flex stated, *'I have noticed that the employees may not speak the language perfectly, but I am still able to understand them and interact with them.'*

As shown in the finding chapter, many refugee participants appreciated the hotel's flexibility allowing them to take language training as per their needs at their convenience. Some refugee workers chose to register in language training courses with external providers outside the hotel premises. For example, Beenzu had the choice to enroll in a German language course as he stated: *'Yes, they [Hotel management] allow us [refugee employees] to search for German language training outside the hotel, and they will pay for that...I am so pleased to work here.'* Such flexibility offered by the hotel management is not only crucial for refugee training but to their comfort.

Furthermore, the flexibility in allowing refugee workers to switch among the hotel's different departments can enhance their chance of learning the language faster. As each department will have specific terminologies, workers will have a better opportunity to learn diverse vocabularies while working at the same job.

For service industries, like the hospitality industry, language skills that facilitate effective communication are significant. This is because the staff has to understand the guests' needs to serve them right, and here communication is the key.

### ***5.3.2 Cultural Gap and Discrimination***

Although I was made aware of no signs of discrimination, some participants felt grief due to being away from their families and struggling alone to handle their lives, which can be a factor that affects the refugee labour workforce's efficiency. This is unlike previous studies, which denoted that the refugees face outright discrimination (Verwiebe et al., 2019), religious discrimination (Fozdar, 2012), ethnic discrimination in hiring decisions (Zschirnt & Ruedin, 2016), and 'discriminate against them or exploit them through low wages, long hours, poor working conditions' (Moran & Petsod, 2003, p. 7).

Even though none of these studies were conducted in a tourism social enterprise context, there are two possible explanations for this difference in the findings. First, the hotel exists as a social enterprise. Its goal is to provide refugee job-seekers with access to the labour market and offer them training and development in a supportive atmosphere. This interpretation is supported by earlier work showing that social enterprises help create a supportive work environment that

serves their employees and their needs (Paluch et al., 2012; Svanberg et al., 2010). Second, most hotel employees mainly come from a refugee background, so co-workers were accommodating and kind. This second interpretation is backed by earlier work revealing that co-workers were friendly and cooperative (Williams et al., 2012).

As discussed in the literature review chapter, studies indicate that refugees in some European countries encounter cultural racism from their local hosts (Joly, 2016). The responses in this study revealed that one of the more significant challenges for new employees is to fit in the new environment. Ilcan et al. (2018) referred to such a challenge as the precarity of space, in which physical places where refugees are functioning and practicing their daily actions. It's reasonable to suggest that the precarity of space is not limited to physical locations but exceeds to include the social context in which refugees exist. Refugees who move to countries with different cultures face this type of precarity. One of the refugee employees expressed that European culture was challenging and shared that it was his first time living in a European country. He mentioned that everything is different in Austria: the language, the food, the people, and the lifestyle. At the Magdas Hotel, refugee employees expressed having no issue keeping their cultural values while working at the hotel. I have observed Muslim females working with their scarves on and special halal food provided for Muslim workers in the hotel.

### ***5.3.3 Refugee Employment Policies***

Joppe (2012) noted how different countries have different regulations limiting immigrants' and refugees' ability to join the labour market. Participants in this study mentioned

that it is the government's responsibility to provide the necessary accommodating policies. The managerial and non-managerial participants shared that government policies play a vital role in creating opportunities for refugees. Accommodating and friendly policies help refugees access employment easily and also motivate corporations to employ them. Moreover, both the managerial and non-managerial stakeholders agreed that the government needs to evaluate the current Austrian policies to facilitate refugee employment. This finding aligns with the literature regarding the importance of suitable policies to foster integration into the Austrian labour market, as was noted in the literature review. Verwiebe et al. (2019) viewed the current Austrian labour market policies as damaging to refugee integration. This finding points to the necessity for more supportive and less anti-immigrant policies, a much-needed topic for future research (Verwiebe et al., 2019). Likewise, as Oner et al. (2020) mentioned, a particular country's domestic policies can significantly affect refugee employment. At present, there is substantial room for improvement along with the requirement of making policies uniform.

According to Zetter and Ruaudel (2018), developing suitable policies that pay attention to refugees' employment and give them the full right to become employable is critical. Even when a country has effective policies addressing refugee employment, it is inadequate without enforcement mechanisms (Zetter & Ruaudel, 2018). The study also reflected that refugees face challenges while getting integrated into the labour market due to a lack of suitable refugee policies in the host nation. While Hotel Magdas has a simple recruitment process and a culture that supports inclusion, as discussed earlier, the country is said to have unfriendly policies

(Verwiebe et al., 2019). As mentioned by Amnesty International Austria, all the Austrian governments in the last two decades were open about not being ‘thrilled’ about having migrants in the country. However, if the refugees had already entered the country, the governments made efforts to make them active members of society. Such inconsistent policies seem confusing and ‘hostile.’ (Infomigrant, 2021). Furthermore, Vytiska (2019) reported, in the same year of this publication, that the Austrian government deported those who have been refused or rejected asylum, even if they were in the middle of educational or training programs.

As was noted above, the participants in this study reported that Austrian policies keep changing due to the federal system. More specifically, non-management participants highlighted that Austrian employment policies are restrictive market policies that are selective regarding hiring strategy. The uncertainty and ambiguity in employment policies will undoubtedly add to refugees’ struggle to find a decent job, which significantly contributes to their precarious employment (Jackson & Bauder, 2014). In this context, it’s fair to highlight The Public Employment Service agency’s efforts in helping refugees find work. It is a federal agency in Austria responsible for implementing labour market policies and help job-seekers, including refugee job-seekers, with employment-related information.

#### ***5.3.4 Retention of the Refugee Employee***

In the view of the managerial stakeholders who participated in the study, Magdas’ approach to employing refugees is unique and thoughtful. As was described in the previous chapter, the hotel uses a specific recruitment procedure adapted after identifying the drawbacks



of the initial recruitment process, and a high retention rate is observed. Although most refugees are semi-skilled or unskilled, there are also situations when they are overqualified for the job. In both cases, retention is a concern, and participants shared their views on this matter. First, the refugees grab the job because of their needs or are highly motivated to do the job. Later, due to a monotonous routine, being over-qualified, or getting better job opportunities, they tend to leave their jobs soon.

Similar to the study conducted by Kallick and Roldan (2018) acknowledged that refugees tend to remain with an employer longer than the other employees, the present study mentions a high retention rate. However, while Kallick and Roldan (2018) compared refugee employees with the locals, this study's managerial participants compare refugees' serving periods with two different recruitment processes - Magdas's management changed the recruitment process to ensure they have steady employees.

On the other hand, Hurstfield (2004) cited retention as a barrier to employing refugees in hotel chains. They also mentioned over-qualification and financial problems as the major reasons for the low retention rate. However, once refugees are trained, and their language skills have improved, they tend to switch for better and higher-paying job roles that match their qualifications, which the managerial participants stated. This highlights the flexibility and responsiveness to the needs and goals of refugee employers.

In light of the preceding, it is reasonable to state that recruiting the right refugee employee to the proper job role is a significant factor in ensuring retention and consistency in

work. Also, management participants highlighted an issue regarding having highly motivated employees who cannot do their job. Therefore, the management decided to add a trial period to the recruitment process and rotate employees into various departments. As the management noted, they aimed to fit the right person in the proper position. Thus, the need created a unique, flexible, and yet pragmatic recruitment process to hire refugees planning a hospitality industry career.

In this section, I have identified and discussed the main challenges and complications related to refugee employment. First, I have addressed the language barrier, which is the most significant barrier that prevents refugees from obtaining a job. Next, I discussed the role of employment policies on refugee employment. Finally, I explained the retention of the refugee employee at Magdas Hotel and related recruitment processes. Following, I will discuss issues related to the future of Magdas Hotel and how lessons learned could be applied to the hospitality industry more broadly.

#### **5.4 An invitation to the Hospitality Sector**

The stakeholders involved in the Magdas Hotel provided generally positive responses to my questions about refugee employment. From their reactions, we can sense the feeling that social enterprises in the hospitality sector are a practical part of the solution to refugee employment. Furthermore, they highlighted that such enterprises are useful once the associated barriers are taken into account and labour policies are on these enterprises' side. This explanation is supported by previous work determining that tourism social enterprises can create meaningful

employment for refugees - see, for instance, (Biddulph, 2018), through supportive work environments that benefit workers (Paluch et al., 2012; Svanberg et al., 2010). At the same time, these enterprises develop a comprehensive supportive environment that further provides a sense of belonging, which may be highly sought after by refugee employees.

When considering the findings of this study and its implication on the hospitality industry as a whole, the social enterprise model can be seen as a significant part of the solution to deal with the present refugee crisis, at least pre Covid-19. Likewise, Laville and Nyssens (2001) indicated that social enterprises could be the latest method of enhancing economic development by establishing mutually beneficial organizations and co-operatives. This is in line with the results of the present study. Furthermore, the non-managerial stakeholders indicated the mutual benefits achieved by establishing a social enterprise. Hence, similar enterprises in the hospitality industry can re-model their hiring processes and make space for refugee employees.

Indeed, when it comes to refugee employment, the Magdas Hotel may seem like a reliable alternative to some hotels that embrace and commit to corporate social responsibility. In this context, it is important to highlight that there is less certainty about other hotels' ability to deliver corporate social responsibility commitments (Page & Katz, 2010). Yet, the non-management participants do not see Magdas as an alternative to other organizations or training programs that support refugee employment, as I addressed this in the finding chapter. This was clear throughout my interview with Flex when he stated, *'I think this model [Magdas Hotel] is important to refugees but not an alternative to other companies or training programs.'* The non-

management perspectives in this connection seem reasonable as there is a need for collective efforts from the hospitality sector toward refugee employment. Magdas Hotel is employing around 20 refugees - less or more. Indeed, such single efforts won't fix the issue, but it creates an awareness of the importance of refugee employment in the sector.

#### ***5.4.1 Implementing an Innovative Idea for Refugee Employment***

Participants indicated that refugee employment is an important social matter and has to be given utmost attention while making policies and business decisions. The present study's findings suggest that refugees' employment is not only viewed positively by the stakeholders. There is also an indication that customers (Magdas Hotel guests) wish to be associated with socially conscious enterprises (Powell & Osborne, 2020) and practice ethical consumption at their destination. Indeed, the business model of Magdas hotel can be an attractive approach that encourages customers to transform their usual practices and activate their capacity to become more 'caring' customers. As previous researchers have suggested, promoting sustainability in hospitality and tourism venues is very much associated with customers' ethical approach in their consumption (Moskwa et al., 2015). At this point, it is appropriate to link to the philosophical basis of 'care ethics' and consider how it could be connected to the context of this study.

The development of ethics of care as a separate moral theory can be linked to the work of Carol Gilligan, who implied that men and women treat morality utilizing two distinct 'views:' the view of *justice* and the view of *care*. For Gilligan, support would be an emotion or an act of care to a specific group of people in particular relations. Ethics of care is frequently perceived as

a sort of feminist ethics, however likewise adopted in non-feminist contexts (Hamington & Sander-Staudt, 2011). Thus, ethics of care has been employed successfully in different academic disciplines, including those investigated social enterprises or stakeholder theory context. Take, for example, the argument of (Higgins-Desbiolles & Monga, 2020) to restore and improve the ideas of capitalism by forming and supporting sustainable tourism organizations through successful social enterprise models in the sector. The argument of Higgins-Desbiolles and Monga is legitimate since it rejects models of businesses that rely on unlimited capital accumulation and overlook the social and ecological values. Such an approach exploring alternative possibilities can be viewed as a kind of ‘caring capitalism’ (Dredge, 2017), due to its commitment to delivering societal goals (i.e., socializing tourism highlighted in Higgins-Desbiolles, Doering & Bigby’s 2021 book on socializing tourism) in a capitalistic market.

The feminist ethic of care proposes recognizing creative and meaningful ideas, which contribute to developing alternative businesses (businesses that care about people more than financial profit). Furthermore, enhanced models of capitalism show that markets are a significant part of a community and are connected by relationships. In this context, innovative social enterprises in the tourism sector that mix the social goals and financial ends could influence these developments. Thus, raising ethics of care and confidence serve as crucial catalysts to establishing a more sustainable, ethical and just future.

Connecting to the feminist ethics of care, helping refugees not just to access the labour market but also offering a supportive work environment can be classified as a positive strategy

informed by ethics and values of care. While the world perceives the accelerating number of refugees as a problem, the project of Magdas (as a social enterprise model) sees refugee job-seekers as human beings, and as a 'way' to fill a labour shortage in the Austrian hospitality sector. In addition, as the management group indicated, Magdas Hotel aimed to ease refugees' unfamiliarity with local standards and job application procedures in a time many of these refugees lack social networks and accredited qualifications (Ratheiser et al., 2019; Verwiebe et al., 2019).

At the same time, the tourism social enterprise of Magdas Hotel incorporates social responsibility into its foundation as a primary strategic objective. It reveals a mixed model of ethical responsibility that serves the refugee population and the hospitality sector simultaneously. Therefore, tourism social enterprises move beyond corporate social responsibility and exceed their balance sheets. Future studies may conduct similar assessments in new contexts and could help to further our understanding of the role of corporate social responsibility in tourism social enterprises.

Moreover, findings suggest that refugees can be effectively employed at the proper designations in countries with a labour shortage. Such action treats a part of the hospitality sector's labour shortages (Lucas & Mansfield, 2008). Likewise, non-managerial stakeholders believe that refugees can be a valuable asset to the country. At the time of this research, owing to the dual issue of increasing refugees and decreasing the labour pool, Austria's employers have transformed their recruitment process and started employing refugees (Bathke, 2019).

#### ***5.4.2 Attractive Avenue for Refugee Job Seekers***

Refugees acknowledged the hotel to be a fun and good place to work. The empathetic and friendly nature of the management, adequate training aids, and fair wages make it lucrative work in the job seeker's eyes. Moreover, as previous studies indicated, employment in the hospitality sector is attractive to job-seekers because it is easy to access (Riley et al., 2002).

As I detailed in the findings chapter, refugee workers at Magdas Hotel found the vocational training attractive because they can develop their skills while earning income and achieve their goals. This is what Robert from the non-management group affirmed: *'Emerging social enterprises can be an avenue for refugees to accomplish something they are enthusiastic about.'*

Additionally, the views of managerial and non-managerial stakeholders show that Magdas Hotel's example is a role model for the hospitality industry for dealing with various labour shortage issues and enhancing its diversity. According to the study conducted by Kallick and Roldan (2018), in which companies were hiring refugees in Atlanta, Phoenix, New York, and eastern and central Nebraska were interviewed, the employers were optimistic. They favoured hiring refugees due to the significant benefits attached to their hiring. For example, the refugee group can be a new labour pool for employers seeking higher employee retention. In addition to Kallick and Roldan's study findings, employers may consider refugees as long-term or lasting workers since a high percentage of them tend to permanently stay in the receiving countries (Tayfun, 2021).

### ***5.4.3 Emphasis on Refugee Training***

Baum (2002) detailed that ‘the development of skills to meet the needs of various stakeholders in hospitality is frequently seen as a partnership between the industry and the educational/training providers, with each playing a complementary role’ (p. 356). With the growing numbers of migrants and refugees working in the hospitality sector, the importance of training has been highlighted as a necessary investment to meet the industry’s skills requirements (Baum, 2012).

According to the management stakeholders, the Magdas Hotel model is an excellent initiative for integrating refugees. Moreover, with adequate training, such as vocational training, these refugees can become assets for the company and have more stable employment (Lumley-Sapanski & Callahan, 2019). The management and non-management participants supported this and indicated that it is easier to train people with an enhanced zeal to learn. This was clear throughout my interview with some of them as they stated: ‘*in the first run when we opened the hotel, we had lots of highly motivated people.*’ Cristina ‘*I believe such initiatives are important for refugees to learn and work at the same time.*’ Robert.

Although, in some cases, refugees may bring skills and knowledge that benefit the host country (Arnold-Fernández & Pollock, 2013). Still, particular industry standards form a significant constraint in refugees’ employment. For example, as addressed earlier, language stands as a substantial barrier in the front as a requirement for refugee access to the labour market. Legrain (2016) suggested that refugees can become more employable in the flexible



labour market through training. As previous studies confirmed, investing in refugee training and development is crucial for their integration (Lumley-Sapanski & Callahan, 2019).

Most refugee participants were thankful to have the opportunity of getting trained at the Magdas Hotel. Unfortunately, most refugees cannot afford to pay for training, limiting their ability to work in the host country. Therefore, the importance of Magdas' initiatives in training refugees is significant, especially with the lack of training programs available in the industry, in general, for such individuals. Earlier, Hurstfield (2004) highlighted the need for tailor-made refugee-centric introduction programs in the hotels. Such programs may attract more refugee job-seekers to choose to work in the sector, as indicated by some participants.

As noted previously, some refugees are semi or unskilled; some are overqualified, while most are under stress and trauma as they face financial and emotional pressures. In such a scenario, adequate training enhances refugees' skills and helps them settle in the host country. Likewise, other studies from the European context acknowledged the role and significance of employee training when qualifications become a barrier to refugees' employment (Bloch, 2002a, 2002b, 2004). As Legrain (2016) stated, most refugees can work in countries with flexible labour markets with training, support, and counselling. Magdas Hotel, as a 'work integration social enterprise,' is a hybrid model that combines paid training and social support for refugees.

## **5.5 The Magdas Hotel as a Unique Social Enterprise Model**

Although this dissertation focuses on the stakeholders' experiences and perceptions about refugee employment, it is helpful to describe Magdas Hotel's model and distinguish it from other

tourism social enterprises. Under the umbrella of Caritas, the Catholic Church Organization, Magdas Hotel, used an entrepreneurial approach to help refugees access the labour market and find a placement that supports them as they work to overcome economic and social obstacles and integrate faster into Austrian society. Such a strategic goal is critical to the assimilation of the increasing numbers of refugees in Austria (Bock-Schappelwein & Huber, 2016; Verwiebe et al., 2019).

As was shown in the findings chapter, the Magdas Hotel has invested in refugees in order to help them be an active part of their new community and become independent from governmental aid. According to hotel management, this initiative focuses on benefiting from refugees' experiences and capabilities rather than perceiving them as a burden superimposed on the hosting country. In this context, the Magdas project can be viewed as a rejoinder to previous invitations to adjust receiving countries' views and policies toward refugees (Legrain, 2016). Magdas Hotel mimics similar social enterprises' models intended to provide employment to marginalized groups in that it exceeds traditional businesses' corporate social services (Cornelius et al., 2008; Page & Katz, 2010; WOS, 2018). And yet, as this study makes clear, the Magdas' model reveals the influence of ethical approaches to business that focus on 'caring for' people while remaining financially independent (Daniele et al., 2017). As it is apparent in the hotel's vision and mission, the management is looking beyond employing these refugees; endeavouring to care for them while also equipping them with transferable skills to support their future employment in the hospitality sector.

Magdas Hotel falls into the social enterprises' employment model suggested by Alter (2006). According to this model, the social enterprise provides its target group (e.g., refugee job-seekers) with employment opportunities and on-the-job training. The income produced by those jobs flows back into employees' salaries and enterprise expenses. Importantly, such a model goes beyond a focus on generating profit for their shareholders. Instead, this model exerting an ethics-based approach that helps address social and even environmental issues. Magdas Hotel is a tourism social enterprise that creatively establishes its purpose via fixing an ongoing and alarming social problem and uses the generated profit to achieve its social mission. In this context, P. Sheldon et al. (2017) proposed that tourism social enterprises may function as an 'ethical' answer to the failed modern capitalist market and thus resolve critical social problems impacting marginalized groups and vulnerable people. Indeed, the accelerating numbers of refugees globally (UNHCR, 2020), combined with the absence of earnest efforts to adjust labour market policies, turned the refugees into precarious employment (Fasani et al., 2020; Koyama, 2017; Zetter & Ruaudel, 2018). Therefore, the need for socially-inclusive initiatives like Magdas Hotel model, or similar enterprises, is more urgent than ever.

As Higgins-Desbiolles and Monga (2020) suggested, the 'networks of care and social change' is a model developed through communication among various stakeholders to benefit all. This model requires collective support and participation, which facilitate change to an enterprises' way of operations. Thus, for example, understanding how care is being undertaken becomes necessary to support and promote refugee employment through collective efforts and

relationships. By foregrounding this, countries dealing with refugee employment need to pay more attention to such innovative business models, as they are potentially supportive solutions to challenges faced by refugees, rather than relying on the welfare system. Moreover, such creative models may encourage other businesses to follow similar paths and embrace related approaches.

This research illustrated how the management of Magdas Hotel is aware of the necessity of creating advantages and benefits for all its stakeholders equitably while fulfilling its social mission. Thus, for example, the hotel benefits the refugee employees and fosters their integration. At the same time, employing refugees at Magdas Hotel supports the business and enhances its reputation, which may attract more guests. The following subsection will detail how Magdas Model distributes its care among the different stakeholders.

#### ***5.5.1 A Business Model that Cares for its Stakeholders***

Stakeholder theory highlights the ways organizations have ethical and human obligations. Accordingly, corporations have a responsibility to care for those involved (i.e., customers, employees and the local community in which it operates). Therefore, ethics of care can have a productive approach for developing stakeholder theory (Engster, 2011). Furthermore, from a feminist viewpoint, the moral basis of ethics of care is a convincing and influential philosophical framework that helps identify the effective and participating stakeholders, their power to make decisions, and their overall relationship to the enterprise (Giuseppe & Lorenzo, 2012).

As was addressed in the literature review chapter, Freeman (1984) defined stakeholders as ‘any group or individual who can affect, or is affected by, the achievement of a corporation's

purpose' (p 46). Based on Freeman's definition and the discussion of stakeholders' classifications in the literature review section, the following three levels summarize the stakeholders associated with the Magdas Hotel model: (1) **macro-level** stakeholders, which include the local community and its economy and surrounding environment; (2) **micro-level** stakeholders, which cover the enterprise's investors, founders, managers, employees, customers and suppliers (3) **meta-level** stakeholders, which involve the enterprise committees, governance, regulators, and media. Based on this classification, I will discuss the ethic of care that Magdas Hotel strives for its stakeholders.

On a **macro-level**, we can consider Magdas Hotel as a social enterprise model that uses sustainable practices to help integrate refugees in Austria. Refugee integration is a significant and urgent issue concerning Austrian society, especially with the inconsistent policies undermining refugees' integration efforts into the Austrian labour market (Verwiebe et al., 2019). In addition, refugee job seekers may lack qualifications and thus, exploring alternative approaches that support stable employment will be crucial to refugees' integration. Therefore, the employment of refugees at Magdas Hotel is a practical step toward their integration. The internship program at Magdas Hotel, for example, is designed to requalify refugee employees and improve their language and professional skills.

Furthermore, Magdas Hotel also 'cares' about its workers as well as the environment and follows eco-friendly practices throughout its operations. For example, the hotel serves as a model that uses upcycled materials, used furniture and decoration. As a result, antique doors and

windows have converted to mirrors, cupboards, and cabinets turned into serving nooks for the buffet lunch. Therefore, building a 'caring' workplace in the hospitality sector adds to and encourages sustainability in the industry (Moskwa et al., 2015). Overall, Magdas Hotel is a social enterprise model connected and contributing to the local community and the surrounding environment. Such findings are supported by previous literature, which views social enterprises as care-oriented to the communities in which they function (Dredge, 2017; Higgins-Desbiolles & Monga, 2020; P. Sheldon et al., 2017).

In this context, as the management group emphasized, there is a necessity for creating awareness about the benefits of the model of Magdas Hotel offering employment to refugees in the Austrian labour market and the hospitality sector. Indeed, educating people about such an ethical approach to business and its effects is one of the pillars to promote tourism that confronts the neoliberal tendency to make a profit bypassing social obligation (Carnicelli & Bulok, 2021). Therefore, educating the public about ethical approaches to business in the tourism sector and the potential contribution of tourism social enterprises to sustainability and long-term growth is crucial. Nonetheless, the indispensable step in this direction is illustrated in the call for embedded 'ethics' in tourism education that recognizes social and environmental issues essential for the tourism sector and its sustainability (Carnicelli & Boluk, 2021).

On a **micro-level**, the stakeholder who benefits most is the refugees in Austria. Magdas Hotel initiative comes in the context where employment in businesses that hire refugees occurs only for 'unwanted or grimy jobs' that the local community commonly ignores (ILO, 2010;

UNHCR, 2018). Thus, this model reflects the ethics of care that the Magdas Model offers to refugee job-seekers. The non-management group revealed that obtaining a job is a priority for refugees as they migrate to their new homes. For example, from the non-management group, Flex and Robert responded that receiving countries should treat refugee employment more seriously, confirming that a job is crucial in helping refugees surpass hurdles, make a living, and integrating rapidly. In this context, the refugee employees at Magdas Hotel mentioned the various forms of support they experience during their employment. Fair remuneration, adequate social support and appropriate training are examples of the different types of this support. This thesis has detailed the financial, social, and professional forms of support that refugee employees experience at Magdas Hotel. Also, I have addressed how social enterprises embrace a supportive corporate culture to integrate refugees (Lundborg, 2013). Thus, Magdas Hotel provides its 'caring' activities to meet the essential needs of its employees, develop their fundamental skills, and mitigate their discomfort and suffering.

Giving attention to refugee workers was apparent in the case of Magdas Hotel. The 'care' for refugees to overcome their hurdles is evident in the hotel's mission and operational process. For example, the management utilized an uncomplicated and unique hiring process, as I highlighted in the findings chapter. Also, the hotel provided the refugee workers with job-shadowing and mentorship, paid training, free meals, fair remunerations, and extra tips from the hotel guests. Furthermore, as discussed above, the hotel has a supportive network of people, including a social worker who helps those in need of help or guidance.

Another primary stakeholder in this model is the hotel guests. The hotel's proximate location to the city centre, the reasonable prices and the friendly trained staff were some of the features mentioned by the hotel guests. In addition, guests were pleased to be served by refugees. Indeed, the guests' acknowledgment may reflect their positive opinion about the ethical and responsible consumption of the enterprise's services (Boluk, 2011). In this context, and while profit maximization continues to be the driver for most businesses, the shift in customer values joined with increasing social and environmental apprehension is creating the need for a more inclusive corporate obligation to social and environmental responsibility (P. J. Sheldon et al., 2017; Sheldon & Roberto, 2017). Thus, Magdas Hotel provides its customers with trustworthy and reliable services and truthful information reported by guests' responses. Indeed, as was discussed above, Magdas's model creates a satisfying tourist experience and enhances business reputation and image.

From the **meta-level**, the Magdas Hotel is trying to solve a social problem through an economic approach that is innovative and emphasizes ethics of care. Since day one, Magdas Hotel started its operation by hiring refugees from different nations, reflecting its governance based on ethical and moral values. Furthermore, the hotel is committed to helping individuals who need opportunities to obtain work and equates people from various cultural backgrounds, professional experiences and social classes. Also, as it is declared in the hotel's webpage, 'Here, people from all over the world come together as guests, employees, or friends' (Magdas, n.d).



Furthermore, the hotel management of Magdas is transparent and open to local and international media. In 2015, the hotel's inauguration was received with extensive media coverage, as this was the first project of its kind in Austria and the European Union as a whole. Many Austrian publishers and trusted foreign news agencies such as The Guardian, NZZ, Die Zeit, Süddeutsche Zeitung, CNN, BBC, and many more reported the Magdas Hotel project's innovative approach (Social-Platform, 2017). Also, when I approached hotel management to conduct this research, they welcomed the idea and facilitated the needed resources. Such actions reflect their desire to spread awareness about their unique model and to provide other hotels with an example to follow. Future research may expand on these levels of analysis and investigate the ethics of care of tourism social enterprises using a similar stakeholder approach.

## **5.6 Conclusion**

This chapter started by discussing the supportive corporate culture of Magdas Hotel. I discussed the hotel refugee workers' financial, social, and professional forms of support in this context. Next, I discussed how refugee workers, as an asset to the hospitality sector, can benefit this sector by creating a satisfying tourist experience and enhanced business reputation. Also, I identified the challenges and hurdles that shape the refugee employment issue, including language or communication barriers, cultural gaps and discrimination, refugee employment policies, and retention of the refugee employee. Next, I proposed a call to the hospitality sector to consider the innovative model of the Magdas Hotel. Finally, I presented the model of Magdas

Hotel as a tourism social enterprise that embraces the ethics of care approach that fosters refugee integration in Austria.

## **Chapter 6**

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

This study sought to understand refugee employment at the social enterprise of Magdas Hotel from stakeholders' perspectives. The study underlines both the promising and challenging aspects of refugee employment in the hospitality sector and makes an effort to contribute to the literature addressing these areas. Through both primary research within the scope of this study and the overview of past literature, what becomes apparent is simply that good jobs support refugees in myriad vital ways. However, while analyzing this case, I found it to be much more than that.

While all the stakeholders favoured the refugees' employment, the guests were rather impressed when I told them about the social enterprise model of Magdas. The refugees look to the hotel as their social, financial, and professional support source, while managers see how other businesses can benefit significantly from this social enterprise model. The hotel's mission is attached to refugees' integration in Austria and assumes they will be able to contribute to their new community. Hence, the managerial participants shared that refugee employees must be given an appropriate job to sustain their life in the country. The non-managerial participants appreciated the approach but raised some policy-related concerns. Still, those refugee workers are likely to remain pivotal for the sustainability and continued growth of the hospitality industry in several countries, particularly in the developed nations. This chapter wraps up the dissertation by discussing the study's contribution, limitations and considering opportunities for future

research. Finally, the chapter offers recommendations for refugees, employees, and the host countries' governments based on the findings and analysis.

## **6.1 Understanding Refugee Employment - Investigated Dimensions**

Scholars from different academic disciplines have studied refugee employment. Overall, some studies examined this topic inductively in which refugees were the focus (Colic-Peisker & Tilbury, 2007; Newman, Bimrose, et al., 2018). Other studies took a deductive approach by including a theory (Koyama, 2017). Through a case study methodology, which was shaped by stakeholder theory, this study used thematic analysis to understand refugee employment from stakeholders' perspectives at the social enterprise of Magdas Hotel. Furthermore, this dissertation looked at three aspects to better understand the refugee employment matter. The first aspect describes precarity as a necessary concept that helps us understand how refugee conditions reshape their employability. The second aspect recognizes stakeholder theory as a potent approach for a more comprehensive understanding of the refugee employment matter. The last aspect analyzes this research's specific context, which includes the social enterprises, corporate social responsibility, tourism social enterprises, and a background of the case selected for this research – Magdas Hotel.

These dimensions incorporate combined key elements that help us understand refugee employment that has not been introduced in the same way through previous tourism social enterprises literature. At the same time, considering these dimensions acknowledges the importance of various factors contributing to refugees' employment previously recognized by

scholars. An illustrative image of the Refugee Employment Investigated Dimensions is displayed in Figure 11.

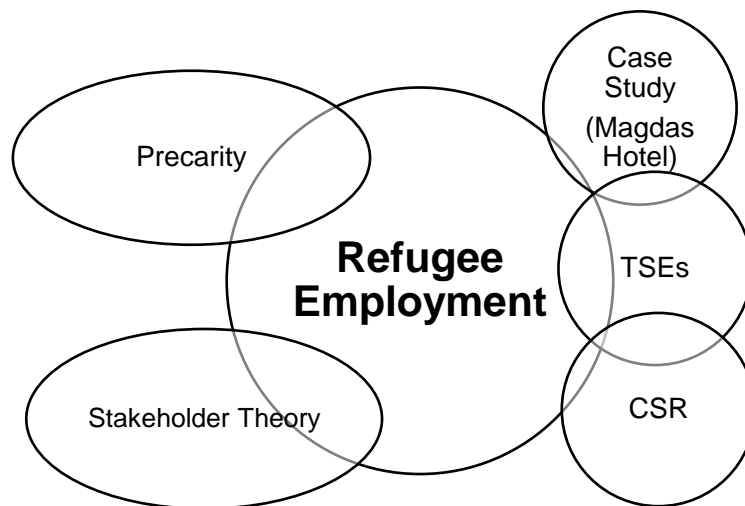


Figure 11. Refugee Employment Investigated Dimensions

## 6.2 Contributions

This dissertation offers a comprehensive analytical approach to exploring refugee employment in the tourism social enterprises context. Unlike extant studies that focus on single perspectives, this study tackles refugee employment through the lens of various stakeholders. Using this approach helps us understand the multiple views of stakeholders and paves the way for future research on refugee employment in the hospitality sector, specifically in tourism social enterprise. Moreover, this study may also be significant to countries hosting refugees - the

findings could provide governments and employers with insights and knowledge that could improve refugee employment, which may help faster integration and help meet the hospitality industry's needs.

In addition to stakeholder theory, I have also employed relevant concepts such as precarity and corporate social responsibility in the context of tourism social enterprises, which shaped the study's contextual framework.

Precarity is a concept that I used to develop insights gained from this project. In this case, precarity helped me make sense of the refugees' conditions, such as lack of support, physical and mental well-being, and the ambiguity and vulnerability of conditions (Waite, 2009). In addition, I added the precarity concept to comprehend the refugees' various types of support as they were built within the Magdas hotel's model and learn how this support fosters employability for refugee employees and enhances their well-being.

Corporate social responsibility is another concept I utilized in the context of this study. As set out in the literature review, corporate social responsibility encourages businesses to combine social and environmental interests with their operations and communication with their stakeholders. It was essential to include corporate social responsibility in this study since it's embedded in Magdas Hotel's fundamentals and mission as a social enterprise. Furthermore, this theoretical knowledge represented in the concepts used offers a comprehensive contribution to our existing understandings of refugees working in the hospitality sector. More specifically, those are working in tourism social enterprises.

Furthermore, this study contributes to the literature on refugee employment in three ways: first, this study provides a new, broad-based understanding of perceptions and experiences related to this issue. Indeed, participants made up a heterogeneous stakeholder group (refugee employees, hotel guests, management and non-management stakeholders). Second, the study focuses on the refugee employees' voice, a large group working in the hospitality sector. Therefore, the study provides a foundation for future studies investigating refugees' employment in tourism social enterprises, especially those working in hospitality establishments. Finally, the study presents the case of Magdas Hotel as a unique social enterprise that uses an ethical approach rooted in the feminist theory to address, holistically, issues related to refugee employment.

### **6.3 Limitations of the Study**

The limitation of one study is an opportunity for other researchers. Hence, I have covered this study's limitations in the subsequent sections while also outlining where other projects might lead. In particular, I noted that this topic is sensitive as one of the respondent groups, refugees, tends to face particular mental and physical trauma. As was described in the methodology chapter, this sensitivity was taken into account. Moreover, other limitations like being able to generalize from the data and not addressing topics such as employers' barriers are also explicitly discussed. A discussion about my experience as a researcher in this study is also included.

### ***6.3.1 Sensitivity of the Topic***

For refugees, the experience of migration may be traumatic and bitter. This may make them reluctant to respond to specific questions if they are reminders of such a difficult journey. Thus, I took extra care while interviewing these participants, I did not ask them to dig deeply into these experiences, and I focused on issues related to their work experience at Magdas Hotel. To get responses, building rapport and establishing relationships were crucial. Consequently, researcher bias was checked and acknowledged throughout the process. While some researchers support using qualitative tools to encourage openness from respondents (Sampson et al., 2008), others recommend quantitative analysis to keep participants' anonymity (Bhattacharjee, 2012). Owing to the topic's sensitivity, future research using mixed methods may be useful.

### ***6.3.2 Intrinsic Case Supports Transferability***

Transferability in the qualitative research method is similar to external validity as it allows for applying research findings to a similar context. However, researchers using qualitative paradigm 'cannot specify the external validity of an inquiry; he or she can provide only the thick description necessary to enable someone interested in making a transfer to conclude whether the transfer can be contemplated as a possibility' (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 316). Therefore, I made sure throughout this study to provide a solid description of Magdas Hotel (geographic boundary) and the study participants (demographics boundary) to establish transferability in this research. Therefore, given that I conducted this research in a developed country context, the findings could be transferable to a similar setting and to tourism social enterprises more broadly.



By adopting the single case methodology, this study bases its findings on a specific set of facts derived from a particular and unique context. Given that experience at only one place of employment is taken into account, much care and caution should be exercised before generalizing the study's implications and viewing it against a broader perspective of industry or society at large. The findings obtained here do not represent the characteristics of a larger sample size, which would involve a group of employers operating in the hospitality domain. Even though there is no inherent flaw in adopting such an approach that excludes broad application, it is inappropriate to extrapolate any theoretical doctrines or assumptions (theory-testing or theory-building) that could provide a more comprehensive perspective about the industry in question (the hospitality industry). However, the study makes a genuine effort to situate itself within existing research and support and enhance findings delivered through other research designs, as is described in more detail below.

### ***6.3.3 Limited Employer and Stakeholders' Perspectives***

As mentioned earlier, including a more comprehensive stakeholder network would further strengthen the finding of this study. The inputs of NGOs, refugees' settlement agencies, and other refugees' service providers should add more perspectives for such studies. Furthermore, the employer perspectives are essential, as this study focused primarily on refugee workers' perspectives. For instance, the study overlooked some other significant challenges that may hamper refugee workers' employment in the hospitality domain. An excellent example of such a challenge is the employers' difficulty checking and confirming the refugees'

documentation, identity, and qualifications. Because of this inability to undertake the essential requirement of identity and qualifications verification, employers are often unable to appoint or hire refugee workers who completely fit the criteria of their needs. Therefore, it is a massive challenge. Future studies may consider such an important issue and investigate employers' challenge authenticating refugees' documentation, identification, and qualifications.

#### ***6.3.4 Researcher Experience***

Another limitation is related to the researcher's access to the study field at the right time. In preparation for the fieldwork, I had to schedule the observation and interviews carefully. As the ethics application process took longer than I expected, I had to wait in Vienna for a few weeks before starting the official data-collection phase. As a result, I had to reschedule few interviews, especially those with non-management participants. As I expected, the refugee-group participants were busy working in a hotel most of their time. Thus, I had to conduct interviews with refugee workers based on their availability (I conducted some interviews late evening and early morning and used Skype for one interview).

Furthermore, owing to the in-depth nature of research and the collected data were large to handle, time was a problem, mostly since the study's scope was broad and complex (Crowe et al., 2011; Gustafsson, 2017). While collecting data, I transcribed interviews almost on an immediate basis. Also, I kept a separate notebook for daily reminders, suggestions, and general notes.

When reflecting on all participants, and if they were forthright with me about their experiences and perspectives, I believe that participants were transparent in reflecting their

honest opinion about refugee employment. However, during my interviews with all groups, I avoided questions not related to their employment. I assured them that my research has nothing to do with their job performance, and their opinions and inputs to this research will not affect them in any way.

Additionally, I tried to reflect throughout the whole research process, not only when I came back from the fieldwork. For example, I have applied Reflexivity during the interviews to increase the representation and honesty of the information formulation between myself and the interviewees. In addition, I used 'bracketing' to reveal participants' actual opinions and hear their own voices to understand refugee employment from their perspective. Also, in preparation for the interviews, when I used to go for observational sessions at the hotel premises, I always thought of my role - I asked myself what am I doing here? How I'm going to engage with potential participants? How do I start a conversation with them? Such questions kept me aware of my position and how it is more than taking notes about the site and its physical appearance.

Shklarov (2007) signified that the bilingual researcher has a prominent position of expertise and open thought in the cross-cultural ethical context. Nonetheless, such an indication can induce reasonable uncertainties because it might contradict the ethical standards of research. Yet, Shklarov explained that the bilingual researcher's duality could both request further caution while it might strengthen the study. As I have mentioned earlier, I have been living in Canada for over 11 years now, and I have travelled and worked in many different cross-cultural contexts. Also, I have worked and volunteered in newcomers' settlement agencies in Canada for over five

years. Even though this research's fieldwork occurred in an environment where the German and English languages were significant, all participants could communicate in English, except for some refugee workers who spoke Arabic. I could conduct all interviews in English or Arabic, but I wish I had spoken German to strengthen this study further.

Overall, as I started working on this project, I was aware of the importance of acknowledging my biases throughout the research process. My cultural background, beliefs, previous work experiences, status as an immigrant, history of volunteering with refugees, and other factors can contribute to my bias. Throughout this research, I kept a check on my biases, acknowledged them and dealt with them. For example, all interview questions have been designed to limit my influence on the participants' responses. These questions were set in order from general to more specific and kept open-ended. I was also aware of how close my relationship with the study participants was and kept evoking my role as a researcher. Another measurement that I took was to validate the data after the interviews, as I asked participants to confirm their interview data. I recorded some interviews using my mother tongue, the Arabic language, also some participants' mother tongue, and I translated these scripts and validated them with an external interpreter's help.

Lastly, it is important to note that the guests' group consists of 4 none-Austrian participants, which reflects excellent opportunities for future research to use TripAdvisor reviews on Magdas Hotel, for example, to understand better how tourists feel about the hotel as a social enterprise. The following section presents more suggestions for future research.

## **6.4 Opportunities for Future Research**

The present study is based entirely upon one qualitative case study project. By adopting qualitative methodology and being informed by stakeholder theory, the study maps out the difference of ideas and perspectives concerning refugee workers' use in the hospitality sector. The study covers various perspectives in-depth and provides insights into significant stakeholders' views and experiences. However, future similar studies may benefit from the amalgamation of both quantitative and qualitative derived data inputs. Future studies may investigate the opportunities and challenges of refugee employment in the context of tourism social enterprises. For example: how do tourism social enterprises contribute to the refugee integration of a host country? How do current employment policies encourage or prevent Tourism social enterprises in their mission of employing refugees? How do social enterprises' initiatives contribute to refugee employability? How does employing refugees in the hospitality sector impact its services' quality and the customer experience? Furthermore, there is a lack of studies that consider refugee workers' motivations to join the hospitality sector. For example, there is a need to understand and evaluate the tourism social enterprises' ability to enhance refugees' language skills and cultural competencies.

In the context of this study, the discussions about the ethics of care, which has developed as a subfield of feminist ethics, bring to the surface the importance of relationships as close and vital social connections. The relationship between the employer (Magdas Hotel) and their employees (refugee workers) provides a position from which we can critically explore, review

and evaluate existing social problems. Traditional businesses may consider and mimic Magdas Hotel's approach by recognizing 'care' as a reliable means for promoting social change that confronts the current predicament of capitalist society. For example, future research may consider the implications of ethics of care on the relationship between employers and their employees in the tourism social enterprise context.

Future research on this topic could employ quantitative data gathering techniques as well as statistical analysis of data if combined with other similar-context cases. Moreover, the inclusion of quantitative data analysis can off-set the concerns related to generalization. Also, more stakeholders, like placement agencies and non-profit organizations, can be involved. This could produce an even more comprehensive representation of the stakeholders' perspectives. Including the point of view and experiences of NGOs and placement agencies, who act as a first contact point and bridge between refugees and employers, can give more weight to the findings presented. They can also provide more insights into how enterprises can improve refugees' employment in the hospitality industry. In the following section, I will discuss the practical implications and recommendations of the study.

## **6.5 Recommendations**

I have divided the recommendations of this study into separate sections for refugees, employers, and governments of refugees' receiving countries.

### ***6.5.1 For Refugees:***

Several challenges hamper the employability of refugees. Their inability to speak the host country's language, inexperience working abroad, and lack of legal status are some of the more prominent hurdles. Although there is not much they can do to help with the latter two; refugees can lower the language barrier. The employer interviewed for this study showed a broader understanding of the context attributed to the refugees' poor English or German language skills. There was also the willingness to aid efforts directed towards enhancing language skills among employees that are refugees. However, the employer exhibited a reservation that it is entirely their responsibility to fix the language issue. Also, in the view of health and safety concerns, the employer preferred that irrespective of job profile or skill level, all employees should have at least basic-level knowledge of the language so that necessary communication can take place.

Given the above observations, refugees should be encouraged and supported as they work on their language skills to access the labour market better. Also, having solid language skills helps them avoid lower positions that do not match their experience and skills. Hence, the aspirants seeking a career in this sector must learn local and possibly foreign languages to easily and effortlessly communicate with guests.

### ***6.5.2 For Employers:***

Employers in the hospitality domain encounter seasonal demand for their workforce. This seasonality encourages hospitality enterprises to hire refugees. Similarly, labour market shortage is often indicated as a motive for employing marginalized groups such as refugee workers

(Andersson et al., 2019; Pelek, 2019). By employing refugees in the hospitality sector, employers can contribute significantly to integrating this group into host communities (Lee et al., 2020), enhancing the production of enterprises working in this sector (Altındağ et al., 2020), and diversifying the sector's workforce (Szkudlarek, 2019).

Furthermore, according to some studies, employers in the hospitality sector may gain quick and high returns by investing in the proper training of their refugee employees (Legrain, 2017). Furthermore, refugee employees tend to combine skills and dedication to hospitality jobs, which is hugely beneficial for the sector. There is an acknowledgement of refugees' willingness to bring to the table, which seems absent from the available domestic labour.

Still, the picture around refugees' legal status and their permitted work remains blurry and undefined in most countries. Thus, vague governments' regulations around refugee employment can leave employers in a dilemma, yet employers can significantly contribute to proactive policies that enhance the employment of refugees (Zetter & Ruaudel, 2018). Even though refugee workers may bring new experiences or skills to their employer, they still face various challenges but not limited to legal, socio-cultural, financial, and industry-related ones (Alrawadieh et al., 2018).

According to Kallick and Roldan (2018), there might be initial reservations to hire refugees at lower positions than their skill and expertise, based on the assumption that they would leave for better opportunities. Yet, it is noticeable that the refugees' retention rate is high compared to other employees (Kallick & Roldan, 2018). Also, the findings of this study indicate



that efforts to support refugees help with retention too. Such a remark suggests that the hospitality sector's employers can benefit from such an advantage.

Given the above observations, it is lucrative for employers to appoint refugees in the hotel industry. Hence, I have developed some specific recommendations meant for employers to consider:

- Employers should introduce and implement robust and impactful cultural diversity policies.
- Employers should have an effective introduction program to introduce refugee employees to the host country's culture.
- Employers should cooperate to help preserve the refugee workers' rights and interests operating under their organizations.
- Employers should carefully analyze and evaluate the workforce and skill requirements in the long run. This will allow employers to strategize better how they can efficiently and seamlessly integrate refugees into the industry over a prolonged period.
- Employers should adopt an approach of more careful supervision so that neither future potential nor immediate expediency remains unnoticed on the part of refugee employees.
- Employers should also try and acknowledge the difficulties that refugee workers might experience while working, assisting them in their skill-enhancement and professional progress, as they would have in the case of native workers.

Employers Should follow the Magdas Hotel model in adjusting their recruitment process in actions that serve the business and the applicant.

Employers Should follow the Magdas Hotel model in providing the needed support for refugee employees - e.g., a social worker in the workplace.

Employers Should consider how the Magdas Hotel model implemented the rotation strategy among its refugee employees and apply it where possible.

- Most importantly, employers should aid and assist in lingually and culturally train refugees, allowing them to manifest their competence while dealing with clients and co-workers.

Lastly, the following section covers recommendations for governments that may formulate policies and take concrete steps towards refugees' inclusion. These recommendations will not just safeguard the rights of refugees but also ensure the interests of employers.

### ***6.5.3 For Government:***

- Governments can identify the human resources requirements in the hospitality sector for the foreseeable future. Identifying the needs will allow countries to formulate a better overall strategy for ensuring the continuous availability of jobs for refugees to fill up posts across the board.

- Governments need to take more concrete actions to ensure that international hotels embrace corporate social responsibility more effectively. Hotels that employ refugees must comprehend and react with the refugees' domestic level of qualifications- refugees might need time to certify their qualifications.

- Governments should prioritize bilateral agreements and partnerships with governments of the countries from where the refugees are coming. Such collaboration will create a pathway for communication and cooperation between the two countries, allowing them to solve and eliminate issues that mutually contribute to refugees' precarious employment.
- Governments should also support and promote domestic and global research, documenting refugee workers' issues and their experience working in the hospitality domain, specifically in tourism social enterprises.
- Lastly, governments should invest heavily to support the local and English language programs for refugees. Even though these programs have been proven to cut back the on-the-job-training duration and expenses considerably, employers are still hesitant to add additional or specialized language programs for refugee employees, primarily due to the overall endeavour's cost. Therefore, governments should take the initiative to provide well-structured language programs for refugees. Such programs should foster refugees' ability to learn the skills they need to survive and thrive in a foreign country.

The study concludes that the refugees experience several challenges, and the case study of the Magdas Hotel shows that there are ways employers could contribute to improving refugee integration in the labour market. In contrast, refugee employees could also do their part and take the initiative to learn the host country's language, customs, and cultural traditions. Refugees should make more of a concerted effort towards cultural integration and acceptance of the local way of living. Similarly, governments must also try and shift public opinion towards a more

positive outlook concerning refugee workers. Indeed, Magdas Hotel is an innovative and exemplary avenue for inducing refugees into the labour market, which its peers can replicate.

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## Appendices

## Appendix A. Information Letter (Observation and Interview)



Date

Dear potential participant:

This letter is an invitation to consider participating in a study I am conducting as part of my Ph.D. degree in the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies at the University of Waterloo in Canada under the supervision of Professor Heather Mair. I would like to provide you with more information about this project and what your involvement would entail if you decide to take part in this study entitled ‘Utilizing the Stakeholder Approach to Understand the Context of Employing Refugees in the Hospitality Sector, the Case of Magdas Hotel of Vienna, Austria.’ The purpose of this study is to understand the experiences of the stakeholders (different groups) involved in the tourism social enterprise: Magdas hotel, about refugees’ employment. The data that will be collected from observation and interviews will contribute to a better understanding of the nature of employment of refugees in the hospitality sector.

Initially, I would like to conduct observations on how refugees experience employment in the hospitality sector, which will allow me to better understand the meanings associated with such an experience. Observations will take place over a period of 4 weeks at the Magdas Hotel and only be conducted with your permission. I will be volunteering within various hotel departments such as at the front office, in sales and marketing and in the restaurant. During this time, I would like to observe the kinds of interactions employees have with one another as well as the kinds of activities they engage in as it relates to their employment at the Magdas Hotel

In addition to observations, I would like to invite you to participate in an interview with me that will last. The interview will last approximately 45 minutes to one hour and will take place in a mutually agreed upon location. I will be asking questions related to your experience working at Magdas hotel. With your permission, the interview will be audio recorded to facilitate the collection of information and later transcribed for analysis. Shortly after the interview has been completed, I will send you a copy of the transcript to give you an opportunity to confirm the accuracy of our conversation and to add or clarify any points that you wish.

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may decline to answer any of the interview questions if you so wish by requesting to skip the question. You may also decide to end the interview

session or decline to be observed at any time without any negative consequences by advising the researcher.

Your participation will be considered confidential by the research team. Identifying information will be removed from that data that is collected and stored separately. Your name will not appear in any paper or publication resulting from this study. However, with your permission, quotations may be used, and you may be referenced generally by your role with a pseudonym in place of your real name (e.g. 'Maria, hotel employee'). Collected data will be securely stored on a password-protected computer and in a locked office for a minimum of seven years. You can withdraw your consent and request your data be removed from the study by contacting the researchers within this time period. Please note that it is not possible to withdraw your data once the results have been submitted for publication.

Given the focus of the study and the kinds of questions that will be asked, it's possible that some of the discussion may cause you to feel upset, particularly if you've had negative experiences in the past associated with working in the tourism and hospitality sector. Please remember that you do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer. Additionally, due to the familiarity that participants may have with one another, it is possible that others may be able to identify your involvement in the study (e.g. by recognizing comments made by you in study results), even with the use of pseudonyms. The risk associated with this is equivalent to sharing information about yourself and your views publicly.

This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through a University of Waterloo Research Ethics Committee (ORE#40895). If you have questions for the Committee, contact the Office of Research Ethics at 1-519-888-4567 ext. 36005 or [ore-ceo@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:ore-ceo@uwaterloo.ca). For all other questions or if you would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about participation, please contact me at 226 789 1008 or by email at [talomari@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:talomari@uwaterloo.ca). You can also contact my supervisor, Professor *Heather Mair*, at 1-519-888-4567 ext. 35917 or email [hmair@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:hmair@uwaterloo.ca).

Participation in this study may not provide any personal benefit to you. However, the results of the study may contribute towards a better understanding of the employment of refugees in the hospitality sector, and the final report of this study will be available to share with the hotel management.

I very much look forward to speaking with you and thank you in advance for your assistance in this project.

Yours Sincerely,



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## Appendix B. Information Letter (Interview)



Date

Dear potential participant:

This letter is an invitation to consider participating in a study I am conducting as part of my Ph.D. degree in the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies at the University of Waterloo in Canada under the supervision of Professor Heather Mair. I would like to provide you with more information about this project and what your involvement would entail if you decide to take part in this study entitled ‘Utilizing the Stakeholder Approach to Understand the Context of Employing Refugees in the Hospitality Sector, the Case of Magdas Hotel of Vienna, Austria.’ The purpose of this study is to understand the experiences of the stakeholders (different groups) involved in the tourism social enterprise: Magdas hotel, about refugees’ employment. The data that will be collected from observation and interviews will contribute to a better understanding of the nature of employment of refugees in the hospitality sector.

I would like to invite you to participate in an interview with me that will last. The interview will last approximately 45 minutes to one hour and will take place in a mutually agreed upon location. I will be asking questions related to your experience working at Magdas hotel. The interview will be audio recorded with your permission to facilitate the collection of information and later transcribed for analysis. Shortly after the interview has been completed, I will send you a copy of the transcript to give you an opportunity to confirm the accuracy of our conversation and to add or clarify any points that you wish.

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may decline to answer any of the interview questions if you so wish by requesting to skip the question. You may also decide to end the interview session or decline to be observed at any time without any negative consequences by advising the researcher.

Your participation will be considered confidential by the research team. Identifying information will be removed from that data that is collected and stored separately. Your name will not appear in any paper or publication resulting from this study. However, with your permission, quotations may be used, and you may be referenced generally by your role with a pseudonym in place of your real name (e.g. ‘Maria, hotel employee’). Collected data will be securely stored on a password-protected computer and in a locked office for a minimum of seven years. You can

withdraw your consent and request your data be removed from the study by contacting the researchers within this time period. Please note that it is not possible to withdraw your data once the results have been submitted for publication.

Given the focus of the study and the kinds of questions that will be asked, it's possible that some of the discussion may cause you to feel upset, particularly if you've had negative experiences in the past associated with working in the tourism and hospitality sector. Please remember that you do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer. Additionally, due to the familiarity that participants may have with one another, it is possible that others may be able to identify your involvement in the study (e.g. by recognizing comments made by you in study results), even with the use of pseudonyms. The risk associated with this is equivalent to sharing information about yourself and your views publicly.

This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through a University of Waterloo Research Ethics Committee (ORE#40895). If you have questions for the Committee, contact the Office of Research Ethics at 1-519-888-4567 ext. 36005 or [ore-ceo@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:ore-ceo@uwaterloo.ca)

For all other questions or if you would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about participation, please contact me at 226 789 1008 or by email at [talomari@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:talomari@uwaterloo.ca). You can also contact my supervisor, Professor *Heather Mair*, at 1-519-888-4567 ext. 35917 or email [hmair@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:hmair@uwaterloo.ca)

Participation in this study may not provide any personal benefit to you. However, the results of the study may contribute towards a better understanding of the employment of refugees in the hospitality sector, and the final report of this study will be available to share with the hotel management.

I very much look forward to speaking with you and thank you in advance for your assistance in this project.

Yours Sincerely,  
Thabit Alomari  
Ph.D. Candidate  
Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies  
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## Appendix C. Consent Form (Interview and Observation)



By signing this consent form, you are not waiving your legal rights or releasing the investigator(s) or involved institution(s) from their legal and professional responsibilities.

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I have read the information presented in the information letter about a study being conducted by Thabit Alomari of the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies at the University of Waterloo, Canada. I have had the opportunity to ask any questions related to this study, to receive satisfactory answers to my questions, and any additional details I wanted.

I am aware that I have the option of allowing my interview to be audio recorded to ensure an accurate recording of my responses.

I am also aware that excerpts from the interview and other observational data may be included in the thesis and/or publications to come from this research, with the understanding that the quotations will be anonymous. Those quotations may be used with permission, and that a pseudonym will be used in place of my real name.

I was informed that I may withdraw my consent up until results are submitted for publication without penalty by advising the researcher.

This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through a University of Waterloo Research Ethics Committee (ORE#40895). If you have questions for the Committee, contact the Office of Research Ethics at 1-519-888-4567 ext. 36005 or ore-ceo@uwaterloo.ca

For all other questions, contact Thabit Alomari, talomari@uwaterloo.ca.

With full knowledge of all foregoing, I agree, of my own free will, to participate in the following procedure(s):

An interview

The observational aspects of the study

I agree to have my interview audio recorded.

YES

I agree to the use of anonymous quotations in any thesis or publication that comes of this research.

YES  NO

Participant Name: \_\_\_\_\_ (Please print)

Participant Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Witness Name: \_\_\_\_\_ (Please print)

Witness Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix D. Participants' Feedback Letter



Date

Dear Participant,

I would like to thank you for your participation in this study about the employment of refugees in the hospitality sector. The purpose of this study was to understand the experiences of the stakeholders (different groups or individuals) involved in the tourism social enterprise: Magdas Hotel. The data collected during this study will contribute to the understanding of the employment of refugees in the hospitality sector. For instance, the challenges refugees face while working in the sector. This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through a University of Waterloo Research Ethics Committee (ORE#40895). If you have questions for the Committee, contact the Office of Research Ethics at 1-519-888-4567 ext. 36005 or [ore-ceo@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:ore-ceo@uwaterloo.ca). For all other questions or if you would like additional information, please contact me at 226 789 1008 or by email at [talomari@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:talomari@uwaterloo.ca). You can also contact my supervisor, Professor Heather Mair, at 519-888-4567 ext. 35917 or email [hmair@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:hmair@uwaterloo.ca)

Please remember that any data pertaining to you as an individual participant will be kept confidential. Once all the data are collected and analyzed for this project, I plan on sharing this information with the research community through seminars, conferences, presentations, and journal articles, as well as Magdas Hotel management. If you are interested in receiving more information regarding the results of this study or would like a summary of the results, please contact me and provide your email address, and when the study is completed, anticipated by the end of August 2020, I will send you the information. In the meantime, if you have any questions about the study, please do not hesitate to contact me by email or telephone as noted.

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## Appendix E. Observation Guide



The purpose of this guide is to help conduct an organized observation related to refugee employees (RE)

<b>Site location:</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>Start time:</b>	<b>Stop time:</b>	
<b>Research issue</b>				
<b>Area of Observation</b>	<b>RE dealing with guest</b>	<b>RE dealing with a manager</b>	<b>RE with anyone</b>	<b>Other areas of Observation</b>
<b>Behaviour</b> (what, by whom, where?)				
<b>Conversation</b> (what, by whom, where?)				
<b>Context</b> (what else is going on, what is the weather, is it a holiday?)				
<b>General mode</b> (what, by whom, where?)				
<b>Reflexive comments</b>				

## Appendix F. Interview guide for Magdas Hotel's guest



The research question:

What are the stakeholders' experiences involved in the tourism social enterprise, Magdas hotel, about refugees' employment?

The purpose of this guide is to help conduct organized interviews. The guide includes:

- A- Welcoming participants and thanking them for participating in this research.
  - B- Briefing participants about the research project and clarifying their roles.
  - C- Questions
    - Q1: How did you hear about Magdas hotel?
    - Q2: Describe your overall experience visiting this hotel?
    - Q3: What was your motive in choosing this hotel?
    - Q4: Did you know about the refugee program?
    - Q5: What is your opinion/comfort in dealing with employees coming from a refugee background?
    - Q6: What is your experience dealing with the staff during your stay at Magdas hotel?
- Close the interview and thank the participants for their time.



## Appendix G. Interview guide for non-management



The research question:

What are the stakeholders' experiences involved in the tourism social enterprise, Magdas hotel, about refugees' employment?

The purpose of this guide is to help conduct organized interviews. The guide includes:

A- Welcoming participants and thanking them for participating in this research.

B- Briefing participants about the research project and clarifying their roles.

C- Questions

LQ: leading question/FQ: follow-up question/ PQ: probing question

LQ 1: Tell me about your experience working on the project of Magdas hotel.

FQ1: How did the idea of Magdas Hotel start?

FQ2: How do you become involved in the project of Magdas hotel?

FQ3: What do you think of the Magdas Hotel project and its implications on refugee job-seekers?

FQ4: How do you see, as a stakeholder, the future of this project?

FQ5: What do you know about the employment policies in Austria and this hotel? How do you feel about these policies with regards to refugee's employment?

FQ6: How your involvement in Magdas Hotel's project affects your view regarding the importance of employment for refugees?

FQ7: How do you see this project is helping refugees into their settlement in Austria?

FQ7: How do you see this project solve the labour shortage in the tourism and hospitality sectors?

FQ8: Do you have anything else related to your experience working in Magdas Hotel you would like to add?

LQ3: What is your experience working in tourism social enterprises?

FQ1: Can you tell me about your experience working on social enterprise projects?

FQ2: How do you see this project helpful social enterprise?

FQ3: How have employment policies, rules, and regulations impacted the refugee's employment in this project?

FQ4: In your view, what are the challenges refugees and other employees may face while working in Magdas Hotel?

FQ5 How has involvement in Magdas Hotel shaped your social networks and relationships?

FQ 6 Do you have other comments you would like to add?

D- Close the interview and thank the participants for their time.

## Appendix H. Interview guide for management



The research question:

What are the stakeholders' experiences involved in the tourism social enterprise, Magdas hotel, about refugees' employment?

The purpose of this guide is to help conduct organized interviews. The guide includes:

A- Welcoming participants and thanking them for participating in this research.

B- Briefing participants about the research project and clarifying their roles.

C- Questions

LQ: leading question/FQ: follow-up question/ PQ: probing question

LQ 1: Tell me about your experience working at Magdas hotel.

FQ1: What is the goal of Magdas hotel?

FQ2: What can you tell me about Magdas Hotel as a social enterprise?

FQ3: What do you think of Magdas Hotel's project and its implications on refugee job-seekers?

FQ4: Describe your experience working closely with refugee employees?

FQ5: How employment policies in Austria impact this hotel mission? How do you feel about these policies?

FQ6: How does working at Magdas Hotel affect your view regarding the importance of employment for refugees?

FQ7: How do you see this project is helping refugees into their settlement in Austria?

FQ7: How do you see this project solve the labour shortage in the tourism and hospitality sectors?

LQ8: How do you see refugees adding value to Magdas Hotel?

FQ9: Do you have anything else related to your experience working in Magdas Hotel you would like to add?

LQ2: What are the selection criteria for refugee job seekers?

FQ1: How you decided who the best individual is for the job?

LQ2: How do you see other Hotels embracing this model? LQ3: How do you see refugees adding value to Magdas hotel?

D- Close the interview and thank the participants for their time.

## Appendix I. Interview guide for refugee employees



### Interview guide for refugee employees

The research question:

What are the stakeholders' experiences involved in the tourism social enterprise, Magdas hotel, about refugees' employment?

The purpose of this guide is to help conduct organized interviews. The guide includes:

- A- Welcoming participants and thanking them for participating in this research.
- B- Briefing participants about the research project and clarifying their roles.
- C- Questions

LQ: leading question/FQ: follow-up question/ PQ: probing question

LQ 1: Tell me about your experience working at Magdas hotel.

FQ1: How did you hear about Magdas hotel?

FQ2: How did you join Magdas hotel?

FQ3: How does the general society (family, friends, community, media, and government) encourage you to work in the tourism sector?

PQ How about working at Magdas hotel?

FQ4: What are the difficulties you face while working at Magdas hotel?

FQ5: What do you know about the employment policies in Austria and this hotel? How do you feel about these policies?

FQ6: How does working at Magdas Hotel affect your professional skills?

FQ7: Do you face any discrimination at work?

FQ7: In your opinion, how is working at Magdas Hotel different from working at any other hotel?

FQ8: Do you have anything else related to your job search period that you would like to add?

LQ 2: Could you describe in as much detail as possible your experience working in restaurants, cafes, bars, or any other tourism/ hospitality job?

FQ1: How soon after you arrived did you commence employment?

FQ2: I am interested in knowing if you immigrated anywhere else in Europe first before arriving in Austria. Can you talk about that?

FQ3: what your knowledge/expectations of Magdas Hotel were in terms of successfully integrating you into the community?

FQ 4: What are your plans, if any, for working at this job? PQ Any plans to keep this job and make it a career, or is it just a temporary solution?

FQ5: Please tell me more about the skills you are learning and practicing throughout this job.

FQ6: Do you think that such skills would benefit you in your future? In what way?

LQ3: What is your experience working in tourism social enterprises?

FQ1: What attracts you to work in this tourism social enterprise – Magdas Hotel?

FQ2: What drives you to work in this tourism social enterprise – Magdas Hotel?

FQ3: How are your precarious conditions impacted by your choice to work at this hotel?

FQ4: How have employment policies, rules, and regulations impacted your choice of this job?

FQ5: What are the benefits of working in this hotel?

FQ7 How has worked at Magdas Hotel shaped your social networks and relationships?

FQ 8 How has worked at Magdas Hotel enhanced your cultural awareness and existence in this new space (community)?

D- Close the interview and thank the participants for their time.