



Seeking Sanctuary in the UK and the Netherlands

A comparison of the impact of asylum
policy on refugee integration

*Linda Bakker (EUR), Sin Yi Cheung (Cardiff University),
Jenny Phillimore (UoB)*

Context



https://www.flickr.com/photos/national_museum_of_australia/5056220012/

Commonalities

- History of tolerance and multiculturalism
- Deterrent asylum policy
- Integration starts with status (not on arrival)





NL: Asylum centres (AZC);

- segregating
- rural areas
- tightly controlled, i.e. lack of autonomy
- lack of privacy

➤ leave to remain: social housing is provided



UK: NASS housing;

- dispersal
- deprived areas
- poor conditions
- embedded in communities
- lack of infrastructure

➤ leave to remain: leave NASS housing within 28 days



Research Question

How does the type of asylum accommodation in the Netherlands and the UK relate to refugee integration in terms of socio-economic participation, social networks and health?

Main contributions:

- Many claims have been made about the impact of asylum accommodation policy, we are able to test this in a comparative way (so for two different types)
- Large scale quantitative data; national surveys; several domains of refugee integration



Hypotheses

Figure 1: Summary of hypotheses of the effect of state-arranged asylum accommodation (compared to self-arranged housing) on refugee integration outcomes in the UK and the NL

	UK: NASS	NL: AZC
Socio-economic participation (H1)	(-)	(-)
General social network (H2)	(-)	(-)
Ethno-religious network (H3)	(-)	(+)
General health (H4a)	(-)	(-)
Mental health (H4b)	(-)	(-)
Physical health (H5)	(-)	x

Socio-economic participation = in employment or education

General social network = contact with family and friends

Ethno-religious network = contact with co-ethnics and place of worship

Mental health = feeling nervous, stressed, depressed

Physical health = problems walking stairs, cycling, housework

Data & Method

SING09 (NL)

- Random, Cross-sectional, 2009
- Four largest refugee groups (Afghani, Iraqi, Iranian, Somali) N=4000

SNR (UK)

- Longitudinal, 4 waves, 2005-2007
- All refugees that received status >18 years, response 70% N=5678 (W1)

Descriptive analyses: selected comparable samples

- Only Afghani, Iraqi, Iranian and Somali group
- < 5 years leave to remain (in NL)
- Wave 4: 21 months leave to remain (in UK)

Multivariate analyses: full relevant samples (gain statistical power)

- Control for origin country, length of stay, Dutch nationality
- Exclude <18 years, family and work/study migrants



Results (1)

Table 1: Description of integration outcomes for the Afghani, Iraqi, Iranian and Somali group in the UK and the Netherlands by type of asylum accommodation.

	NL		UK (W4)			
	Total	Type of accommodation	Total	Type of accommodation		
		AZC	other	NASS	other	
Socio-economic participation	40%	40%	41%	66%	69%	
Employment	19%	20%	12%	44%	45%	
Education/training	21%	20%	29%	22%	24%	
Social network (friends and family)	3.34	3.33	3.52	2.85	3.53	
Ethno-religious network	2.72	2.72	2.68	2.26	2.26	
General health	3.89	3.88	3.93	3.66	3.97	
Physical health	2.68	2.68	2.66	2.49	2.57	
Mental health	3.64	3.64	3.61	3.44	3.62	
Language proficiency	1.87	1.88	1.82	1.96	1.76	
Number of cases in sample	444	403	41	308	104	204

Results (2)

Table 2: Summary of findings of the effect of state-arranged asylum accommodation on refugee integration outcomes in the UK and the NL

	UK	NL
Socio-economic participation (H1)	(-) n.s.	(+) n.s.
General social network (H2)	(-) ^{***}	(-) ^{**}
Ethno-religious network (H3)	(-) n.s.	(+) n.s.
General health (H4a)	(-) ^{**}	n.s.
Mental health (H4b)	(-) ~	(-) [*]
Physical health (H5)	(-) ^{***}	x

^{***}p<.001, ^{**}p<.01, ^{*}p<.05, ~ p<.10

Note: controlled for relevant background characteristics: education, language proficiency, length of stay, gender, age, household composition, origin country.

Some other findings

- Language proficiency is key determinant in refugee integration
- In NL Somali are least likely to be socio-economically active, not reflected in UK
- Somali are most likely to have ethno-religious network
- Iranians are least likely to have a sizeable general social network



Conclusion

- State-provided asylum accommodation -> (-) refugees' health and social network
 - Confirm critiques on NASS: dispersed away from communities and housing in poor conditions
 - Confirm critiques on AZC: lack of privacy and autonomy deteriorates mental health
- Socio-economic participation higher in the UK than NL
 - Composition effect (more men, less families)
 - Flexible labour market, self-employment
 - Less discriminating of Blacks and Muslims



Discussion

- Indication that NASS is more damaging than AZC
 - No direct test of differences between countries
 - Importance of integration policy
 - None in the UK; Extensive in the NL
 - > likely to affect refugee integration as well. E.g. threat of homelessness on health
 - > effectiveness language classes: level of language proficiency is similar in both countries, despite that some refugees already speak English on arrival
- Further research
 - Study impact integration policies as well; comparison Scandinavian countries





Thank you!

for your attention and for my great stay at IRiS

Questions?

l.bakker@fsw.eur.nl