

Meeting the needs of asylum seekers

A challenge for rural areas in Germany?



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Meeting the needs of asylum seekers

A challenge for rural areas in Germany?

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Abstract

Due to recent developments, a lot of people worldwide are forced to leave their countries. Also Germany receives many asylum seekers at the moment. The German society supports them a lot. However, the question emerges, if the offered support meets the needs of the asylum seekers. By using a need assessment model, this thesis explored the needs of asylum seekers and the available social support services for them in order to see if the services are able to meet the needs of the asylum seeker. Emphasis was put in the analysis on the differentiation between formal and informal social support because previous studies with migrants showed that informal sources were preferred by them. Due to the fact, that situations of asylum seekers are not yet explored in rural settings, the study took place in a rural area in the west of Germany. Several villages around the town of Wörrstadt were explored. In total 16 interviews were conducted with asylum seekers and social support providers. Additionally, participant observation was used. The most important needs of the asylum seekers were learning the German language, finding a job and having clarity about their legal status. Different formal as well as informal social support services were found in the area of study, which served specific needs. The findings also showed that asylum seekers preferred informal social support over formal social support. The analysis suggests that both categories of social support services were not able to satisfy the needs of the asylum seekers effectively alone. However, by overlapping and complementing each other they were able to cover nearly all the needs of the asylum seekers in the area of study. This entails a need for the reformulation of the used assessment model and a rethinking of the organization of support services for asylum seekers.

Key words: asylum seekers, need assessment, formal social support, informal social support, rural area

Preface

You now hold my finish master thesis with the title `Meeting the needs of asylum seekers A challenge for rural areas in Germany?` in your hands. It is part of the master program of Development and Rural Innovation at Wageningen University. Writing a social science master thesis was a challenge for me because of my natural science background, but I really enjoyed it. I was thinking a long time about the topic of this thesis and I neglected a lot of them. What finally brought me to this topic was a sentence said by my mother. She was watching the news that reported about the increasing amount of asylum seekers in Germany. She said: `What will happen with all this people here?` This sentence and how she said it, stuck in my mind for a few days and finally led to the decision to write my thesis about asylum seekers. During the preparation for this thesis I finally decided to conduct it in my hometown. I am really happy about the fact that this was possible and hope that my findings will improve the support for the asylum seekers there.

A lot of people contributed the success of this thesis, whom I want to thank here now. From the beginning on I felt very welcome in the area of study. Also it was my hometown, I was still new to the refugee relief group there. But I became part of it very fast. Everyone was open to my research and gave me all the information and support I needed. I really appreciate that. Without the openness and support of the people there the thesis at hand would not have been possible. A big thanks to all of them who took the time and did an interview with me. Thank you very much as well to everyone who let me join their activities they organized for the asylum seekers.

I also want to thank the municipality of the VG Wörrstadt that they gave me the permission to conduct this research. Furthermore, I want to thank the employees of the municipality for their willingness to let me accompany them.

A special thanks to the team of the Café Willkommen project that you let me be an active part of your project. I always enjoyed spending the Thursdays with you. Keeping me informed about what was going on, contributes a lot to the thesis at hand. Without you I would have missed out a lot of important information.

Of course, I am also grateful to the asylum seekers, who agreed to do an interview with me. Thank you for your openness and honesty. Without you, half of this thesis would not have been possible.

I also want to thank my supervisor from Wageningen University, dr. R (Rico) Lie for supervising me and pointing me at interesting connections evolving in my data analysis.

Finally, I want to thank my parents. Thanks to their support I was able to concentrate fully on writing this thesis and had not to worry about anything else. You always supported me with everything in my life. So I want to use the place here, to thank you for everything you made possible for me.

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List of Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Explanation
AWO	Arbeiterwohlfahrt (German non-governmental organization)
BAMF	Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge (Migration Department)
NGO	non-governmental organization
UNHCR	United Nations Refugee Agency
VG	Verbandsgemeinde (association of municipalities)
Vhs	Volkshochschule (adult education center)

1. Introduction

Everywhere in Germany you hear or read that asylum seekers need help. They need accommodations, they need clothes, they need to learn the German language, and they need a job. Responding to that, everywhere support is offered to the asylum seekers. People donate furniture, others clothes, and again other people give German classes. However, is the support effective and sufficient to meet the needs of the asylum seekers? If not, what do the asylum seekers really need? What should be offered in order to meet the needs of the asylum seekers? Did someone ask them instead of just talking about them? In fact, most of the claims about the needs of asylum seekers are not made by themselves but by others. Therefore, the thesis at hand will try to answer the questions expressed above by exploring the needs of the asylum seekers from their point of view and by describing the available social support services for them. In the introduction chapter I will first present some background information about the current situation with regard to asylum seekers in Germany and state the research question. Chapter two will explain the underlying theories and models, which will be used here. I will first give some definitions that are important for the understanding of the topic and will briefly outline the current debate about the definition and practical meaning of integration. After that, I will go further into detail about the topic of needs, including the explanation of the need assessment model employed in this study. It is followed by a literature review in chapter three about the needs of asylum seekers, social support services for them, and need satisfaction. In chapter four I will outline the methodology and methods, which includes amongst other things a description of the area of study and the sample as well as some ethical considerations. After that, in chapter five, the collected data will be presented. First the needs of the asylum seekers from their point of view, second the available social support services, and third the views of the social support providers on the whole situation. In the analysis chapter I will bring the collected data together. I will evaluate the different social support services and compare them with the needs of the asylum seekers. In chapter seven I will conclude the thesis with answering the research questions based on the findings. Finally, I will present some policy recommendations and ideas for further research

1.1. Background and Problem statement

One of the most concerning topics in Europe at the moment is the issue of people who are forced to leave their homes because of war, civil war, prosecution, or the destruction of their means of existence (PRO ASYL, 2015a). According to the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR), around 59.5 million people are currently on the run worldwide (UNHCR, 2015). Most of them stay in their home countries or move to the neighboring ones. Some also make their way to Europe (PRO ASYL, 2015b). The number of people who came to Germany in 2015 added up to over a million people (Die Welt, 2016). This raises the issue of how to deal with the all of them. Due to recent developments, the migration policy of the German government aims at the integration of

the asylum seekers into the German society (Bundesregierung, 2007; Davy, 2005). In the current research, integration is *defined as the ability to participate fully in economic, social, cultural, and political activities while maintaining one's cultural identity, as well as a two-way process 'by which settling persons become part of the social, institutional and cultural fabric of a society'* (Castles et al., 2002; Spaaij, 2012; Valtonen, 2004). The reality in Germany looks as follows. The asylum seekers are distributed over whole Germany and placed in urban as well as rural areas. The work of the government and municipalities is done when the asylum seekers are placed somewhere (Grabitz, Lutz, Nagel, & Schlesier, 2014). Everything else e.g. learning the language, filling in forms for the asylum application, finding a school for the children, or health issues are not supported by the government. The asylum seekers are often not able to organize all of it by themselves because most of them do not speak German (Middelhoff, 2015). They also do not know how things in the German culture work. Therefore, they often need support and, because the government is not taking over this task, non-governmental organizations (NGO), the Churches, and volunteers step in (Middelhoff, 2015). They help with translations, drive them to authorities, or give German lessons (Middelhoff, 2015). By doing that, the volunteers often encounter difficulties, e.g. language barriers, money problems or the German law. These are all problems for the asylum seekers themselves, but as well for the whole German society (including the German government). They hinder a successful integration of the asylum seekers into the German society and support the development of parallel societies (Korac, 2003).

Refugee and migration studies have a long history in Germany. They studied e.g. the guest workers, who came to Germany in the 60s and 70s of the last century (Hettlage, Deger, & Wagner, 1997; Leib & Mertins, 1980). The focus of the current research is more on the immigration process itself, the politics connected to the topic of asylum, and the situations of the asylum seekers during their applications for asylum (Davy, 2005; Dorr & Faist, 1997; Forschungszentrums Migration, 2015). A lot of studies are done by the German government. In addition, much grey literature is published e.g. by the provincial governments or NGOs, which cover the same topics as mentioned above (Aumüller & Bretl, 2008; Forschungszentrums Migration, 2015; Siegert, 2006). They are mostly based on quantitative data, especially nationwide surveys (Siegert, 2006). A perspective that is not yet in the focus is, according to Aumüller & Bretl (2008), how the integration of asylum seekers works on a local level. Only a few studies are done, which mainly focus on urban areas in Germany, e.g. about Dortmund (Rüßler, 2000) Berlin or Munich (Aumüller & Bretl, 2008). The problems mentioned in the paragraph above are all happening in urban areas. No studies have been conducted yet in rural areas in order to confirm that those problems are the same in rural settings. Given that the infrastructure is different between urban and rural areas, the needs of the asylum seekers might be different in rural areas than in urban areas. This means, that the social support services need to be adapted to the rural environment, too. Connected to that, the question emerges, whether the available social support services are actually able to meet the needs of the asylum seekers. According to Berger, Berthold, & Hemmann (2015), that question has not been attracted much attention by the research until now,

besides their own study. With my research I want to fill the just mentioned knowledge gaps. I will look at the needs of asylum seekers and compare them to the available social support services in order to see if they fit together or not. Due to the fact that rural areas have not been explored yet, the research area will be a rural setting.

1.2.Objective and Research Question

Based on the problem statement and research gaps identified in the previous chapter, the objective of the study is to contribute to the integration of asylum seekers into the German society in rural areas by investigating the available social support and its ability to satisfy the needs of the asylum seekers.

How does the available social support satisfy the needs of the asylum seekers?

- a) What are the needs of asylum the seekers?
- b) What formal social support is available to satisfy the needs of the asylum seekers?
- c) What informal social support is available to satisfy the needs of the asylum seekers?
- d) What discrepancies exist between the available social support and the needs of the asylum seekers?

2. Theory

In the last chapter I presented the main topic of this study, which are needs of asylum seekers and social support services. Now, I will outline the underlying concepts and theories, which are necessary to understand the topic. I will begin with defining the target group, namely the asylum seekers. In addition, I will compare the term to others, which are frequently used in the current scientific and political debates. Then, I will give a short overview of the two main understandings of integration that are currently discussed in German politics and research. Finally, I will describe the need assessment model that will be used in the research at hand. Emphasis will be put on the differentiation of formal social support and informal social support.

2.1.Definition of target group

In daily life, a lot of terms are used to describe people who leave their country of origin in order to live in another country. They are often used interchangeable, although they describe different groups of people. The definitions of some terms indeed overlap and some people can be described with different terms. However, significant differences between the terms exist. The terms I will explain more in detail here are `migrant`, `immigrant`, `refugee` and `asylum seeker`. I will begin with the term `migrant`. Actually, it includes all the other terms I mention above. It is a general description and includes all

people who move from one to another place (Oxford Dictionaries, 2016b). The difference to the term `immigrant` is that it describes people who move to another country, while `migrant` applies for people who move within a country as well (Oxford Dictionaries, 2016a). The next very common term is `refugee`. It is often used in the meaning of `migrant` and `immigrant`, but has actually a very detailed definition. Indeed, `refugees` is not just a term, but it is a political status a person can get after applying for it (UNHCR, 1951). The term is defined in the United Nation Refugee Convention of 1951 as someone who *owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.* The UNCHR definition includes three requirements. Firstly, a person is outside his/her country of origin. Secondly, the person fears to be persecuted in his/her country of origin and cannot not/will not be protected by its government. Lastly, the reason for the persecution is based on either race, religion, nationality, membership in a social group or political opinion of the person (UNHCR, 1951). Before a person can get the refugee status, he/she has to apply for it. In the period of time the application is processed, the person is called an asylum seeker (Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights, 2016). The term has nothing to do with the fact that the person really fulfills the requirements of the refugee status or not. The only reason for calling a person an asylum seeker is that he/she applied for asylum. This means, not all asylum seekers get the refugee status, while all refugees were asylum seekers before. Furthermore, asylum seekers as well as refugees are both part of the bigger groups of migrants and immigrants. For a better understanding Table 1 summarizes the just described terms, starting with the most general one.

Table 1 Comparison of terms

Term	Definition
Migrant	A person who moves somewhere else
Immigrant	A person who moves to another country (permanently)
Asylum seeker	A person who has applied for asylum but whose application is not yet confirmed or denied
Refugee	A person who is outside his/her own country, unable/unwilling to put oneself under the protection of this country and fears of being persecuted because of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion

The German asylum law includes other statuses asylum seekers can receive as well (BAMF, 2015a). The various statuses have different consequences, e.g. temporary residence permits or deportation (BAMF, 2015a). Going more into detail here would be out of the scope of the theory chapter at hand. It is also not necessary because this research only includes people who applied for asylum and did not receive any kind of

status until now. Therefore just the term `asylum seeker` will be used in the following text.

2.2. Integration

Migration is a topic that is discussed a lot. Again, different terms are used interchanging, which sometimes mean the same or sometimes not (Gordon, 1964). To get some order in the chaos, I will give some definitions of often used terms as well as review two paradigms. I will start with defining acculturation and assimilation. Acculturation is a term that is often used interchangeable with assimilation, but they mean different things (Gordon, 1964). Acculturation, defined by Redfield, Linton, & Herskovits (1936), *comprehends those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups`*. In general, the term is neutral with the possibility of changes in both cultural groups, but it is often used to refer to the change in only one of the groups (Berry, 1997). The various definitions of assimilation can be summarized into the following statement: a group of people is being absorbed by the host or dominant group (Gordon, 1964; Williams Jr. & Ortega, 1990). It includes memories, attitudes, traditions, language, and loyalties (Gordon, 1964). In contrast to the term acculturation, the term assimilation only refers to changes in one group.

Assimilation is actually one strategy of acculturation proposed by Berry (1997). Besides assimilation, three other acculturation strategies exist, which can be applied by migrants. Opposite to assimilation is segregation, which means that a person or group only values its own culture and does not have any contact or interaction with the hosting culture (Berry, 1997; Esser, 2001). It can be a free choice or forced upon them by the hosting culture. The strategy of marginalization implies that the people neither have interest in their own culture nor in the new hosting culture (Berry, 1997; Esser, 2001).

Marginalization is always forced on people from outside through pressure to assimilate and/ or to segregate (Berry, 1997). Finally, the well-known and heavily discussed strategy of integration includes maintaining one's own culture, but at the same time interacting with the hosting society, too. Integration can only be achieved when both cultures acknowledge the right of the other group to live as they like (Berry, 1997). I am not going more into detail in the different definitions and models of acculturation, but I will briefly outline two paradigms about acculturation. According to Öztürk (2007), those two paradigms are the most important ones currently discussed in politics and research in Germany. One of them puts assimilation in the focus and sees it as most appropriate for migrants (Öztürk, 2007). The paradigm is going back to Robert E. Parker and Milton Gordon and was further developed by Hartmut Esser, a German researcher (Öztürk, 2007). They all see integration as a linear and gradual process that ends with the complete assimilation of the individuals into the social and cultural system of the hosting culture (Esser, 2001; Gordon, 1964; Öztürk, 2007). It demands from the migrants to completely leave behind their original culture and identity in favor of the culture and identity of the hosting culture (Öztürk, 2007; Williams Jr. & Ortega, 1990). The second

paradigm is the most favored one at the moment by politicians, researchers as well as by the civic society (Öztürk, 2007). It defines integration *‘as the ability to participate fully in economic, social, cultural, and political activities while maintaining one’s cultural identity, as well as a two-way process ‘by which settling persons become part of the social, institutional and cultural fabric of a society’* (Castles et al., 2002; Spaaij, 2012; Valtonen, 2004) . The proponents of the integration paradigm see integration as an interactive process in which the migrants and the hosting society are both involved and both have to adapt to each other (Berry, 1997; Öztürk, 2007). For them, the aim of integration is the equalization of migrants in the hosting society while they are able to maintain their own cultural heritage. Both paradigms, of course, criticize each other. Proponents of the assimilation theory claim that integration would just fosters the development of parallel societies, while the proponents of the integration paradigm accuse the others of ethnocentrism and xenophobia (Öztürk, 2007). Going more into detail in the critics and current debate about integration is out of the scope of the theory chapter. However, I will shortly outline what Öztürk (2007) defines as integration. For him, integration is a dynamic and continuous process in which all people, migrants and hosts, are involved. Integration requests from both groups to step up towards each other and to respect the differences of the other group. Furthermore, Öztürk (2007) proposes that a person is integrated into a new society when he/she acts according to the legal basic rights of the hosting country, is willing to be part of an intercultural exchange and dialog, as well as when he/she is interested and eager to take the available chances. Based on the discussion above, the thesis at hand sees integration in the light of Berry’s and Öztürk’s theories. As a dynamic, continuous, and two-way process, where everyone has to contribute to its success.

2.3. Need assessment theory

As the name need assessment already implies, the core of the assessment is a description of the needs of a certain group, but it also includes a to prioritization of them (Reviere, 2013). Besides that, it additionally consists of an evaluation of available services that might serve these needs. The final aim is to design or improve interventions to satisfy unmet needs (Hernandez-Plaza, Pozo, & Alonso-Morillejo, 2004; Reviere, 2013). A need assessment generally consists of three parts. First, the analysis of the needs and priorities, second the investigation of the available resources to meet them, and third the comparison of the needs and the resources (Hernandez-Plaza et al., 2004; Reviere, 2013). Different need assessment models can be found in the literature. I will use the need assessment model proposed by Hernandez-Plaza, Pozo, & Alonso-Morillejo (2004) because they developed and applied the model in a migration context. Figure 1 presents an overview of the different steps of their model. The model consists of the same steps as all need assessment models, namely the need analysis, the social resources analysis, and the comparison of the results of both of them.

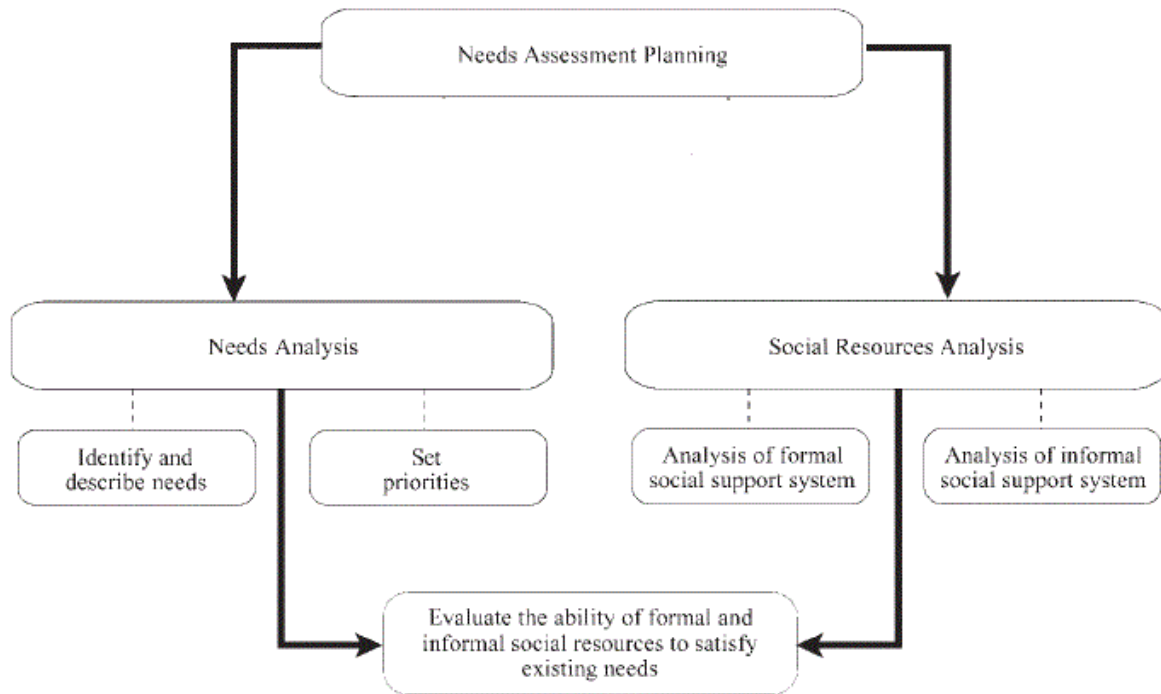


Figure 1 Need assessment model

The difference to other models is that Hernandez-Plaza et al. (2004) divided the social resource analysis into an evaluation of formal and informal social support. The definitions of the terms and reasons for the differentiation will be explained in a later paragraph.

Need analysis

A need analysis includes two steps. First, the identification and description of the needs of the target group. The second step is to prioritize the needs (see Figure 1) (Hernandez-Plaza et al., 2004). Most commonly a need is something that someone wants or desires (Monette, 1977). So a person in need is someone who falls short of a desirable standard. Reviere (2013) adds, that the gap 'is both acknowledged by community values and potentially amenable to change.' Tyler (1971) sees a need as a gap between a present situation and an acceptable norm. For McKillip (1987) a need also includes a value judgment about a group having a problem that is solvable. According to Leagans (1964), 'needs represent an imbalance, lack of adjustment, or gap between the present situation or status quo and a new or changed set of conditions assumed to be more desirable.' All these definitions have something in common, which is visualized in Figure 2 (Leagans, 1964). A need is a difference or gap between an actual situation (What is) and a desirable situation (What ought to be).

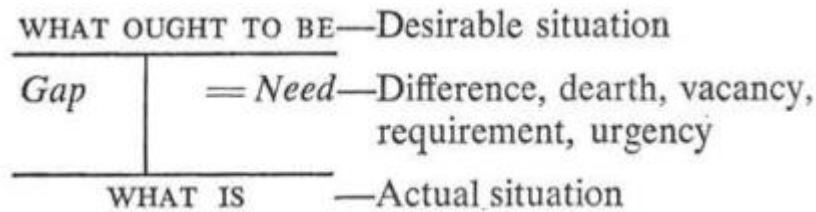


Figure 2 Definition of need

Often the word `want` is used as well. According to McKillip (1987) wants are `something people are willing to pay for`. Campbell (1998) states, the difference between `need` and `want` is, that `need` has to do with satisfaction and `want` is connected to pleasure. Furthermore, he claims that a need can be satisfied by a real thing. Wanting something, in contrast, includes a judgment of like or dislike about an object, which might be able to satisfy a need (Campbell, 1998). In other words, a need is a basic requirement, e.g. food and a want is a more specific requirement about what someone likes. People want different things, while their needs are the same. The focus in the research at hand will be the general needs of people and not the specific wants. Furthermore, a need is defined in here as the gap between `what is` and `what ought to be`.

Social Resource Analysis

The social resource analysis looks at the available social support for a specific target group. Social support is defined by Langford, Bowsher, Maloney, & Lillis (1997) `as the assistance and protection given to others, especially to individuals`. Social support can describe a supportive behavior that is enacted and/or `the perception that adequate support is available when needed` (Hynie, Crooks, & Barragan, 2011). It can have a tangible form, e.g. food or money, or an intangible form, e.g. trust or respect. Social support can be divided into three or sometimes four different categories according to which function the support has (Langford et al., 1997; Whittaker & Garbarino, 1983). The first category is emotional support, which includes giving love, trust, respect as well as a sense of belongingness and admiration. Instrumental support is the second category, which provides tangible support like goods or services (Langford et al., 1997). Compared to the emotional support, instrumental support offers concrete help. The third and fourth category are sometimes referred to as informational or appraisal or referral (Langford et al., 1997; Whittaker & Garbarino, 1983). Informational support is about providing information or `helping to define and understand problematic events` (Langford et al., 1997; Mels, Derluyn, & Broekaert, 2008). Different to that, appraisal support only includes giving information concerning the self-evaluation of individuals (Langford et al., 1997). Lastly, referral support is about the connection to formal helping systems and the assistance in finding other sources of support (Whittaker & Garbarino, 1983). In the thesis at hand, I will work with the categories of information and referral support as one category, but I will call it as information support.

Furthermore, social support can be divided into two other categories, namely formal and informal social support (Hernández-Plaza, Alonso-Morillejo, & Pozo-Muñoz, 2006). For a long time, need assessments only assessed formal support, but overlooked the importance of informal support (Hernandez-Plaza et al., 2004). Formal social support is given by institutions or organizations in terms of programs and services. The support is often offered by professionals (Hernández-Plaza et al., 2006). Opposite to that, informal social support is provided to the person in need by its own social network, composed of family, friends, neighbors, teachers, or other people from the community. (Whittaker & Garbarino, 1983). Formal social support is organized, there might be rules, a defined leading person, and regular meetings. In contrast, informal social support often occurs naturally and unorganized. The support can happen just ones or regularly (Hernandez-Plaza et al., 2004; Whittaker & Garbarino, 1983). Formal social support often has a one-way character, which means the professional is helping the person in need, but does not get anything back. Informal social support is based on reciprocity and equity, so mutual giving and taking (Whittaker & Garbarino, 1983). Table 2 gives an overview of the characteristics of formal and informal social support (Hernandez-Plaza et al., 2004; Whittaker & Garbarino, 1983).

Table 2 Characteristics of formal and informal social support

Formal social support	Informal social support
Institutions or organizations / often professionals	Individual social network (family, friends, neighbors, teachers, colleagues, priest.....)
Organized and planned	Unorganized and random / can occur naturally
Defined leading person	No leading person
Regular	Regular or once
One-way	Mutual giving and taking

Studies showed that people in need actually prefer informal social support over formal social support (Cowen, 1982; Hernandez-Plaza et al., 2004; Litwak, 1985). According to Hernandez-Plaza et al. (2004), informal social support services are, amongst other things, easier to access and less costly than formal social support services. Furthermore, formal social support services are less personalized and often bonded to bureaucratic processes, while informal social support services are based on trust and mutual understanding. This reduces the potential of stigmatization. Based on that, Hernandez-Plaza et al. (2004) developed a need assessment model that incorporated the analysis of informal support as well. In their need assessment model they propose to analyze the formal social support system and informal social support system separated from each other. Important for the formal social support system is to identify and describe available services, as well as investigate the 'level of knowledge and use of these programmes'. When analyzing the informal social support system, it is important to have a look at the social network structure and the support functions of the services (Hernandez-Plaza et al., 2004). For practical reasons, social support is used in the study at hand to refer to the social support system.

Evaluation

The final step of the need assessment is the comparison of the results from the need analysis and the social resource analysis. The main question is if the available formal and informal social support is able to satisfy the needs of the target group (Hernandez-Plaza et al., 2004). It includes the evaluation of the capacity of the social support services to meet the needs of the target group as well as the identification of the unmet needs. Furthermore, Hernandez-Plaza et al. (2004) propose several leading questions, which can be used in the analysis. Questions for the formal social support services are e.g. `Are they known and used by the target population? Are there programmes and services for each identified need? Are they effective to meet existing needs?` (Hernandez-Plaza et al., 2004). The questions for the analysis of the informal support are `Do individuals have social ties who may act as a source of support? Do they have the resources needed to meet their needs? Are available resources sufficient? Are they utilized? To what extent are needs being met by informal social support` (Hernandez-Plaza et al., 2004). The just mentioned question will be used as a guide to evaluate the collected data in the analysis chapter.

In the light of the above mentioned theoretical concepts and theories, I will present the current state of research in the next chapter. For that it is important to remember the following things. An asylum seeker is someone who applied for asylum and has another legal status than refugees and immigrants. A need is a gap between the current situation and a desired situation. Finally, the need assessment model used in the study at hand makes a difference between formal and informal social support services.

3. Literature review

With the just outlined theoretical background in mind, I will now take a closer look at the research that was already done with regard to the topic of this thesis. I included studies about refugees and immigrants as well, because of the lack of studies just about asylum seekers. First I will see what can be found in the literature about the needs of them. Second, I will describe the current state of research on the topic of social support for asylum seekers, refugees, or immigrants. I will also look at possible differences between urban and rural areas. Lastly, I will outline four different studies that assessed the needs of asylum seekers, refugees, or immigrants and compared them to the available social support services.

3.1. Needs of asylum seekers, refugees and immigrants

At first sight, a lot of research seems to be done about the needs of asylum seekers, refugees, and immigrants. However, if you take a closer look, most of the research is concerned with the health needs of immigrants (Burnett & Peel, 2001; Harris & Telfer, 2007; Kisely, Stevens, Hart, & Douglas, 2002). Frequently, mental health needs of

asylum seekers and refugees were explored (Gerritsen et al., 2006; Misra, Connolly, & Majeed, 2006; Strijk, van Meijel, & Gamel, 2011; Tribe, 2005). Besides that, other areas of needs that were explored are e.g. housing, work, education and language skills (Bloch, 1996; Sumberg, Thompson, & Woodhouse, 2012; Ward, 2002). However, all these studies just focused on one area of needs. Furthermore, the needs were often not defined by the immigrants itself, but by experts or social service providers. Many studies additionally investigated why asylum seekers, refugees and immigrants do not use available formal social support services (Hernandez-Plaza et al., 2004; Strug & Mason, 2001; Walsh & Krieg, 2007; Waxman, 1998). The main barriers they found are lack of knowledge, limited language skills, limited accessibility, no right to use services and discriminatory experiences. Nearly no studies looked at the overall needs of immigrants. Two researchers who did it are Strug & Mason (2001). They explored the needs of Hispanic immigrants in New York. Their aims were to explore the needs of the Hispanic immigrants, to analyze access barriers to social services as well as investigate what role social workers can play in helping the immigrants to overcome these barriers. The interviews with Hispanic immigrants and service providers showed that the most important needs of the immigrants were health care, housing, jobs, public transport, and sanitation as well as education and literacy. The barriers to accessing the service were a lack of coordination between the services, a lack of information on the side of the immigrants, language problems, and discriminating experiences with the services or service providers. Strug & Mason (2001) concluded that in order to increase the use of social services by immigrants, social workers are needed. Likewise, another research was conducted in Cairo, Egypt (Briant & Kennedy, 2004). The sponsor of the study was a church-based ministry, which offered services to refugees from different neighboring countries who live in Cairo. The aim of the research was `to assess the needs of the [refugee] community and their priorities`. It turned out that the most important needs of the refugees there were medical services, help with the UNHCR cases, food, shelter, education for children and adults, as well as English language classes (Briant & Kennedy, 2004).

3.2. Social support for asylum seekers, refugees and immigrants

When you search for literature about social support for asylum seekers, refugees or immigrants, you will find similar topics as for the needs. The research concentrates a lot on health support services provided by professionals. So on formal social support. Some studies explored the sources of support, which also included informal social support (Barnes & Aguilar, 2007; Hynie et al., 2011; Ryan, Sales, Tilki, & Siara, 2008; Williams, 2006). Representative for them, I will briefly outline two different studies. The first one dealt with the `community social support for Cuban refugees in Texas` (Barnes & Aguilar, 2007). They found out that other Cuban refugees were the most important source of emotional and instrumental support. Locals were the second most important source of emotional and sometimes also of instrumental support. The group of locals included neighbors, workmates, volunteers from the resettlement agencies, or other

people from the communities. NGO`s and government agencies were a source of support for some of them, too (Barnes & Aguilar, 2007). Another study, which was conducted in Canada with women, found similar patterns (Hynie et al., 2011). Sources of support for the women were family, both in the country of origin and in Canada, friendship networks, close friendships, and the community. However, the social contacts of the women were nearly exclusively co-ethnic contacts. Likewise, the few women who used formal support services preferred co-ethnic staff or, at least, staff with a migration background. All of the women`s sources were able to provide emotional, instrumental or information support. Altogether, the current state of research shows, that the sources of support for asylum seekers, refugees, and immigrants are other co-ethnics e.g. family and friends in the home country as well as in the host country, locals from the host country as well as formal support providers. Additionally, all studies mention that the formal social support is mostly offered by government agencies, medical facilities, as well as NGO`s (Barnes & Aguilar, 2007; Hynie et al., 2011). However, both studies above as well as the others indicate that informal support from people who have a similar background or come from the same country is very important and much more used by the asylum seekers, refugees or immigrants than the other sources. According to Simich, Beiser, & Mawani (2003), *`seeking support from people from the same background or country of origin who have gone through similar experiences with migrating and resettling is especially helpful because they have the same points of reference and likely have faced similar experiences and challenges with adjusting.`*

Looking at the formal support offered for the asylum seekers, also not much data is available. Mainly the formal support is concerned with the counselling, health care, language and material support. In Aumüller & Bretl`s (2008) report in which they describe the local integration of refugees in four different cities, the providers of this services were on the one hand the government that is only concerned with the basic services like housing. On the other hand, a lot of non-governmental organizations and institutions were involved in the service provision for asylum seekers. That were big and small NGO`s as well as other forms of groups, e.g. initiatives without fixed memberships. They either targeted at special topics or offered general counselling to the asylum seekers. Aumüller & Bretl (2008) also gave an overview about the social support providers. They are the same as mentioned above. Furthermore, you can see a trend in the organization, amount and kind of support providers from bigger (around 3.1 million inhabitants) to smaller cities (around 36.000 inhabitants) (Aumüller & Bretl, 2008). In the big cities they found a broad range of service providers like big and small NGO`s, associations and clubs, private initiatives as well as migration organizations. The last ones were set up by people with migration background and often aimed at a specific group from a certain country or region. The different service providers worked to some degree together, but because the amount of them was very high, networking between all of them was not possible (Aumüller & Bretl, 2008). Also mapping all available services was not possible. Due to the fact that most of social support providers are official NGO`s, they can apply for public funding. The problem is, according to Aumüller & Bretl (2008), that the funding was often only available for a certain period of time, so the work of the

social support provides in big cities was mostly project-oriented. The smaller the cities became, the smaller also the amount of service providers as well as the amount and diversity of services became. Furthermore, the smaller the city was, the less professionals were involved in the service provision but the number of volunteers increased. Aumüller & Bretl's (2008) report also indicated that the different service providers knew each other and the networking between them was very good. Setting up joint services was easier there and also less project-oriented. Also the focus of what was offered, moved from very specific topics, which aim at a big group of people in big cities, working with individuals and serving their specific needs in smaller cities (Aumüller & Bretl, 2008). Another trend, which emerged in their descriptions was that in smaller cities the contact to the municipalities and politicians is better. They also take over some organizational tasks, while it happens less in bigger cities. The direct involvement of religious communities in the support provision was also higher in smaller cities (Aumüller & Bretl, 2008). However, this counts only for the Christian communities. Muslim or Jewish communities were only active in the bigger cities in form of formal immigrant organizations. In the bigger cities more formal support services were available but only a few informal support services. Informal contact between refugees and locals was not happening that much. In contrast, in the smallest cities examined in the report, most support was based on informal contact. All in all, Aumüller & Bretl's (2008) report illustrated a general trend from more general and diverse services provided by a lot of different service providers in bigger cities to more individualized services offered by a small amount of service providers in less bigger cities.

3.3. Needs satisfaction by social support

As the other chapters show, some research was done in different areas of needs of asylum seekers and social support services to meet their needs. Surprisingly, not a lot of research was done about the needs of asylum seekers in general. Even fewer studies compared them with the available social support service like the thesis at hand does it. Some literature dealt with it but they are vague or do not include informal support services. An example is Waxman's (1998) study about the 'Service Provision and the Needs of Newly Arrived Refugees in Sydney'. He proposed to answer the question if the available services are adequate and if they meet the needs of the refugees. However, he only asked social service provider about the needs of newly arrived refugees. Also, his research only included formal social support services. However, the study just examined why they are not used much by the asylum seekers. A comparison, if the social support services are really needed, was not conducted. The author finally concluded that in order to meet the needs of the refugees it is necessary for the government, NGO's and representatives of the refugees to work together. So it does not really give an answer to the question it proposed to answer. Another research, which took asylum seekers, refugees and immigrants into account, was conducted in Ireland (Ní Shé, Lodge, & Adshead, 2007). It described a group of asylum seekers, refugees and immigrants, who live in County Clare, and their needs. The study described the

available formal service provision as well as experiences with and access to services. Ní Shé et al. (2007) concluded the study with practical recommendations for meeting the needs of asylum seekers, refugees, and immigrants in the topics of health, work, accommodation, education, language and social integration.

In 2015, a group of researchers examined the needs of asylum seekers and the available social support services in Saxony, Germany (Berger et al., 2015). The research question of the study was what the needs of the asylum seekers are and to what extent they are met by the available services in rural and urban areas. Berger et al. (2015) did structured interviews with asylum seekers from rural and urban areas. The interviews showed that the asylum seekers have, on the one hand, the same basic needs everyone has, like safety and security, social contacts, work, and leisure time. On the other hand, they also found the need for learning the language, free mobility, free choice of place of residence, as well as human rights and legal equalization. In addition to the interviews, they prepared a list of all services that the asylum seekers can use. They also only focused on the formal social services and did not consider the informal network of the asylum seekers. The researchers as well analyzed barriers to the utilization of formal services. The barriers they identified were a lack of information, language problems, and also the special legal situation of the asylum seekers. The study concluded that theoretically all needs of the refugees can be covered by the available services. That counted for the urban area as well as for the rural area, although in rural area less services were available. Moreover, they found out that all services met at least one need. Finally, Berger et al. (2015) emphasized that the needs of asylum could be met, but that especially the asylum law prohibits the satisfaction of some needs.

Finally, I want to outline the research on which the need assessment model of this study is based on. Hernandez-Plaza et al. (2004) made a need assessment of Moroccan immigrants in Almeria, Spain. They assessed the needs and problems of Moroccan immigrants and analyzed available formal and informal social support. Hernandez-Plaza et al. (2004) found out that the most important issues for the immigrants in Almeria are the housing situation, working conditions as well as their legal situation. Many interviewed immigrants were actually illegal in Spain, which caused some of the other problems they had. The analysis of the formal and informal social support services demonstrated that the Moroccan immigrants prefer to use their informal social network to solve problems, instead of approaching formal social support services. Barriers to the utilization of the formal services were accessibility problems (transport and time), language problems and unstable legal situation. Hernandez-Plaza et al. (2004) proposed that it is important to use both, formal and informal support, when planning social interventions for immigrants. Furthermore, they suggested, that the need assessment model proposed by them will need further testing to find out if it is efficient.

As shown above, the literature can partly provide answers to the questions I proposed in the introduction chapter. Needs of asylum seekers are, according to the literature, connected to the topic of health, housing, working and education (including language

skills). Nevertheless, the examples above do not fully agree with each other. Especially, the prioritization of the needs is different. A reason for this might be the different environments where the studies were conducted. Studies on social support for asylum seekers, refugees and immigrants show that they prefer informal and co-ethnic sources of support. Lastly, the search for studies about need satisfaction did not provide many insights. Just one similar case indicated a theoretical satisfaction of the needs of asylum seekers in refugees.

4. Methodology and methods

Having introduced the current state of research in the last chapter, I will now present the practical implementation of the study at hand. First I will explain the methodology that I used. This will be followed by a description of the study area, the data collection and the sample. After that, I will go more into detail into how I analyzed the data and will outline the changes that were carried out on the original data collection plan. The chapter will end with some ethical considerations concerning the implementation of the data collection.

Methodology

The research was performed in a qualitative way. The reasons for the decision were firstly, a personal preference for the approach and secondly, the aim of the study. The aim was not to give an answer to the research questions that can be generalized for a bigger population. It was an exploratory investigation and just aimed at describing and analyzing a specific case. As I explained in the problem statement, no research was done in rural areas so far, so the thesis at hand will only provide some first insights into what happens there. This might lead to a hypothesis, which needs further testing to be approved. Furthermore, I wanted to explore the topic from the point of view of the target group, namely the asylum seekers. Qualitative methods were more appropriate for doing this than quantitative methods. Therefore, I chose to use an ethnographic approach. It was very suitable because it gave me the opportunity to explore the topic of needs and need satisfaction from an insider as well as outsider perspective. In other words, from the perspective of the asylum seekers as well as social support provider. Moreover, I was able to incorporate the different views to get a holistic picture of the whole case. Using an ethnographic approach made it possible to triangulate the data collected through the different methods.

Study area and characteristics

The study took place in the area of the Verbandsgemeinde (VG) Wörrstadt (see Appendix 1 for map). Verbandsgemeinde means an association of different villages and towns under one municipality. The VG Wörrstadt is an association of 12 villages and one town. In total around 29.000 people live there. It is in the province of Rhineland-Palatine, which is in the west of Germany. The area is called Rheinhessen and it is a famous wine region. The VG Wörrstadt is near Mainz (Rhein) and the Rhein-Main Airport. The local

municipality is situated in Wörrstadt. The local authority that is in charge of the VG Wörrstadt is in Alzey. Both, the local authorities in Alzey and the municipality in Wörrstadt, have different responsibilities concerning the asylum seekers, which will be explained more in detail later in the chapter. Around 350 asylum seekers lived in the villages of the VG in the end of 2015. They were placed in seven of the villages as well as in Wörrstadt. The most asylum seekers were in Wörrstadt and in Saulheim. The housing of the asylum seekers is decentralized, they live in flats and houses all around the villages. The number of people in one accommodation ranges from 4 – 15 asylum seekers. Most of the families live alone in small flats. The rest of the asylum seekers mostly live together with other asylum seekers from their home countries. The majority of them are men. Most of the female asylum seekers came together with their husbands and live together with them in a room or have their own flat. Besides couples, men and women are situated separately. Underage asylum seekers in the VG Wörrstadt always live together with their parents or other relatives. No unaccompanied underage asylum seekers are accommodated in the VG Wörrstadt. Most asylum seekers come from Syria, Somalia or Eritrea, but some are also from Balkan states like Bosnia, Macedonia as well as from Armenia a former State of the UdSSR. Among them are Christians, Muslims and people without any religion.

Wörrstadt is the only official town in the VG Wörrstadt as well as the biggest community with around 7700 inhabitants. The municipality of the VG is situated there. Besides a police station and several doctors, it has some smaller shops and bigger supermarkets. Wörrstadt has in total four schools, one primary school, three secondary schools, as well as four kindergartens. Part of Wörrstadt is also an industrial area with small and middle-size companies. It also has a train station. The trains go to Alzey and to Mainz. Around 80 asylum seekers lived in Wörrstadt in the end of 2015. Most of them are from Syria, but some come from Armenia or Kosovo, too. Besides some families, most of the asylum seekers in Wörrstadt are male and unmated. They are placed in several accommodations distributed over the whole town.

Saulheim is the second biggest village in the VG Wörrstadt after Wörrstadt. It has around 7300 inhabitants and is in the north of the VG Wörrstadt. The distance between Saulheim and Wörrstadt are just around 1,5 km. The village has several doctors, shops and restaurants as well as bigger supermarkets and an industrial area with some companies. It has several kindergartens and a primary school as well as a train station. Trains are going to Wörrstadt and to the next two bigger towns of Alzey and Mainz. Several bus lines are going to the neighboring villages. Given that Saulheim is the second biggest village in the VG more asylum seekers live there than in the other villages. At the beginning of 2016 around 80 asylum seekers were placed there, e.g. from Somalia and Syria. They live in different flats and houses, which are distributed across the whole village.

Partenheim is three times smaller than Saulheim and Wörrstadt and is in the north of the VG Wörrstadt. It is 8 km away from Wörrstadt and has around 1500 inhabitants. The village has, among other institutions, a kindergarten, a primary school, a doctor, a

dentist and a small grocery store. The village has two bus stations. The buses go to Mainz and Sprendlingen and during school times buses are going to Wörrstadt, Nieder-Olm, and Ingelheim. According to two of the leading volunteers in the Flüchtlingsinitiative Partenheim, at the end of 2015 32 asylum seekers lived in Partenheim. They are from Eritrea, Syria, Iran, Bosnia, Russia and Georgia. Amongst them are two families and three single parent men with in total 14 children.

Schornsheim is in the west of the VG Wörrstadt and has around 1500 inhabitants. The distant to Wörrstadt is 5,5 km. Like Partenheim, it also has its own kindergarten, a primary school, a doctor as well as some small shops, a bakery and a butcher. A bus is going from Schornsheim to the train station in Saulheim. The number of asylum seekers changes a lot there, but at the time when I did my research in Schornsheim the German teacher told me that 20 asylum seekers live there at that moment. Four women and 16 men. The asylum seekers in Schornsheim are from Somalia, Eritrea, Syria and Algeria. They live in four different places in Schornsheim. One house is just for women and the other three places are only for men.

Wallertheim, Armsheim, Spiesheim, and Vendersheim are four other villages that are part of the VG Wörrstadt. They have between 580 (Vendersheim) and 2500 (Armsheim) inhabitants. The two bigger villages, Armsheim and Wallertheim have similar infrastructure as Saulheim and Wörrstadt, while the other two villages are comparable to Partenheim and Schornsheim. Asylum seekers lived in all four villages, but less than in the other communities I described above. One family lived in Vendersheim. Some asylum seekers from the Balkan states lived in a house in Wallertheim. At the end of the data collection phase, some Syrian asylum seekers moved to Wallertheim, too. In Armsheim is a children`s home for underage unaccompanied asylum seekers. However, the children home was not part of this research. Besides that, during the time period of the study, some adult asylum seekers moved to Armsheim and mid-October the first asylum seekers moved to Spiesheim.

Data Collection

The data collection consisted of three different parts, which took place partly simultaneously and partly after each other. The three parts were participant observations, semi-structured in-depth interviews, and document analysis. The three different methods were chosen because they made it possible to explore the topic from different points of views. Furthermore, the mix of the methods allowed the triangulation of the data.

I started with participant observation, which included participating in the activities of the social support providers. First I attended a planning meeting, where I got to know the main stakeholder. At the meeting, I informed the participants about the purpose of my research. Besides that, I also asked the municipality of the VG Wörrstadt for permission to conduct this study, which I got. Through the participation in the planning meeting I got involved into some social support activities. I actively joined two support projects for the asylum seekers on a regular base. In particular, I helped out in the *Café Willkommen*

project and the *Kleiderkammer*, which I will describe in chapter 5.2. Additionally, I visited German classes and other events, which were organized for the asylum seekers. In addition, I spent two days with the employees of the municipality of the VG Wörrstadt who are responsible for the asylum seekers in order to gain an impression of their tasks. During the participant observation I did small, informal interviews with the social support providers. The findings of the participant observations were recorded in the form of field notes. The participant observation gave me the opportunity to experience the point of view a social service provider by myself. Thereby I got in touch with possible interview partners. Taking part in different projects also had the advantage that I heard about other social support services. The fact that most of the social support provider knew that I conducted a study, helped a lot as well. They always kept me informed about what was going on.

The second part of the data collection were semi-structured in-depth interviews. I did interviews with people who offered social support for asylum seekers as well as with asylum seekers. I met them during the participant observations and asked them if they would agree to do an interview with me. Everyone agreed and we set an appointment. Before I started the interviews, I explained the purpose of the interview and I assured confidentiality and anonymity. I asked for permission to record the interviews. The interviews with the social support provider were all conducted in German, while the interviews with the asylum seekers were held either in English or in German depending on the skills and wishes of the interviewees. I prepared interview guides for the different stakeholder groups in advance (see Appendix 2). The interview guides served as a guideline for the interviews, but were adapted depending on the answers of the interviewees and the situation. The interview guide for the social support providers included questions about the social support they give, like aim, target group, the organization of the support, and utilization by the asylum seekers. Moreover, I wanted to know what their views on the situation of the asylum seekers are and what they think asylum seekers need. The interview guide was designed by myself, both based on my own opinion about what is important to know about the available social support and on the leading questions proposed by Hernandez-Plaza et al. (2004) in their need assessment model (see 2.3). The questions I asked the asylum seekers were mostly aimed at finding out what their needs are. Based on findings from the literature, I included the topics of housing, formal support services, social contacts and leisure activities as well as language, education and working. I formulated the questions similar to the questions Berger et al. (2015) used in their research on needs of asylum seekers because this study was also conducted in Germany and thus the context is the same as in this thesis. I rearranged their questions for my purpose, because they conducted structured interviews, while I did semi-structured interviews. Based on the proposed analysis by Hernandez-Plaza et al. (2004), I added questions about informal support, which Berger et al. (2015) did not include in their assessment. Additionally, I asked the asylum seekers to prioritize their needs as well as what they think newly arrived asylum seekers need. Besides that, I wanted to know which social support services they use

and what they think about the services. The latter information was used to triangulate the data I obtained through the interviews with the social support providers.

The third part of the data collection was the analysis of different types of documents I got access to during the data collection phase. The documents can be grouped into two different groups. One group were documents that are accessible for everyone, like newspaper articles from two regional newspapers as well as Flyer about events. The second group of documents was only accessible for the social support providers in the area of study. These documents included internal newsletters, E-mails, protocols of meetings as well as information from an internal internet platform. Again the information were used to triangulate the already obtained data and to complement it.

Study sample

The study sample included two different groups of stakeholders. One was the group of asylum seekers and the other one were the people who offer social support (formal and informal) to the asylum seekers. Both groups of stakeholders lived in the area of the VG Wörrstadt. First, I conducted in total eight interviews with social support providers, who offered formal as well as informal support. One of the interviews was done with two persons together. The interviewees were involved in different services and some were actually active in different areas of support. Two of them were German teachers, four were active in projects aiming at asylum seekers and five support asylum seekers on an individual level. The interviewees were all from different villages, which gave me a good impression what happened in the different places. Smaller interviews were conducted with the employees of the municipality of the VG Wörrstadt while I accompanied them for two days. Besides that, I talked to many volunteers informally during events and projects. The decision whom I wanted to interview was mainly based on my own evaluation of the key social support providers for the asylum seekers in the area of study. As I stated above, I visited the planning meetings of the Flüchtlingshilfe VG Wörrstadt. Based on these meetings I first interviewed people that were, in my opinion, leading persons of either special projects or local groups from the villages. I did that in order to get a first overview of the social support that was offered. I also asked these people to recommend other possible interview partners, which fitted with my own ideas quite well. So besides my own intuition, I used the snowball sampling method to find interview partners. In my opinion, the eight interviews covered all the activities quite well. More interviews would not have led to more or different information because they already covered similar and repeating topics.

The second group of people I talked to were the asylum seekers. I did interviews with eight asylum seekers. One Interview was done with two people at the same time. Three of the interviewees were female and five were male. They youngest was 17 years old and the oldest around 40 years old. They were in Germany between 3 weeks and 18 months. Three interviewees were Syrians, two were Eritreans and one asylum seeker was from Somalis, one from Bosnia and another one from Armenia. The decision about who to interview was random. Some of the asylum seekers I got to know through my observations, to others I got contact through social support providers. Although I chose

the asylum seekers randomly, I tried to interview people with different characteristics that represented a certain group within the target group in order to get a representative cross sample of them. I interviewed more men, but that's also the bigger group of asylum seekers. I included unmated asylum seekers as well as people who have a family either in Germany or elsewhere. The countries of origin of the interviewees represented the general trend in the area of the VG Wörrstadt quite well. The biggest group, in general, is from Syria, followed by Eritrea and Somalia. The smallest group are the people from the east of Europe. The last group has other reasons for leaving. By interviewing two of them, I covered that as well.

Additionally, I interviewed one person who actually provided insights from both perspectives. He was not only a social support provider but likewise a former asylum seeker. So he has a unique perspective on the topic of needs and need satisfaction.

Data Analysis

All semi-structured interviews were recorded. The English interviews were transcribed literally, whereas the German interviews were only summarized and directly translated into English. After that, I divided the collected data into two groups. Firstly, the data about the available social support services and secondly, the data about the situations and needs of the asylum seekers. Initially, the information about the social support services were coded according to where they take place. While doing it, repeating topics emerged from the raw data. These topics were individual support, language, education and working as well as events and leisure activities. Social support services that not fitted into the categories were summarized under other services. These topics were used to classify and summarize the different social support services. As sub-codes still the different places were used. These codes were used to code the interview transcripts of the social support providers and asylum seekers, as well as for field notes. The information about the needs of the asylum seekers were coded according to the topics of the interview guide. The topics were housing, formal support services, social contacts and leisure activities as well as language, education, and working. Two other codes I used were priorities of needs and needs of newly arrived asylum seekers. Again, I coded all interviews and the field notes according to the coding scheme. Information acquired through the document review were in general only used occasionally to verify information or when no other sources were available. The codes described here are used to present the data in chapter 5. The coded data was finally analyzed in the way Hernandez-Plaza et al. (2004) proposed it in their model, which I described in chapter 2.3.

Changes

During the data collection phase, some changes of the original data collection plan were made. After the initial participant observation phase, I decided to not do focus group interviews with the asylum seekers. It had practical as well as content reasons. Initially, I thought it would be possible to do a focus group interview in each village. After some time, I recognized that it is not possible to get all of them together at the same time

because they have appointments or German classes. It was already a challenge to make individual appointments for interviews. Another problem was the language. Fewer asylum seekers than I expected spoke German or English. I did not find anyone who would have been able to translate for me in the focus group interviews. The last reason, why I decided to not do focus group interviews, was that I was worried that cultural differences could hamper the honesty of the asylum seekers. So I decided to focus on the in-depth interviews with individual asylum seekers. Additionally, I decided to include documents in my analysis of the social support services. It offered me the opportunity to triangulate the data I obtained through the other methods.

Furthermore, I did not do any interviews with religious or political representatives, as planned in advance. During the data collection phase, I decided to concentrate my research on the people who are directly in contact with the asylum seekers and on their opinions. I was more interested in what is really happening on the ground than in political opinions, which is without doubt interesting. However, it was not the aim of this thesis, so I decided to concentrate on the interviews with the direct social service providers and asylum seekers.

Finally, I extended the data collection period for two more weeks. The reason for that was, that I still needed to conduct some interviews with the asylum seekers. The extra time was needed because the initial phase of participant observation and the interviews with the social service providers took more time than expected. Especially, the social support providers were often very busy. Also arranging the interviews with the asylum seekers was more complicated than expected. Some of the contacts to the asylum seekers came from the local volunteers. So I talked to them and they talked to the asylum seekers and arranged appointments for me. Altogether, the extra time was worth it. I was able to get more insights from the asylum seekers and could explore the available social support services more in detail.

Ethical issues

The study at hand complies with the ethics code of Wageningen University. The permission to conduct it was given by the municipality of the VG Wörrstadt. Furthermore, I introduced the purpose of my research at the planning meetings of the social support providers. During the participant observation, I also introduced myself and explained the purpose of my visit. Nevertheless, some observed people might have forgotten over time what I was doing while they were together with me. Once in a while, I remembered them. I tried to inform the asylum seekers about the topic of the research, too, but it was not always possible. Partly because of language barriers, partly because during the course of events or projects it was sometimes not possible to explain everything to everybody in detail. The aim of the participant observation was primary to get to know the social support services and get insights into what extent they are used by the asylum seekers. So I did not collect any personal data from the asylum seekers. I only used the obtained data for the triangulation with the data I got through the interviews.

Furthermore, I did not use any specific situations from the participant observation unless I was sure that the observed people were informed about the research. Additionally, the

interviews were only conducted and recorded with the approval of the interviewees. During the data analysis phase, I checked back with some key social service providers, if the presented data about their services is right. They all agreed on it. I guaranteed all participants privacy of their data. I promised anonymity, which I put into practice by changing the names of the involved people. All the names used here are fake names. Only I know which fake names corresponds to the real names. However, for people who are from the area of study, it might be possible to identify individual people. Besides that, I will not use the collected data for any other purpose than writing the thesis at hand. The raw data will only stay with me, which I promised the interviewees. During the participant observations and the interviews, I told the people, if they do not want that I use something for my research, they should please tell me. Furthermore, no one was harmed during the data collection. I did not include sensitive questions, e.g. why the asylum seekers left their home countries or about their journey. It was not the scope of the study at hand and was therefore not asked. Based on the promised privacy, no harm is expected through the publication of the data. No exploitation of the stakeholders took place. I already gave something back to them through my involvement in the projects. Additionally, I will make my results available in an adequate way to the social service providers, besides the possibility that they can read the thesis.

5. Data

After introducing the methodology and methods in the last chapter, I will now present the collected data. I will first outline the results of the need analysis, which includes the identification and description of the needs as well as the prioritization from the perspective of the asylum seekers. That will be followed by the social resource analysis, where I describe the social support services that are available for the asylum seekers. The last chapter will outline the perspectives of the social support providers on the situations and needs of the asylum seekers. The data will be presented according to the coding scheme, which was used to code the data (see chapter **Fehler! Verweisquelle konnte nicht gefunden werden.**). Therefore the chapter does not present the data in an objective way, but already in a pre-analyzed state.

5.1. Perspectives of asylum seekers

What are the needs of asylum seekers? This is one of the sub-research questions of the study at hand. As I explained in chapter 2.3, a need is a gap between 'what is' and 'what ought to be'. In the literature, the gap is often defined by the social support providers. So from an outsider perspective. In the following chapter, I will first investigate the gap from the point of view of the asylum seekers. So from an insider perspective. In detail, I will outline the perspectives of the asylum seekers on their current situations and investigate their needs. This sub-chapter will deal with the topics of living and daily life, official institutions and organizations, language, education and working, as well as social

contacts and leisure activities. I will conclude it with an overview about the needs of the asylum seekers.

5.1.1. Living and Daily life

First, I will describe the needs of the asylum seekers connected to the topic of living and daily life. Whereas most asylum seekers are satisfied with the housing for the moment, mobility is an issue for most of them, especially for the ones living in the smaller communities.

From an interview with a male asylum seeker

Do you like how you live here? Or is there anything you do not like? - Its good, but it is a little bit far to the train station and to the supermarkets.

Also you room? You do not need anything? - No, everything is fine.

Are there any problems in the flat here? - No, just we live here with 13 people, so it is a little bit small.

When you have a problem or a questions who do you ask for help? – Mr. Meier always help us. Always when we have a problem with an appointment at the doctor or the social department. We always go together. That is very good. And when we get a letter he translates it from German to English and then into Arabic. That's very good.

(male asylum seeker from Syria, between 20-30 years old, unmated, Electrician, in Germany since 8 month, Wörrstadt)

The above excerpt of an interview is about the living situation of an asylum seeker. He is satisfied with his living situation at the moment and does not need anything. Later in the interview, he admits that he indeed would like to move to another flat, but he says that for the moment it is fine for him. The only things he complains about are the distance to the train station and supermarkets as well as that around 13 people have to share one flat. On the question who he asks for help when he has a problem or a question, he answers that a local man comes to his accomodation several times a week and he helps him every time he needs it. Not all asylum seekers are satisfied with their living situation like the man from the above excerpt. The following excerpt of an interview with a female asylum seeker illustrates that.

From an interview with a female asylum seeker

How do you like it here? - In reality, no but we ... everything takes time to arrange it. Everything is not good .We are fare away from market, fare away from Wörrstadt. We

cannot talk to Mr. Wagner. if we need something. That's the problem but we will be patient.

So you want to ask him if you can move somewhere else? - Yeah, if he can move to another family house or something house for having that. Even this, you see, this is broken (*the bed*). This is kaputt (*German for broken*). About all of that we need to talk about with Mr. Wagner, but we cannot go to Wörrstadt, it is so far away. Maybe boys got with the cycle but what about girls. It is a problem.

So the transport is also a problem? - Yeah

And for shopping. Are you doing shopping here? - Shopping is fine in the next villages. And the shop does not have full things. Yeah, it has some necessary things, but does not have full things. But last time we went in Wörrstadt. We bought everything from Wörrstadt and come here back with the car.

What do you do when you have a problem? Who do you ask? - Those people (*points to Mrs. Kuhn, a volunteer who joined the interview*). They are coming. The people are nice. They are coming and what you want. If we need something we can tell them but they can't do about our house. You see, it doesn't have anything this house. They give us this and even this. Everything, but they can't change the house. This is for Mr. Wagner, I think, his work, Mr. Wagner. And we go to Mr. Wagner but didn't find him. We can't find him.

(female asylum seeker from Eritrea, between 20-25 years old, came to Germany with her boyfriend, student, in Germany since 6 weeks, Partenheim)

In contrast to the man from the first interview, the woman is not really happy with her living situation. Her bed is broken and she only has a table and a small cupboard, which she uses together with her boyfriend. She also complains that there is no supermarket in the village she lives in. Going to Wörrstadt by public transport is very complicated for her, she said. She would like to move to another flat. Not necessary to a bigger city, but a place where the public transport is better. Besides her dissatisfaction with the living situation, she appreciates very much the support she gets from the local people. She got some furniture and clothes and can ask them every time she needs help or something else. All that makes the situation more bearable for her, she told me.

Most asylum seekers mentioned that they are fine with their accommodations, at least for the moment. They all know that it could be worse and are happy that they have a room for themselves and do not have to share it. They are all aware of the current situation in Germany, so they say they will be patient and wait until they get their residence permit. After that, they all want to move to another place. A problem for most of them is the public transport. Especially the asylum seekers who live in the smaller villages often depend on locals that take them with the car. The buses go rarely or in the wrong directions. Besides that, the tickets are also not cheap. The asylum seekers who

live in Saulheim and Wörrstadt are fine with the public transport because both towns have a train station. They told me that it is easy for them to go to Alzey or other places.

Nearly all asylum seekers I spoke to, know one to two locals who they can ask for help. Often these locals pass by at the accommodations regular. All asylum seekers appreciate that and use the opportunity to ask them for help frequently. The topics they seek help for ranged from daily live things, administration and legal affairs to health issues. Only one asylum seeker, who just moved to Wörrstadt, did not know anyone he could ask for support there. Yet he lived in another villages before and still had contact with locals from there.

The topic of health seems to be an issue for some of the asylum seekers. However, most of the interviewees only needed basic medical treatment e.g. vaccinations, dental treatments or flu medicine. They were all satisfied with the treatment and had no major problems. Fetching the health insurance certificate at the authorities in Alzey is also no problem. Most of the asylum seekers who have to go to the doctor ask their local contact persons for help, e.g. where the doctor is or if they can accompany them, at least for the first time. Only a few need more than the basic medical treatment. They have to go to e.g. to Mainz for that, but it is, according to them not really a problem and feasible.

In general, the interviews show that the asylum seekers are fine with their current living situation. However, that is also based on the fact that they know, that their situation could be worse. Nearly all of them want to move somewhere else later after they got their residence permits. They all get along well in daily life because they know one or two locals, who they can ask for help when they need something. It seems from the interviews that the asylum seekers are also satisfied with the medical treatment they get.

5.1.2. Official institutions and organizations

In the last chapter, I explained that most asylum seekers have a local contact person they ask when they have a problem. The examples in the following chapter will show that most asylum seekers actually know official institutions and organizations as well. Nevertheless, nearly all interviewed asylum seekers prefer to approach their local contact persons instead. In the following situation, a female asylum seeker explains the reason for that.

I ask Mrs. Hodzic if she contacts other people for help besides Mrs. Kuhn or any official institutions. She negates it. `What is with Mr. Wagner.?' Mrs. Kuhn interrupts us. `Ohh, yes Mr. Wagner.` Mrs. Hodzic continues, `When we came here, I tried to get along with Mr. Wagner alone but it was not possible. I always fight with Mr. Wagner. That's the truth.` Mrs. Kuhn adds that she is coming along quite well with Mr. Wagner, so she always talks to him when Mrs. Hodzic needs something. Mrs. Hodzic tells me that she also tried to solve problems alone before but often it was not successful. `But when a German person calls them then everything is fine and works out. I do not know why.` , she adds a little bit frustrated.

Mrs. Hodzic is an asylum seeker from Bosnia and in Germany already for around 18 months. She came with her four children and husband to Germany. The example above shows that she knows official institutions or persons, in this case, Mr. Wagner. He is the responsible employee of the municipality who is in charge of the asylum seekers. Although the woman sometimes needs something from him, she does not contact him directly. In the beginning, she did it by herself but made the experiences that it was very difficult for her. When she needs something now from him, she only asks her local contact person, who is solving the issues for her with Mr. Wagner. As the end of the small conversation above highlights, this also happens when the female asylum seeker needs to contact other official institutions or organizations. She needs someone who does it for her because doing it on her own is not successful, according to her.

In general, most interviews and conversations with the asylum seekers show that they know at least some official institutions or organizations, where they can get support. All interviewed asylum seekers e.g. know Mr. Wagner or, at least, heard of him. Nearly all of them already tried to contact him concerning housing issues, but not all of them were successful. Some complain that it is very difficult to get hold of him. These experiences lead to the situation that the asylum seekers only approach their local contact persons when they need something from Mr. Wagner. The local contact persons then communicate with him and solve the issue for the asylum seekers. From the point of view of the asylum seekers, that way is more appropriate to get what they need. It happens also in other situations, when they needed to contact official institutions or organizations, like the local authorities in Alzey or insurance agencies. A female asylum seeker explains that she indeed tried to solve problems on her own. Although she can communicate in the German language quite well already, she said that when a German person e.g. calls the insurance agency everything was directly fine. When she calls them, she often does not get a satisfying answer to the same questions. These experiences correspond with the short conversation above.

The interviews indicate that the asylum seekers who are already longer in Germany know in average more official institutions than the ones who only shortly arrived. All of them know and go to the local authorities in Alzey because they get their money and health certificates there. Although they know official institutions or people working there, most of the asylum seekers again do not approach them directly. That fact is also illustrated in the excerpt from an interview with an asylum seeker below. Furthermore, the excerpt gives an impression of which other institutions the asylum seekers know and use, besides governmental institutions. In the first place, these non-governmental institutions are the *Café Willkommen* and the *Kleiderkammer* in Wörrstadt (see 5.2.2 and 5.2.3) and secondly other organizations, like the *TAFEL* in Alzey or the Volkshochschule (vhs), which offer language courses in Alzey and Mainz (see 5.1.3).

From an interview with a male asylum seeker

Do you know any official organizations or institutions who can help you with problems? - Yes, Mr. Wagner. And Mrs. Weber, she is living in Wörrstadt and she is working for the social department in Alzey. When I have a question I talk to Mrs. Lang. and she talks to Mrs. Weber.

So you mostly ask Mrs. Lang? - And when I have a questions for another person I ask via Mrs. Lang.

But you know the Café Willkommen, right? For what do you go there? -Normally I need to talk to people, to play and to have contact with people.

Do you know the Kleiderkammer? -Yes, I know it.

Did you go there? - Yes, I went there and I bought something.

Do you like the Kleiderkammer? -Yes, it is a good idea. It is good organized. It is cheaper there and that helps the other refugees. That's good.

(male asylum seeker from Somalia, between 20-25 years old, no professional education, unmated, in Germany since 8 month, Saulheim)

Summarized the interviews demonstrate that the asylum seekers know official institutions and organizations. Occasionally, they need to communication with these official institutions. However, the asylum seekers prefer to interact with the local volunteers in order to satisfy these needs instead of directly communicating with the institutions or people in charge. Other organizations that are not connected to the government (e.g. *Kleiderkammer*, *TAFEL*) are appreciated and used frequently by the asylum seekers.

5.1.3. Language, Education and Working

Learning the German language and finishing school or finding a job seems to be a very important topic for all interviewed asylum seekers. Like the following excerpt from an interview with a young asylum seeker shows, they often addressed it before I asked them about it.

From an interview with a male asylum seeker

`And something else I want to tell you. I am very much interested in the school. You know I am 17 years and I have the papers and I have everything about the papers of my school. I am going to eleventh class and I have the papers not yet but my father will send it to me in the fax or something. And I am happy to join in the school. But first I will, I should learn Deutsch more, then I go to school. Because the school is everything about

important in my live. I need cause I leave my country because no schools. That's why I coming here. For learn. That's it.'

(male asylum seeker from Syria, 17 years old, lives together with his uncle, went to school until grade 11, in Germany since four month, Wörrstadt)

The excerpt from an interview above describes the needs of a young asylum seeker. He went to school before he came to Germany but did not finish it. He now wants to finish school so that he can go to university. He has already a clear idea of what he wants to study later but does not know where he can finish school or who can give him information about it. Before he wants to start going to school, he first needs to improve his German, he told me.

As the excerpt shows, education and learning the German language are very important for the young asylum seeker. It is same for all asylum seekers I spoke to. Most of the asylum seekers have a professional background e.g. on was an electrician, another one worked for a car company. They all went to school or university and the older ones additionally have work experiences. They are all motivated to either finish their education or find a job. However, the priority of all asylum seekers at the moment is learning the German language. After that, they all want to search for a job and are sure, they will find a job. The only barrier at the moment for them is that they did not have enough language skills. All interviewees take part in different kinds of German classes or participated in the past. The ones who do not go to a course at the moment would like to join one again in the future. The level and intensity of the courses they visit are different. Some of the asylum seekers get individual support by local volunteers additionally to the German courses. According to a female asylum seeker, the combination of an official course and private lessons is very effective. During the private lessons she can repeat what she learned and ask questions about things she did not understand in the course. Several asylum seekers mention that contact to German people is very important for them in order to improve their German. The asylum seekers normally live together with people from their own country, so they do not speak German to each other. Although they all say that speaking to German people is important, they do not have a lot of contact to German people besides to their local contact persons (see 5.2.4). A last important resource for learning German is the internet. Some accommodations have free internet access. The asylum seekers use it not only to communicate with family and friends but also to learn German. They do online courses or watched videos on Youtube.

The short conversation below represents another situation, which some of the asylum seekers in the VG Wörrstadt are in. Sara came to Germany with her husband, son, and parents in law. They are from Armenia and are in Germany since a year. She speaks German quite well because she already participated in an official German course. Although she is able to communicate in the German language, it is not enough to be allowed to go to a professional school to do a job training. So she first needs to

participate in an advanced German course in order to start going to school or looking for a job.

Mariam, a young asylum seeker, enters the room in the catholic community center in Wörrstadt together with her son and comes to me. Around us, the last preparations are made for the Christmas celebration for the young asylum seekers. `Hello, how are you?`, she asks me. `I am fine and you?` She replies that she is fine, too, and starts searching for something in her bag. Meanwhile, I greet Armen, her son and carry him on my arm. `I want to show you something` Mariam says to me `Wait, I have to look for the note`. She gives me a note with an address. `I got it from a colleague in the kindergarten, where I do my internship at the moment. She said I can do a German course there. It is in Alzey. Do you know the school? Vhs language school? Is it a good school?`, she asks me. I affirm that I know the school and that I think that she can participate in a course there. `Do you think the course is appropriate so that I can go afterwards to the vocational school in Mainz?` `Yes, I think so`, I reply and continue with explaining to her that this language school also offers intensive courses with lessons every day. `That's good` she says and puts the note back into her bag very carefully. `At the vocational school in Mainz they told me that I have to do an intensive German course before I can start there. I really want to go to the professional school, so I think I will call the Vhs school.` `Sure, do that. Maybe you can check the Vhs school in Mainz as well because the courses are always very full.`, I add. She thanks me for the tip while we join the rest of the young asylum seekers and the celebrations starts.

I heard similar stories like the one above from other asylum seekers, too. The asylum seekers are already in Germany for quite some time, participated in a German course and are able to communicate in German. However, they say that their language skills are not yet sufficient enough to get a job or to go a professional school, like the female asylum seeker in the scene above is planning it. In order to find a job, they need to improve their language skills and look for courses outside the area of the VG Wörrstadt because they seem to not find them within the area.

The two examples above summarize the situations of the asylum seekers in the VG quite well. On the one hand, you have people who do not speak German or just a little bit. They need a German course in order to learn the basics. On the other hand, you have the people, like Sara who speak German already. They need an advanced German course to improve their language skills so they can find a job. Besides that, internet and contact to German people play a role in learning German for both groups. After learning German, all asylum seekers want to concentrate either on finishing their education or searching for a job.

5.1.4. Social contacts and leisure activities

Although almost all interviewees mentioned that it is very important to have contact with German people in order to improve their German skills, they do not have a lot of this

contact. Like the following excerpt indicates, having social contacts with locals did not have first priority for them.

From an interview with a male asylum seeker

Do you already have some social contacts here? – Not so much because you know the situation here in the village. There are not so much people or they are busy with their work. And I live far from the town. Maybe it's an effect of this.

What are the social contacts you have? – Only the owner of the house. When I come to the school, see the teacher and Mr. Hoffmann. So three, four, five persons maximum.

Do you want more social contacts to people from the village? – Yes, I hope. But first I have to go ahead with the language because they all maybe do not know the English. So I will contact.

Is there anything you do besides learning German? – Nothing.

Would you like to do some sports? - Maybe yes.

What are the problems why are you not doing it? – There is no problem, just we do not know about it. And how you will ask if you have no German contact. Maybe it will be the next step you know. Maybe when you start the life here in a legal way. Then it will be 100% sure.

(male asylum seeker from Syria, between 30 – 40 years old, his wife and two children are still in Syria, Mechanic, in Germany since 6 weeks, Schornsheim)

The man from the interview above only lives in the villages since two weeks. He does not know many people there, in total 2-4 he said. Reasons for that are according to him that he does not speak the German language and many people do not speak English. He did some sport before he came to Germany. He would like to do something here but not at the moment. He first wants to learn German and get his residence permit. He is sure when he has the residence permit he will do some sport or join other activities, where he can meet other people. Besides the fact that it is not his priority to meet people or do some activities, he also does not know about any. The only activity he joins is the church service on Sunday. He said, he enjoys going to church and will continue doing it.

The following excerpt from an interview is very similar to the one above. The difference is that the two young people are actually interested in playing volleyball but also do not know about the possible to play it. An additional point, which comes up, is that the young people would like to have contact with German people in their age. The woman and the man are between 20-25 years old. Until now they just saw older people or young children in the villages they lived in, but no people in their age, they told me.

From an interview with a two asylum seekers

Are you doing anything besides learning German in your free time? - No

But do you want to do something? Like sports or something else? - I do not know. I just like volleyball but I am not good at it. (Woman)

Mrs. Kuhn: Volleyball. Here is Volleyball. - Really? Maybe I will ask them. (Woman)

Maybe she can help you, if you want to play volleyball. - Yeah. That's good. I am not a good player but I like it. (Woman)

Do you do any sports or something? (To man) - No, actually I like volleyball. (Man)

Would you like to play here? - Sure. (Man)

But you just do not know where you can play? - Yes, we just do not know the place. (Woman) We did not find any younger people here in Partenheim. Most of them going maybe to the big cities. (Man)

So you would also like to do more with younger people in your age? - Yeah (Both).

But here are no people in your age? - Yeah, it is more a village. Young people are more found in the city. Most old people like village because they need a calm place. (Woman)

(male and female asylum seekers from Eritrea, between 20-25 years old, students, in Germany since 6 weeks, Partenheim)

Although both examples above are from asylum seekers who are only in Germany for a short period of time, they represent the general situation of all asylum seekers I spoke to quite well. The asylum seekers who are already in Germany for a longer period of time do not have many contact to German people, too. All said that they know some German people, but that are mostly the people they asked for help or are their German teachers. However, no interviewee called them friends. When they used the word friends they mostly referred to the other people living in the same accommodation. All asylum seekers would like to have more social contacts to locals. A big barrier for that is, according to some of them, that they do not speak German. Another need, which came up in the interviews, was either having the own family around or starting a family in Germany.

The questions about leisure time activities has more diverse results. Most of the asylum seekers had hobbies or did sport before they came to Germany. The asylum seekers who just arrived shortly do not really have the need yet to do e.g. some sports. Besides that, they often do not know about the different activities. Others who are already in Germany for quite some time are interested in doing leisure activities. A few already joined the sports training or a choir. Another point, which is very important for some of the asylum seekers, is religion. Most of the asylum seekers are religious and they want to go to church or to mosque. Some of them go regularly, some less.

Summarized you can say that all asylum seekers are interested in having contact with locals and in participating in leisure activities. However, satisfying this need does not really have a high priority at that moment for most of them. When they get information about activities they are eager to join but they mostly do not ask actively. Indeed important for most of the asylum seekers is going to the church or the mosque.

5.1.5. Overview and priorities of needs

Besides the needs described in the previous chapters, the interviewees additionally mentioned other needs, which are not connected to any specific topic. I will describe them now and will give an overview of all needs, including the ones mentioned in the previous chapters. Additionally, I will present which of the needs are most important for the interviewed asylum seekers.

One important need is to have clarity about the future. The asylum seekers want to know if they are allowed to stay in Germany or not. Some already wait for more than a year and did not get any information about it, others, especially people from Syria, get their residence permits mostly after 4-5 months. For them it is not so important because they know, they will get it anyway. Other people, e.g. from Bosnia, Somalia or Eritrea have to wait a long time without security that they will be allowed to stay. Several other needs were mentioned in the interviews that I summarized under the headline of emotions (see Table 3). The emotions mentioned are happiness, love as well as security and safety. Security is, according to a former asylum seeker, very important for the people who come from war zones. They need the feeling of security. Connected to it is the feeling of being safe in a sense that someone gets used to the environment and has one or more persons of trust. The most important emotion asylum seekers need is to feel welcome. According to one asylum seeker, it does not really matter where or how you live, as long as you are nicely welcomed. She had this feeling when she arrived in Germany, which helped her to cope with the situation that she had to live in a tent for a while. Furthermore, it is important to allow the asylum seekers to rest for a certain time. A lot of them traveled a long way to Germany and experienced a lot. When they finally arrive in Germany, they are tired in their mind, like one asylum seeker called it. He thought a lot about his future, but also about his home country and what happens there. So he needed some time to rest to get new motivation to go along. Motivation is another important need. It can come from locals but also from former asylum seekers. Especially the last ones can support the asylum seekers by telling them their story and how they got along with life in Germany.

Table 3 summarizes all needs that were mentioned in the interviews. However, not all of the needs have the same priority. For examples, the basic needs like food, housing or clothes are not so important, because they are already met by services or the asylum seekers know where they could satisfy them. Others are unmet and more important.

Table 3 Needs of asylum seekers

Needs	Details
Clarity about legal status	Permission to stay in Germany
Clothes	Affordable +fitting
Education and Jobs	School, professional job trainings, jobs,
Emotions	Happiness + Love + Security/Safety(Feeling safe and having someone you can trust) + Feeling to be welcome
Food	What and where?
Health	Medical treatments and counselling
Housing	furniture + adequate size + internet (communication+ learning German)
Infrastructure / Mobility	Nearby supermarkets, doctors and authorities, public transport (affordable, accessible and direct), private transport by volunteers, driver's license (later)
Language	Official courses and individual support adequate for the individual level of knowledge and skills
Leisure activities	Sport + excursions + other activities - Fun
Local contact person	Gives information and support (administration, communication with official institutions, health, transport, education/ language, leisure time activities, institutions, translations, places, culture)
Motivation and Encouragement	From people who experienced the same
Religion	Opportunities to practices faith (church/mosque)
Social contacts / relationships	Meeting and talking to people, locals and other asylum seekers, having friends in the same age, family, intimate relationships
Time	Time to rest and to get used to the new culture and society

Table 4 shows what is most important for the interviewed asylum seekers. The most important topics are learning the German language and getting a job/ finishing education. Both needs are connected in the sense that most interviewees first want to learn the German language before they start looking for a job. Other important needs are social contacts, but more in the context of the family. Either being together with the own family or starting a new one. For others it is more important that their asylum request is accepted. Finally, some asylum seekers wanted to move to another accommodation, preferably alone and in a bigger one. However, for most asylum seekers this need was still less important than the other ones.

Table 4 Priorities of needs

	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3	Priority 4
1	Family from Syria to Germany	Learning German	Finding a job	
2	Going to School	Learning German	Sport / Playing soccer	
3	Learning German	Moving to another place with better public transport	Find a job	
4	Asylum request accepted	Continue studying	Finding a job in the area of his studies	
5	Asylum request accepted	Better future for her children	Moving to a bigger flat after accepted	Better job
6	Learning German	Find a job	Moving in another flat	Marrying
7	Learning German	Find a job/Helping other refugees	Contact to German people (girlfriend)	
8	Finding a Job	Improving German		

The table above describes the individual priorities of needs of the interviewed asylum seekers that they had at the time of the interviews. The other Table 3 summarizes all needs mentioned in the interviews, which includes the needs the asylum seeker had at that moment, had in the past or they think newly arrived asylum seekers have. Summarized, the asylum seekers have many different needs, which have different priorities. However, the most important needs for nearly all of them were language, education and work, and clarity about their legal status. In the next chapter, I will describe the main social support providers. The focus will be, as in the whole study, on Wörrstadt, Saulheim, Partenheim, and Schornsheim. They accommodate the most asylum seekers and offer more social support services than the other four villages. Nevertheless, I will take the other villages into account, if necessary.

5.2.Social support services

‘The assistance and protection given to others, especially to individuals.’ That is the definition of social support by Langford, Bowsher, Maloney, & Lillis (1997). It can take various forms, e.g. material support like clothes, less tangible support as teaching the German language or even intangible like feeling welcome by joining the soccer training or church service. The focus of this chapter will be the social support provided to the asylum seekers. First I will present the main social support providers, which will be followed by a description of the different social support services for the asylum seekers.

Most social support services happened in the different villages and just targeted the asylum seekers who live in the particular village. Based on that, I will present the services in the order of where they took place. Some services aimed at all asylum seekers who live in the area of study. I will summarize them under the headline of VG Wörrstadt.

5.2.1. Description of main social support providers

First I will introduce the main social support providers who operate within the area of the VG Wörrstadt. Other social support providers that offer less or only one service, but are nevertheless important for the asylum seeker, will be mentioned in later chapters, where I will describe which social support is available for the asylum seekers. Furthermore I want to add that in the thesis at hand the social support providers will occasionally be called volunteers because most of them do it voluntarily. Persons who do not do it voluntarily, but are paid for their services, are called accordingly.

VG Wörrstadt

The *Flüchtlingshilfe VG Wörrstadt* is a loose group of volunteers who actively support asylum seekers and refugees. They come from the different villages, which are part of the VG Wörrstadt. Many of them are active in the support of the asylum seekers in their own villages, but they support projects that are aiming at all asylum seekers who live in the area of the VG Wörrstadt, too. The aim of the *Flüchtlingshilfe VG Wörrstadt* is to connect the groups from the different villages and projects to exchange experiences and information as well as to plan and implement projects together. They meet regular once a month. The first project of the *Flüchtlingshilfe VG Wörrstadt* was the organization of two bazaars, in March and May 2015, where the asylum seekers could get clothes and household goods. Those bazaars were very successful and finally led to the founding of the *Kleiderkammer*, a charity shop. Another project, which was initiated by them, is the *Café Willkommen project*. I will describe both projects in a later chapter (see 5.2.2 and 5.2.3). The idea to found the *Flüchtlingshilfe VG Wörrstadt* evolved between the employee of the municipality who is in charge of the asylum seekers in the area of the VG Wörrstadt and members of the catholic community in Wörrstadt. The members of the catholic community supported a Rumanian immigrant family. That way they came in contact with him. Together they initiated the first meeting in February 2015. Besides interested people from all the villages, representatives of the catholic and protestant church participated in the meeting as well. No one from the Muslim community was or is involved. Since then the catholic as well as the protestant church, are informally involved in the *Flüchtlingshilfe VG Wörrstadt*. Their main contribution at the moment is, besides the fact that many members of the *Flüchtlingshilfe VG Wörrstadt* are active members of each religious community, that they provide rooms for events for free or other material support. Currently, a discussion takes place to form an official organization affiliated to one or to both churches. These considerations have practical reasons and do not mean that the projects of the *Flüchtlingshilfe VG Wörrstadt* are only for Christians. On the contrary, the support given by the *Flüchtlingshilfe VG Wörrstadt* addresses all asylum

seekers independent from their faith. As I already mentioned, the asylum seekers are mostly Christians or Muslims. Although most projects e.g. the *Café Willkommen* or the language classes take place in the community centers of the catholic or protestant church in Wörrstadt as well as in the other villages, the Muslim asylum seekers join them, too. Furthermore, the *Flüchtlingshilfe VG Wörrstadt* does not make any differences based on the status of the people. They support all migrants who need support, which includes asylum seekers, refugees, and immigrants with other legal statuses. Nevertheless, most of the people who use their services are asylum seekers.

Another social support provider, who offers services to all asylum seekers in the area of the VG Wörrstadt, is the municipality of the VG Wörrstadt. Between six and eight employees are involved in the topic of asylum seekers. Two employees are full-time in charge of the preparations of the accommodations and they welcome the asylum seekers. They are supported by changing persons from other departments as well as from a person who is actually in charge of the administrative tasks connected to the asylum seekers. Additionally, another person works on the administration tasks. The employees who are working in the field are supported by three to five asylum seekers. The municipality of the VG Wörrstadt is only in charge of the asylum seekers who live in the area of the VG. When the asylum seekers get their residence permit, which means when their status changes, the municipality is no longer responsible for them anymore. Then the Job-Center, the authority who is in charge of the jobless people in Germany, is accountable for them.

Wörrstadt

Most of the volunteers, who offer social support services to the asylum seekers in Wörrstadt, are active in projects that are targeting at all asylum seekers living in the area of the VG e.g. the *Café Willkommen* or the *Kleiderkammer* (see 5.2.2 and 3). Additionally, some people support asylum seekers on an individual base. Given that Wörrstadt is a town with 7500 inhabitants, the volunteers do not know all places, where asylum seekers live. So it is unclear if all asylum seekers receive support from someone. Some communication between the volunteers happens but they are not organized or meet regular. However, they join the regular meetings of the *Flüchtlingshilfe VG Wörrstadt*.

Saulheim

The *Flüchtlingshilfe Saulheim* is a network of around 50 volunteers, who supports the asylum seekers in Saulheim and organizes e.g. German courses and other activities. Some volunteers just support individual asylum seekers, others organize activities or give German classes. They also organized a fundraising campaign to collect money as well as other things, like clothes, household goods or bikes. They meet regular and are supported by the mayor of Saulheim. The *Flüchtlingshilfe Saulheim* has the same problem like volunteers in Wörrstadt that they are not sure if they reach all asylum seekers, who live there.

Partenheim

After the first asylum seekers moved to Partenheim in summer 2015 a group of local people from Partenheim decided to support them. In total, they are around 40 volunteers now. From the 40 volunteers, 12-14 people meet regularly and organize the support of the asylum seekers in Partenheim. All asylum seekers accommodations are known by the volunteers, so they visit them on a regular base. Some of the volunteers just help out spontaneously, others more regularly and again others only support individual asylum seekers. The *Flüchtlingsinitiative Partenheim* is not affiliated with any political or religious community. However, they get support from the church community and the mayor, when it is needed.

Schornsheim

The first asylum seekers moved to Schornsheim around February 2014. That was recognized really fast by the local people. After the first meeting of interested people, a loose group of around ten people formed that support the asylum seekers. They called themselves *Initiative "Willkommen in Schornsheim"*. They meet every second Monday in a month in the evening to discuss and plan the social support services for the asylum seekers. Like in Partenheim, they know all asylum seekers who live in Schornsheim. They started with the collection of clothes, household goods, and furniture. Their current project is to develop a `Welcome-Package` for the asylum seekers. It should include information e.g. about German courses, shopping places as well as a picture dictionary.

Wallertheim, Armsheim, Spiesheim, Vendersheim

In none of the four villages exists groups of locals, which support the asylum seekers as in the other communities. The asylum seekers in Vendersheim get support from a private person. The asylum seekers from the Balkan states who live in Wallertheim are very independent. The chance that they will be allowed to stay in Germany is very low, so they actually do not use many social support services. The mayor of Wallertheim is the contact person for the Syrian and Iranian asylum seekers who were placed in Wallertheim shortly before Christmas. At the end of the data collection phase, no social support services were implemented in Spiesheim and Armsheim, as far as I know.

All in all, there are several groups of locals active in the different villages of the VG Wörrstadt. They are structured in a similar way and offer, in general, comparable social support. However, not in all villages such groups exist.

5.2.2. Individual support

After I introduced the main social support providers I will now outline the individual support most of them offer to the asylum seekers. Individual support means here that the asylum seekers get personal support in order to meet their individual needs. The individual support aims at specific needs of the asylum seekers at given times. It can have very different forms and is provided by different organizations and private persons. The general topics of the individual support are the same everywhere and only slightly

differ based on the individual needs and characteristics of the asylum seekers. In appendix 3 is a more detailed list of topics with which the individual support is concerned with. Therefore I will just present an overview about the main topics here which the social support providers offer in the different locations.

VG Wörrstadt

The asylum seekers, who live in the area of the VG Wörrstadt, can go to two different contact points where they can ask for individual support. The first one is the *Café Asyl* in Alzey. The *Café Asyl* in Alzey is an institution for all foreign people, so for asylum seekers, too. There they get help with all kind problems they have, especially when they need support with legal issues (Landkreis Alzey-Worms, 2015). The second contact point is the *Café Willkommen* in Wörrstadt. The *Café Willkommen* project offers a meeting and information place for asylum seekers as well as local people, who are interested in the refugee relief. According to one of the founders of the project, the *Café Willkommen* is not only an information point but also a place for just having a coffee, to talk and to meet people, locals as well as other asylum seekers. Asylum seekers can get support when they have questions e.g. if they are allowed to work or how they can open a bank account. The volunteers help them when they have problems e.g. with the understanding of a letter or making phone calls. Furthermore, the asylum seekers can get information e.g. about German courses or others activities. If necessary, the volunteers of the *Café Willkommen* show them the *Kleiderkammer* or accompany them to the municipality. For interested asylum seekers, there is also the possibility to improve their German in an informal and playful way, e.g. by playing word games because one of the volunteers is trained in teaching. In contrast to the asylum seekers, the local people can get information about the situation of the asylum seekers on site, about the local support activities for the asylum seekers as well as how they can get involved in the support of the asylum seekers. In addition, it serves as a place where already active volunteers exchange their experiences and information. The *Café Willkommen* is open every Thursday from 10-12 am and from 16-18 pm and takes place in a room in the community center of the protestant church in Wörrstadt. The morning session is open for everyone, while the afternoon session is intended for more private issues and individual counseling. It is also planned that once a month a professional from the *Café Asyl* in Alzey comes to the *Café Willkommen* in order to give legal support. The project is organized entirely on a voluntary base by six local people with one of them having a migration background, too.

Wörrstadt

Between four to six locals support asylum seekers in Wörrstadt on an individual base. Some just take care of individuals or families, others just help out spontaneously when support is needed. Another volunteer visits on a regular base one accommodation and supports everyone there who needs it. One of the individual supporters summarized what he does with the following sentence: I am helping with administration things, integration in society and also promote learning the German language.

Saulheim

Volunteers in Saulheim support asylum seekers on an individual base. They help them e.g. with administration things, drive with them to authorities, doctors or shops. According to a leading volunteer of the *Flüchtlingshilfe Saulheim* they often need to organize translators for the asylum seekers, e.g. when they have an appointment with the doctor or for official purposes. Furthermore, they support them with day-to-day things. According to an asylum seeker, who lives in Saulheim, he can ask a local woman, who often comes to his accommodation, everything and she will help him with it. Besides that, the volunteers sometimes go on excursions with them e.g. to the swimming pool or museums. Furthermore, the volunteers also organized that all children go to school or get a place in one of the kindergartens in Saulheim.

Partenheim

Every asylum seeker in Partenheim has one or two local contact persons. The asylum seekers can approach them every time they need help. Often these people just pass by at the accommodations of the asylum seekers to see if they need something. The social support services the contact persons offer, are very diverse. It starts with administrative help like making calls or writing Emails/letters for them, e.g. to the Deutsche Bahn (German train company) to ask for a release of a fine or to the social department in Alzey. They assist the asylum seekers when they have some health issues and accompany them to doctors, when it is necessary. An important field of support is school issues because in Partenheim a lot of young asylum seeker live. The contact persons help the parents e.g. with the registration at the schools, translate letters from the teachers or accompany the parents to meetings with the teacher in order to translate for them. Furthermore, they help individual asylum seekers to find a job, e.g. some of the Eritreans asylum seekers work for the municipality of Partenheim now. Transport is very important as well, because as I described above, no bus goes directly to Alzey or Wörrstadt, besides the school busses. So the volunteers drive with them e.g. to the authorities in Alzey, to doctors in Mainz or to Wörrstadt. Sometimes they also take care of the children or bring them to the sports training, when the parents have an appointment or cannot bring them by themselves. Finally, they collect furniture and clothes for the asylum seekers and bring it to the accommodations, in which it is needed.

Schornsheim

In Schornsheim, the asylum seekers mostly ask the woman who teaches German when they have a problem or a question. According to her, that is fostered through the fact that they see her twice a week. Furthermore, she lives in the center of the village, which is very near to most of the asylum seekers accommodations as well. When the asylum seekers come to her, she either helps them by herself or organizes someone who takes over the task. According to asylum seekers living in Schornsheim, other important contacts persons are for one accommodation the landlord and for another one the neighbor. The individual social support services cover the same topics as in the other

villages. It is among others transport, support for administration things, translations or organizing jobs.

Wallertheim, Armsheim, Spiesheim, Vendersheim

As I already mentioned, are the asylum seekers in Wallertheim supported by the mayor and the family in Vendersheim has a local man who supports them. About Armsheim and Spiesheim I do not have any information.

As shown above, the individual support covers nearly the same topics in every village of the VG Wörrstadt. The access to the individual support is similar in the different villages, too, mainly through locals, like neighbors or German teachers of the asylum seekers. An exceptional position have here the Café Asyl and the Café Willkommen, which are more formalized places to seek for help for the asylum seekers.

5.2.3. Language, Education and Working

As seen in chapter 5.1.5, the most important needs of the asylum seekers are language, education and working. In order to understand the context of the social support services that serve this needs, I will first give a general introduction. I will explain what integration courses are and will briefly outline the legal regulations concerning work that apply to the asylum seekers. After that, I will present the available German courses and work opportunities in the area of the VG Wörrstadt.

In order to support immigrants to learn the German language, the German migration department provides so-called integration courses (BAMF, 2015c). They consist of language classes as well as an introduction course about the German culture. Immigrants who get a residence permit and do not speak the German language are obligated to participate in an integration course. The costs for the courses are taken over by the migration department. However, asylum seekers do not have a residence permit yet, so they are actually not admitted to the integration courses. However, there are some exceptions, depending on the country of origin the asylum seekers are from. Asylum seekers, e.g. from Syria, who have a high chance of getting a residence permit, are, under specific circumstances, allowed to join an integration course (BAMF, 2015c). But the other asylum seekers have to look for other opportunities to learn the German language, as long as they are waiting for their residence permit. That is not the only constraint that is put on the asylum seekers by the asylum law. They are also not allowed to work. Only under specific circumstance or after they stayed in Germany for more than 15 months, they can get a working permit (BAMF, 2015b). There are only two possible ways, what they can do. First, the asylum seekers are allowed to do internships (Die Bundesregierung, 2016). Secondly, they are allowed to do so-called 1-Euro-Jobs (Bundesministerium der Justiz und für Verbraucherschutz, 2016). The jobs are very low skilled jobs and the person earns a symbolic one euro per working hour. Of course, no one can live from the money, but that's also not the aim of it. The aim is to offer people access to work when they cannot get normal jobs, like people who were jobless for a long time. These jobs can only be provided by governmental institutions e.g. the

municipality of Wörrstadt. So the asylum seekers are allowed to do the 1-Euro-Jobs. As we will see in the following paragraphs the constraints made by the asylum law actually brought the social support services in place.

VG Wörrstadt

In the VG Wörrstadt, several professional German courses took place or are still running, which are open to the asylum seeker. The courses are coordinated by the Landesamt für Soziales, Jugend und Versorgung (Department for social, youth and supply) and financed by the European social fund, so the participation is free of costs for the asylum seekers (Koordinierungsstelle Sprach- und Orientierungskurse für Flüchtlinge des Landes Rheinland-Pfalz, 2016). The courses are implemented by two different organizations, Vhs Alzey and Katholisches Dekanat Alzey/Gau-Bickelheim. The courses have a length of between 100 -200h, depending on who is conducting them. The courses are held by a professional teacher for German as a foreign language, who is paid for conducting it. One course started in Wörrstadt in mid of September and ended at the end of November. It took place in the community center of the Catholic Church. It was organized by Katholisches Dekanat Alzey/Gau-Bickelheim. The courses in Saulheim were in winter 2014 and spring 2015 and were held in the rooms of an NGO called the Arbeiterwohlfahrt (AWO). A new course in Saulheim started at the end of December 2015. They are all organized by the Volkshochschule (vhs) Alzey. The target group of the courses are asylum seekers or persons with exceptional leave to remain for humanitarian reasons because these people do not have the right to participate in an official integration course (Koordinierungsstelle Sprach- und Orientierungskurse für Flüchtlinge des Landes Rheinland-Pfalz, 2016).

The Caritas, a catholic NGO, which operates in whole Germany, offers alphabetization courses in Wörrstadt. The target group of that specific courses are only women. The course takes place twice a week for one and a half hours in the catholic community center. One course started end of April 2015 and will continue in 2016 because of the good response. A new course started in the beginning of January 2016. The target groups of the course are not only female asylum seekers but women in general who speak a little bit of German but cannot read or write it. The aim of the course is, besides teaching German to the women, to empower them. Most of the participants in the course, which started in April, are women with migration backgrounds who live in Germany already for a longer time but at least on asylum seeker participates, too. Due to the recent developments, the new course targets more at female asylum seekers.

The vhs language school offers official German courses in Alzey and Mainz, too. The asylum seekers who live in VG Wörrstadt can join them as well. Some of the courses are for free, some courses are with costs. (Kreisvolkshochschule Alzey, 2015). Besides that, several other language schools are in Mainz, which have German courses, partly for free, partly with costs (Euro Schulen Mainz, n.d.; IQ - wissen individuell erleben, n.d.).

The municipality of the VG Wörrstadt hires several asylum seekers. As I explained above, the asylum seekers are often not allowed to work, but can do the so-called 1-

Euro-Jobs. So the municipality provides several 1-Euro-Jobs to offer some asylum seekers the opportunity to earn some extra money. The asylum seekers support the employees who are in charge of the asylum seekers accommodations. They mainly help with the removing and building of the furniture as well as with tenancy changeovers of other asylum seekers.

Wörrstadt

Besides the official German course and the alphabetization courses for women, which I described in the last paragraph, several private German lessons are take place in Wörrstadt. One example is that three volunteers visit one asylum seekers accommodation on a regular base. In that particular accommodation around 13 men live, so each volunteer just meets with a small group of asylum seekers and practices German with them. One asylum seeker who lives there and speaks German quite well already sometimes supports them with translations. Another small group meets in the catholic community center once a week to learn German.

The elderly home in Wörrstadt offers four internship places to asylum seekers. At the time when the amount of asylum seekers in Germany increased, the management of the elderly home decided that the want to contribute something to the support of the asylum seekers as well. First they wanted to offer a German course but decided that it is likewise important that the asylum seekers get an opportunity to practices the language in reality. So they finally decided to combine both. Through the internships, the asylum seekers additionally gain work experiences, which might be useful in case they get a residence permit for Germany. The interns work in the morning from 8 am-2 pm. Two times per week they have a German course in the afternoon. The course is held by a volunteer who is normally helping out with the elderly people. In the time period of the data collection, the elderly home had three interns, two men, who supported the caretakers, and one woman, who helped out at the laundry.

Saulheim

The *Flüchtlingshilfe Saulheim* organizes several German courses. According to the coordinator of the courses, they experienced in a previous course that the asylum seekers have different levels of knowledge and skills, so they decided to offer different courses. In total, they have six different course levels, which are shown in Table 5. The lowest level is the alphabetization level, followed by three basic courses and an advanced and intensive course. All courses, besides the intensive course, take place two times a week for 90-120 min. Some of the courses are held in a room of the protestant community center and the others in the rooms of the AWO. In total eight volunteers conduct the different lessons. The backgrounds of them are different, some are retired teachers or students and the rest has other professional backgrounds. Additionally to the German courses, they have homework and German support for children once a week.

Table 5 Overview of the German courses in Saulheim

Course	Target group	How often?
Alphabetization	Cannot write and read Latin letters	2x per week
Basic 1	Can write and read Latin letters, but do not speak any German	2x per week
Basic 2	Little knowledge of German	2x per week
Basic 3	Advanced knowledge of German	2x per week
Advanced	Speak German already quite well	2x per week
Intensive	Intensive lesson	1x per week

Next to the German courses the *Flüchtlingshilfe Saulheim* organizes individual language support. The so-called `Sprachpaten` (language mentors) help individual asylum seekers to improve their German by meeting with them for a coffee or going on a trip with them and then just speak German to them.

Similar to the municipality of the VG Wörrstadt the municipality of Saulheim hires some asylum seekers for a 1-Euro-Job. They support the municipality workers.

Partenheim

Most of the asylum seekers from Partenheim go to a German course in Nieder-Olm, the next bigger town. That they can go there was organized by the *Flüchtlingsinitiative Partenheim*. The course in Nieder-Olm takes place three times a week for two and a half hours. Besides that, also locals from Partenheim assist individual asylum seekers with learning German. One example is a woman who meets with a group of Eritrean asylum seekers three times a week in order to repeat and intensify what they learned in the course in Nieder-Olm. Additionally, two other women go to one accommodation every Friday in order to talk to asylum seekers or help them with their homework.

Likewise to the VG Wörrstadt and Saulheim, Partenheim hires some asylum seekers. They get one euro per hour they work, too. They help the municipality worker with all different kinds of tasks, which occur in the village, like cleaning public spaces or playgrounds.

Schornsheim

„Eigentlich mache ich schon einen vollen Integrationskurs“

(Actually I am doing already a complete integration course with them.)

By German teacher, Schornsheim

Two times a week, on Tuesdays and Thursdays, a German course takes place in Schornsheim. The classes last one and a half hours and are held by a retired German teacher. She also gets help from other volunteers, who support individual asylum seekers during the lessons, because the levels of knowledge and skills of the

participants are very different. The *Initiative `Willkommen in Schornsheim`* collected donations in order to finance German books for the participants of the course, but the asylum seekers had to contribute a small amount of money to get the books, too. The course is held in a privately owned house, but no one lives there. It serves as a community center for all kind of activities in Schornsheim. According to the teacher of the course, she is not only teaching German but also explains the participants e.g. how life in Germany is or about the do`s and don`ts.

Besides that German course, another volunteer meets with three recently arrived asylum seekers, who do not speak any German yet, an hour before the other German course takes place I described in the last paragraph. He practices pronunciation and simple words with them individually because he thinks that learning in a small group is both, more effective and efficient than in a bigger group. He is also planning to go shopping with them in order to practice the words in a learning-by-doing style.

In the past, some asylum seekers helped the municipality workers in Schornsheim. It was a 1 Euro-Job; too. However, the asylum seekers stopped doing it.

Wallertheim, Armsheim, Spiesheim, Vendersheim

Once a week a German course is taking place in Armsheim. The course is held by a volunteer and the course is free for the asylum seekers. In Wallertheim private German support takes place. I do not have any information if German support takes place in Spiesheim or Vendersheim.

In short, in nearly all villages some kind of language support takes place. Most of the German support happens on a private base, while there are only a few opportunities for the asylum seekers to participate in professional language courses. Also the work opportunities are not able to offer proper jobs. Both services are caused by the asylum law. After that, I will take a closer look at events and leisure activities available and organized for the asylum seekers.

5.2.4. Events and leisure activities

In order to welcome the asylum seekers and to bring them in contact with the locals, several events were organized by the different social service providers. Besides that, there are several opportunities for the asylum seekers to take part in leisure activities, which will be described in the following chapter.

VG Wörrstadt

A class from a school in Wörrstadt organized together with volunteers from the *Café Willkommen* a Christmas celebration for the asylum seekers children. The pupils had the idea because they had a project about refugees in school and wanted to do something practical as well. In the last week of school before the Christmas holidays, they met for two hours in the afternoon with around 25 asylum seekers children. They organized some food and drinks and brought gifts as well. First they played some games together

and in the end, all asylum seeker children got gifts. The gifts were toys as well as clothes, shoes or bags.

Wörrstadt

Every two weeks on Friday two volunteers, who are also active in the *Café Willkommen* project, organize a game evening. It takes place in the youth room of the Catholic community center in Wörrstadt from 6-8 pm in the evening. In the youth room are a table soccer and a pool table. They offer some snacks and drinks. It is open to all asylum seekers living in Wörrstadt. The aim of the game evening is, according to one of the organizers, to give the asylum seekers an opportunity to leave their accommodations and to have some fun and distraction from their problems.

On an individual base, some asylum seekers take part in the soccer training of the sports club of Wörrstadt. There are two libraries in Wörrstadt, a public one, which is run by the Catholic Church and another one in a school. At both libraries, the asylum seekers can borrow books for free. In the school library, the asylum seekers are also allowed to use the computers. Normally they are only for the pupils of the school but they make an exception for the asylum seekers.

Saulheim

Every third Thursday in a month the Flüchtlingshilfe Saulheim organizes a *Café der Begegnung*. From 16-19 pm asylum seekers and locals have the opportunity to meet each other there. It is a place for conversations and informal exchange. Interested locals, who are not yet active in the refugee relief, can get information about the situations of the asylum seekers and opportunities for help. They also offer tea and coffee as well as seasonal food e.g. Christmas cookies or Kreppel, which is a pastry eaten only during carnival season.

The asylum seekers can participate in all sports courses that are offered by the sports club of Saulheim for free. They can join the tennis club for free, too. The *Flüchtlingshilfe Saulheim* provides bikes and assists with the repairing of the bikes. Furthermore are all asylum seekers welcome to join the choir. The asylum seekers can borrow books in the public catholic library for free. Besides that, the *Flüchtlingshilfe Saulheim* opened an internet café in the youth center in Saulheim. The asylum seekers and also anyone else, who has no internet at home, can go on the internet for free. The young asylum seekers are welcome to visit the youth center. Volunteers of the *Flüchtlingshilfe Saulheim* also organized tickets for a concert in Wörrstadt and for a soccer game in Mainz and went there together with some asylum seekers. The asylum seekers are invited to public feasts and church services. Before Christmas, the volunteers baked Christmas cookies with the asylum seekers.

Partenheim

The *Flüchtlingsinitiative Partenheim* organized two *Willkommenscafes* in 2015. The asylum seekers and locals had the opportunity to spend some time together and to get

to know each other better while drinking coffee and having cake. Many asylum seekers and locals participated and new contacts evolved.

The asylum seekers, especially the children, can join the sport club activities in Partenheim. Also the church choir is open for the asylum seekers and one asylum seeker already joined it. The *Flüchtlingsinitiative Partenheim* invited the asylum seekers to the community feast in Partenheim. All asylum seekers joined it. They invite them to other community activities, e.g. the Christmas market, too. Furthermore, a man organized that the asylum seekers could harvest apples and take them home for free. Two households in Partenheim opened up its internet access, so the asylum seekers can go on the internet with their cell phones in front of these houses.

Schornsheim

The *Initiative "Willkommen in Schornsheim"* organized a *Willkommensfest* to welcome the asylum seekers in Schornsheim, but also to create contacts between the locals and the asylum seekers. After that one-time event, they organized a *Stammtisch* (regular meeting) that takes place every second Monday in a month in the evening. It is open to all asylum seekers, volunteers of the initiative as well as interested people from Schornsheim. It should foster the contact between locals and the asylum seekers, offer a place where the asylum seekers can seek for support as well as give the asylum seekers an opportunity to improve their German.

The activities and sports courses of the sports club of Schornsheim are open for all asylum seekers. The *Initiative "Willkommen in Schornsheim"* organized together with the AGENDA-BUND "Mensch & Natur", an environmental organization, an apple harvesting event for the asylum seekers from Schornsheim. Together with asylum seekers from Schornsheim they harvested apples, which were processed to apple juice. After that, the juice was distributed amongst all asylum seeker in the VG Wörrstadt. Another event was an exhibition on the refugee topic in Schornsheim. One part of the evening was also that locals and asylum seekers together cooked typical German dishes as well as dishes from the countries where the asylum seekers come from.

All in all, a lot of activities are offered, which the asylum seekers can take part in during their free time. Besides the topics of the previous chapter, I found some social support services that do not fit in any of the categories. I will summarize them in the following chapter.

5.2.5. Other services

In this last chapter about the social support services for the asylum seekers I will present services that cover the topics of basic needs like housing, food, and clothes as well as religion and transport. All of them are offered by different organizations or institutions and mostly aim at serving one specific need.

Housing, money and food

The municipality of the VG Wörrstadt is the first social support provider the asylum seekers get in contact with when they arrive in the VG Wörrstadt. They arrive either at the municipality building in Wörrstadt or are brought directly to their accommodation. In both places an employee of the municipality welcomes them. They are registered and get their welcome money. After that, the employee shows the asylum seekers their rooms and hands over the basic equipment to them. Prior to the arrival of the asylum seekers, the municipality employees already furnished the room with a minimum of a bed, a cupboard, and a fridge. Depending on the room size and the availability the asylum seekers also get more furniture. The basic equipment consists of 1x bedsheet, 1x bed cover, 2x big plates, 2x small plates, 2x soup plates, 2x knives, 2x spoons, 2x forks, 2x glasses and a cleaning set (bucket, broom, dish liquid, cleaning liquid) per person. Besides the cleaning set, which is new, everything else is second hand and donations of local people. Most of the furniture are donations. The municipality employees are in charge of collecting all the donations and building them in the accommodations. The furniture that is not obtained by donations is bought by the municipality. The furniture that is not needed directly is stored in a storehouse rented by the municipality. Furthermore, the field of duties of the municipality workers also includes all other possible issues that are connected to the accommodations, e.g. maintenance and repair. Finally, they work together with the volunteers groups of the different villages who support the asylum seekers. In summary, the three tasks of the municipality are the official registration of the asylum seekers, allocation, and responsibility of housing and the basic equipment as well as the coordination of the volunteers who support the asylum seekers in the different villages.

The local authorities in Alzey are another very important social support provider. The asylum seekers have to go there regularly every month in order to get their money. Furthermore, they get the health insurance certificate there, which they need when they want to go to the doctor.

The asylum seekers can register at the *TAFEL* in Alzey. The *TAFEL* is an organization that hands out food for free. The food are donations from shops that cannot sell the food anymore to their customers, although it is still eatable. The target group of the *TAFEL* are all people who get different kinds of support by the social department and live in the area around Alzey. The asylum seekers who live in the VG Wörrstadt fall into the category and can get free food from the *TAFEL* (*TAFEL* Alzey, n.d.-a, n.d.-b).

Clothes – The Kleiderkammer

„Gebt ihr ihnen zu Essen, gebt ihr ihnen Kleidung“

(„You give them something to eat, you give them clothes“ derived from the bible)

By co-founder of the Kleiderkammer

The *Kleiderkammer* is a charity shop, which hands out clothes and household goods in exchange for a small donation. The donations are used by the *Flüchtlingshilfe VG Wörrstadt* to support the asylum seekers. According to one of the founders of the project, the aim of the *Kleiderkammer* is primary to satisfy the basic needs of people and secondly to get in contact with them. Furthermore, the charity shop is a continuous opportunity for people in need to obtain things and not only temporarily, which was the case before the opening of the charity shop. The available clothes include things for babies and children, man and woman, as well as shoes and accessories. Household goods include dishes, towels, as well as bed covers and sheets. Although the idea evolved in the context of supporting asylum seekers, the shop is open for everyone. It mainly aims at disadvantaged people, which are e.g. jobless or single parents. The shop is open every Tuesday from 10-12 pm and 16-19 am and on Thursdays from 10-12 pm and 16-18 am. The *Kleiderkammer* is located in the center of Wörrstadt. The things, which are sold, are all second hand and donations from local people. The charity shop is organized and managed only by volunteers. A core team of six to seven people is responsible for the organizational tasks. They are supported by around 20 volunteers, who help with the sorting and release of the things. One of the volunteers is an asylum seeker. Besides her, some other asylum seekers assisted when the *Kleiderkammer* was furnished. They helped to build the clothes racks and sorted the donations. Although the *Kleiderkammer* is completely run by volunteers, it was officially initialized by the council of the VG Wörrstadt. The municipality also took care of finding an adequate place and pays the rent as well as the fixed costs.

Another small project that was implemented by the team of the *Kleiderkammer* is that they collected school material e.g. school bags, pens, notebooks. The collected material was distributed to all school-aged asylum seekers by the employees of the municipality.

Religious organizations

The support offered by religious organizations to their members, in the form of religious services, are, of course, open to the asylum seekers as well. Within the group of asylum seekers are Christians as well as Muslims. Both groups are free to choose to participate in the religious services they want to. Christian churches are in all villages of the VG Wörrstadt. Muslim services are available in Saulheim and Wörrstadt.

Transport

As long as the asylum seekers do not have a residence permit, they are not allowed to leave the province they live in. In this case, they are not allowed to leave Rhineland-Palatine. Thus, most of them are only on the move when they have a reason, like appointments at the doctor or authorities or going shopping, which mostly happens in the area of the VG Wörrstadt. Therefore, they can use the *Bürgerbus*. The project offers free transport for people who cannot drive or do not have a car. The primary target group are the elderly people but the asylum seekers can use it as well when they want to go somewhere. The bus only drives to places within the villages of the VG Wörrstadt and once a week to Alzey. It is a small bus and is driving every Thursday and Tuesday.

In order to go by bus, you have to make an appointment. The bus picks the people up at home and brings them to their desired destinations and also back home again. Mostly it drives people from the smaller villages to Wörrstadt.

The last chapter finalizes the overview about the available social support services for the asylum seekers. It described services that provide basic services like housing, transport or food. Together with the other available services described in the previous chapters they offer a wide range of services, like individual support, language teaching, leisure activities or serving basic needs.

5.3.Views circulating within the social support provider network

Together with the findings about the needs, the just presented results will be the base for the analysis chapter. Nevertheless, in this chapter I will deal with the views of the social support providers on the situation of the asylum seekers living in the area of the VG Wörrstadt. Although it does not directly address my research questions it might point out reasons for possible discrepancies between the needs and social support services. I will evaluate this in the analysis part. Furthermore, I will describe what the social support providers think asylum seekers need and if these needs are met by the social support they or their programs offer.

All social support providers agree that the atmosphere concerning the asylum seekers in the VG Wörrstadt is positive. The asylum seekers are accepted in the general public. One social support provider explains that they get a lot of donations and that a lot of people want to support the asylum seekers. Many locals e.g. ask in the *Kleiderkammer*, where the asylum seekers live, because the asylum seekers do not attract much attention in daily life, at least not in bigger communities. According to a volunteer of the *Kleiderkammer*, she thinks it is better that the asylum seekers do not attract much attention and that the people ask about them, instead that they are negative about the asylum seekers. In fact, there is no open resistance against the asylum seekers. Of course, some people are not very interested in the topic or complain that too many asylum seekers are coming. However, according to a social support providers, that are just expressions of opinions by individuals, which mostly can be resolved by objective discussions.

All interviewed social support providers agree that the situation of the asylum seekers in the VG Wörrstadt is good. There are no major problems. The interviewees like that the asylum seekers are all placed decentralized. Furthermore, they appreciate that the accommodations of the asylum seekers are within the villages and not outside. According to a volunteer, that also supports the integration of the asylum seekers in the communities. Likewise, it shows the locals that the life of the asylum seekers is not much different to their lives, which again foster the integration of the asylum seekers. Nevertheless, do some volunteers criticize that one or the other asylum seekers accommodation still needs some renovations. The public transport situation in the smaller villages is also not optimal, according to a volunteer. However, after some time,

most of the asylum seekers seem to arrange themselves with it and find solutions for it. Furthermore, many service providers believe that it is very good that the asylum seekers live together with other people from their home countries, who speak the same language. They can help each other and it also makes the integration of new people into the group and the environment easier. Besides that, the relationships between the asylum seekers and the authorities are relatively well, according to volunteers, who support asylum seekers on an individual base. One of them says that it is particular the merit of the employee of the municipality who is responsible for the asylum seekers in the VG Wörrstadt.

Especially the volunteers, who support asylum seekers on an individual level, emphasize that it is important for the asylum seekers to be welcomed in the new accommodation. After that, it is OK to leave them alone, so that they can rest and settle down. Some asylum seekers are traumatized and need time for themselves to cope with their situation. According to a volunteer, he first asks new people where they are from, how old they are and what their profession is. Then he leaves them alone and waits until they come to him by themselves. Besides that, first the basic needs of the asylum seekers need to be met. They are housing, food, and clothes. After the asylum seekers had some time to settle down, they need a person who shows them everything and explains who everything works. Someone that accompanies them to the authorities or doctors and brings them in contact with other locals. The asylum seekers have the need to be independent and to do things alone as well. It is also important to support them to become independent e.g. by providing them bikes or explaining to them how the public transport works. Besides all the material support, it is important, according to a volunteer, to give the asylum seekers security. It can be provided by involving other asylum seekers in the social support services. They have a better understanding of the situation of the newly asylum seekers. According to a social support provider, asylum seekers need someone, who experienced the same and that can help them to go along. Finally, asylum seekers need opportunities to learn the German language. Official courses, as well as private support, are both needed.

All interviewed social support providers agree that the above-mentioned needs are satisfied by the social support services they and the other providers offer. Especially the work of the local contact persons play a big role in satisfying the needs of the asylum seekers. They are in contact with the asylum seekers on a regular base and are the first persons that the asylum seekers approach for help. Besides that, the other projects, e.g. the *Kleiderkammer* meets the need of asylum seekers. In this case, the need for clothes and other things for an affordable price. Nevertheless, most of the interviewees think that doing more is still possible. For example, one volunteers wishes a greater involvement of the churches and sports clubs. Another volunteer wants to offer a place just for women in order to meet their specific needs. However, a few social support provider doubt that really all asylum seekers in the area of the VG Wörrstadt are reached by the available social support services. Especially in the communities without any local contact persons for the asylum seekers.

Summarized the social support providers think that the situation of the asylum seekers in the VG Wörrstadt is very good. In general, the atmosphere is positive and there is no open resistance against the asylum seeker. The support is going quite well in most of the villages. Additionally, the social support providers believe that the services they offer, meet the needs of asylum seekers but acknowledge that doing more is possible. After the final chapter about the collected data, the following chapters will deal with the analysis of the just presented data.

6. Analysis

The last chapter gave an overview about the collected data. In detail, about the social support services for asylum seekers and the situations and needs of the asylum seekers. In the following analysis chapter, I will conduct the last step of the need assessment, namely the evaluation if the available social support service are able to satisfy the needs of the asylum seekers. First I will categorize the social support services into formal and informal support. After that, I will investigate the formal and informal social support services and their ability to serve the needs of the asylum seekers apart from each other and then merge the results of both of them to get a complete picture. We will see if the statement from the social support providers about the need satisfaction is true. Lastly, I will compare the perspectives of the asylum seekers and the social support providers concerning the situations and needs of the asylum seeker.

6.1. Defining formal and informal social support services

According to Hernandez-Plaza et al., (2004) social support services can be categorized into two different groups, namely into formal social support and informal social support (see chapter 2.3). Formal social support is offered by organizations or institutions, while informal social support comes from the own social network e.g. family and friends (Hernandez-Plaza et al., 2004; Whittaker & Garbarino, 1983). Several studies found out that people in need prefer informal social support over formal social support (Cowen, 1982; Hernandez-Plaza et al., 2004; Litwak, 1985). That's the reason Hernandez-Plaza et al., (2004) propose to have a closer look at the informal support. In order to see if their results likewise apply to my findings, I will now first categories the social support services I found during my research.

First of all, the municipality of the VG Wörrstadt is clearly a formal support provider. It is an official institution, the work is done by professionals, the activities are planned, and they have a one-way character. The next two projects, namely the *Café Willkommen* and the *Kleiderkammer*, are more difficult to define. They have characteristics of formal as well as informal services. In favor of an informal service are the facts that they are not part of an official organization and are run by non-professionals. However, both projects are planned and happen regularly. The support offered by the projects is not based on individual contacts, which is the main characteristic of an informal social support service.

As I mentioned in the description of the *Kleiderkammer* in chapter 5.1.5, the project was initiated by the municipality of the VG Wörrstadt. Based on that reasons, I defined the *Kleiderkammer* as formal social support service. The *Café Willkommen* was initiated by the *Flüchtlingshilfe VG Wörrstadt* and the protestant church in Wörrstadt. Therefore, it has more characteristics of a formal social support service and will be categorized as one as well. The official German courses, which I described in chapter 5.2.3, are formal social support services. They are organized and financed by different NGO's or language schools and are conducted on a regular base by professional teachers. The next service, the *Bürgerbus*, I also define as formal. Although it is run by volunteers, the project is officially initiated, managed, and financed by the municipality of the VG Wörrstadt. Additionally, it is an organized activity and has a one-way character.

The next social support service is the Christmas celebration for the young asylum seekers children. It is clearly informal. Although it was organized by a school class in cooperation with the *Café Willkommen*, which I just classified as formal support service, the whole organization happened because of informal contacts. Also the young asylum seekers, who were invited, were told by their local contact persons and not e.g. from the municipality employees and it was a one-time activity. The German children also had a lot of fun and gained some experiences, so they got something out of it as well.

The individual support, which happens in all villages, is totally informal. It has all characteristics of an informal service e.g. it is based on the social network of the people and it often takes place unplanned and irregular. The private German support in Wörrstadt and in Partenheim are clearly informal, too. They are not conducted by professionals and came into place because of private contacts. The German courses in Saulheim have some formal characteristics. The courses are planned, happen regular, and have a one-way character. On the other hand, the different courses are not held by professional teachers and are not affiliated with an official organization or institution. That are the reasons I decided to categorize them as informal social support. Another social support service where it is a little bit unclear if it is a formal or informal service is the German course in Schornsheim. It has formal and informal characteristics. It happens regular and is conducted by a professional teacher, but the teacher is not paid for it. Additionally, the course is not affiliated with any organization. The teacher is actually a part of the social network of the asylum seeker in Schornsheim and supports them a lot on an individual base, too. In contrast to the *Kleiderkammer* and the *Café Willkommen*, which I defined as formal, I categorize the German course in Schornsheim as informal. The main difference to the two other projects is in my opinion their affiliation to official institutions, while the German course is not.

The sports clubs, the libraries, and the elderly home are all formal social support providers. Their services are all conducted by professionals and they are all official organizations. The services of the Mosque and the Churches are clearly formal, too, based on the same reasons as the just mentioned ones. The services of the *TAFEL*, the *Café Asyl*, and the authorities in Alzey, which are situated outside the area of the VG Wörrstadt, are all formal social support services. They are provided by an institution or

organizations, are conducted by professionals and have a one-way character. All events, like the game evening in Wörrstadt, the Café der Begegnung in Saulheim or the Stammtisch in Schornsheim, are informal services. Although they all take place in rooms of the churches, they are organized by people not affiliated with any official organizations or institution. The events are all organized within a network of people, who know each other, which is a characteristic of informal support services, too. Table 6 presents an overview of the classification of all social support services, which were found in the study area.

Table 6 Social support services

Social support services	Formal	Informal
Municipality of the VG Wörrstadt	X	
Cafe Willkommen	X	
Kleiderkammer	X	
Official German Courses / Language schools	X	
Bürgerbus	X	
Church / Mosque	X	
Individual support		X
Private German support		X
Sport clubs / Choir	X	
Libraries	X	
Internship at elderly home	X	
Events (e.g. Café der Begegnung, Willkommenscafe, Stammtisch, Game evening)		X
TAFEL	X	
Authorities Alzey	X	
Café Asyl Alzey	X	

From Table 6 it seems very clear, which services are formal and which are informal. However, like the example with the German courses in Schornsheim and the *Café Willkommen / Kleiderkammer* illustrate, it is not always clear if it is a formal or informal social support service. Sometimes the services have some characteristics of both definitions. Formal services, like official German courses, can have informal characters when participants ask the teacher for individual help not connected to German class. Informal support can be offered by a professional, but on a personal level, like the German course in Schornsheim. From time to time informal experiences can even lead to the start of a formal project. The *Café Willkommen* project is an example for that. The idea developed out of the informal support for individual asylum seekers. The other way around it happens that out of formal services informal services develop. The *Café Willkommen* project is such a formal service from where informal social support starts

from. Occasionally, formal and informal services indeed complement each other or work together. An example for that is the German support in Partenheim. A woman meets with some asylum seekers three times a week in order to repeat what the participants learned in the official course. Another example is that the employees of the municipality are in contact with the local volunteers and help each other out once in a while. Another very important connection between formal social support services and informal social support services is that the informal support is often the way that leads to the satisfaction of a need by a formal support service. The individual support offered by local contact persons shows that very well. Examples are transport, translations or looking up information for the asylum seekers.

These are just a few examples of the connections between formal and informal social support services that I found in the area of the study. Analyzing these connections more in detail is out of the scope of this thesis. Besides that, more and detailed information about the connections between all involved actors, locals as well as asylum seekers, are needed to get a complete picture of the whole network, which evolved around asylum seekers. Based on the distinction made in this chapter, I will analyze the formal social support services in the following chapter.

6.2. Formal social support services

Formal social support is characterized as being affiliated with an organization or institution, happening regular, and having a one-way character. Furthermore, formal support is provided by professionals. First, I will describe the needs that are met by the services and give a short evaluation whether the needs are met effectively. Furthermore, I will evaluate if the services are known and used by the asylum seekers. After that, I will analyze if the needs of the asylum seekers are all served by the available formal social support services.

The services of the VG Wörrstadt meet the need of housing. They provide an accommodation for every asylum seeker, which is used by all of them. The social support service fulfills the basic needs of housing, but not more. Some asylum seekers complain about the size of the accommodations or about too little furniture or no internet access. Nevertheless, are the most asylum seekers aware of the fact that a lot of people come to Germany and they know that they have to patient and have to take what they get. Furthermore, the municipality also meet the need for a job. At least for a few asylum seekers who work for them for one euro per hour (see 5.2.3). The working opportunity is used by some of the asylum seekers, but it is not known by everybody. The municipality can only offer a few jobs, they cannot provide jobs for everyone. Summed up, the municipality offers instrumental support to the asylum seekers.

The next formal social support project, the *Café Willkommen* meets several needs of the asylum seekers. First of all, it is a place where asylum seekers can get support and information. So it serves the need of having a local contact person. Besides that, it also meets the need of having social contacts because one aim of the project is to bring

people into contact with each other and to provide a place to talk to each other. The need for learning the German language is served as well through playing games and having conversations. If needed, questions about grammar are answered. Finally, it can meet the need for motivation and encouragement. The asylum seekers can talk to other asylum seekers and can exchange experiences or help each other. Additionally, one volunteer of the project has a migration background. He can also motivate them by telling his story. Summarized the *Café Willkommen* meets the needs of having a local contact person, social contacts/relationships, language and motivation/encouragement. Most of the asylum seekers know the *Café Willkommen* or, at least, heard about it. However, most of them think that it is only a place to go when they have a problem or a question. Most of the asylum seekers who have a local contact person, which they see regular, do not go to the *Café Willkommen*. They can satisfy their needs by asking him/her. A few asylum seekers do not know the project at all. Asylum seekers who do not have a local contact person go more often to the *Café Willkommen*. The asylum seekers who do not live in Wörrstadt have the problem that they need to go there by public transport or that someone needs to bring them. From some villages it is very complicated, so they only use the public transport, when they really need to go to the *Café Willkommen*. Thus, most asylum seekers only visit the *Café Willkommen* on an irregular base. That the *Café Willkommen* is also a place for meeting other people and to practice the German language, is not widely known. Only a few asylum seekers visit it on a regular base and use the opportunities to meet their needs of social contacts and improving their German skills. It seems, no one visits the *Café Willkommen* in order to satisfy the need for motivation and encouragement. So summed up, the *Café Willkommen* theoretically serves different needs the asylum seekers have and provides instrumental, information and emotional support.

The need for affordable and fitting clothes is met by the *Kleiderkammer*. Nearly all asylum seekers know the *Kleiderkammer* and go there in order to get clothes. Occasionally, it can happen that people do not find anything, which fits them because the shop depends on donations and can only offer what they get. According to the volunteers of the *Kleiderkammer*, the asylum seekers come on a regular base to check if they have new clothes. So sooner or later, everyone finds something, so the service of the *Kleiderkammer* is effective to meet the need for clothes. Also, the asylum seekers themselves appreciate the opportunities to get cheap clothes there. The *Kleiderkammer* has the potential to meet the need of social contacts as well. For example, one female asylum seeker helps in the *Kleiderkammer* as a volunteer. So for her, it is actually a place to meet other people and to improve her language skills. However, this is an exception. For the rest of the asylum seekers it only serves as a place to get affordable clothes, so it offers just instrumental support.

The different official German courses clearly meet the need of learning the German language. Besides, it is a place where asylum seekers meet other people. So it also serves the social needs of the asylum seekers. The official courses are all conducted by professional teachers and take place several times a week. So theoretically, they offer an effective service to meet the need of learning German. However, not all asylum

seekers know or use the official courses. Firstly, not enough courses for all asylum seekers are available. The lack of courses has to do with the fact that there are not enough professional teachers who are actually allowed to conduct such official courses. Secondly, not all asylum seekers are allowed to participate in the courses, depending on their country of origin. Another problem is that the participants often have different educational backgrounds and skills. This makes it difficult to give adequate classes for everyone. Transport to the courses is also a problem. For longer courses it can get very expensive to buy the tickets. Sometimes the transport connections are also not available or very complicated. Some asylum seekers, who already have more advanced German skills, go to courses e.g. in Mainz because no adequate courses for them are available in the area of the VG Wörrstadt. However, not all asylum seekers know the opportunities in Mainz or can afford it. The participants of the official courses go more or less regular. Summarized you can say that the official German courses clearly meet the need of learning the language in an effective way. They clearly offer instrumental support and sometimes emotional support. Nevertheless, not enough courses for everyone and for every level take place in the area of the VG Wörrstadt.

The *Bürgerbus* is not so much known by the asylum seekers. It meets the need of public transport. The asylum seekers who live in Wörrstadt or Saulheim do not have the need to use the *Bürgerbus* because they can walk to the shops or the train station. It theoretically serves more the needs of the asylum seekers who live in the smaller villages. According to a newspaper article, the *Bürgerbus* is used by asylum seekers, but during the data collection phase I did not meet anyone who used it. So I cannot make any statement about the utilization and efficiency. Nevertheless, theoretically, it provides instrumental support.

The church and the mosque definitely meet the need of religion. Religious asylum seekers mostly know the places and times of the services and go there on a regular base. For less religious asylum seekers it does not play a big role. Being part of a religious community can give the feeling of security and happiness. Besides that, it could meet the need of social contacts and language. In reality, there might actually be a language barrier for those asylum seekers who do not speak German yet. For the Muslims, it seems that it does not meet the need of having social contacts and improving their language skills at all. According to a Muslim asylum seeker, the people in the mosque just speak Turkish, so he just goes there for praying. All in all, the religious services offer emotional support.

Taking part in the sports clubs or the choir serves the asylum seekers needs of leisure activities, social contacts, and language. Many asylum seekers acknowledge that, but only a few really participate e.g. in the soccer training. Especially asylum seekers who just arrived, do not know that they can take part in the sports training. Besides that, satisfying the need of leisure activities does not really has a high priority for most of the asylum seekers at the moment. The possibilities to borrow books or free in the different libraries is not known by a lot of asylum seekers. Just a few use it, although it serves the need of improving their language skills. So in theory effective to meet needs, but in

reality they are not used a lot. These services all offer instrumental support, but possibly also emotional support.

The internship possibilities in the elderly home in Wörrstadt mainly meet the need of having a job. Additionally, it meets the needs of the learning the German language and social contacts. However, this applies only for the three interns and not for other asylum seekers. The combination of working and learning the language is very effective in order to meet the needs of the asylum seekers. It is clearly a service that offers instrumental support, but being part of a team of colleagues might also give emotional support.

The next formal support service, the *TAFEL* meets the basic need of food. It is not known by all asylum seekers. However, the ones who know it go there regular. The only problem is, that the *TAFEL* is in Alzey, so it is not accessible very easy for everyone. The second to last formal support service is the *Café Asyl* in Alzey. The asylum seekers can get all kind of information and support there. Finally, the local authorities satisfy the needs for food, clothes and health indirectly and is used by everybody. The asylum seekers get their money from the authorities so that they can buy food and clothes. Additionally, they get the health insurance certificate there. The authorities, the *Café Asyl* and the *TAFEL* all provide instrumental support, while the authorities and the *Café Asyl* might as well offer information support. Table 7 gives an overview of the formal social support services and the needs each of them meets.

Table 7 Comparison of formal social support services and needs

Social support services	Need
Municipality of the VG Wörrstadt	Housing + (Education and Jobs)
Cafe Willkommen	Local contact person + Social contacts / relationships + Language + Motivation and Encouragement
Kleiderkammer	Clothes + (Social contacts / relationships + language)
Official German Courses / Language schools	Language + Social contacts / relationships
Bürgerbus	Infrastructure
Church /Mosque	Religion + Social contacts / relationships + language + Emotions
Sport clubs / choir	Leisure activities + Social contacts / relationships + Language
Libraries	Language + (Social contacts / relationships)
Internship at elderly home	Education and Jobs + Language + Social contacts / relationships
TAFEL	Food
Local Authorities Alzey	Health + (Food + Clothes)
Café Asyl	Local contact person

All in all, there are social support services available exclusively for asylum seekers, but other services as well that can be used by asylum seekers and locals. The services exclusively for the asylum seekers are the services of the municipality, the *Café Willkommen*, and the *Café Asyl*, as well as the internships opportunities at the elderly home. At the same time, most of the needs of the asylum seekers have one or more corresponding formal social support services that can theoretically meet that need. Table 8 gives an overview of each need and the corresponding services that serves it.

Table 8 Needs and formal social support services

Needs	Formal social support service
Clarity about legal status	/
Clothes	Kleiderkammer
Education and Jobs	Municipality of VG Wörrstadt + elderly home
Emotions	Church/Mosque + Sport clubs/choir
Food	TAFEL
Health	Authorities in Alzey (-> doctor)
Housing	Municipality of the VG Wörrstadt
Infrastructure / Mobility	Bürgerbus
Language	German courses + libraries + Sport clubs/choir + Café Willkommen + church
Leisure activities	Sport clubs/choir, libraries
Local contact person	Café Willkommen + Café Asyl
Motivation and Encouragement	Café Willkommen
Religion	Church/Mosque
Social contacts / relationships	Sport clubs/choir + libraries + Café Willkommen + Kleiderkammer + German courses + Church/Mosque
Time	/

The basic needs of housing, food, clothes, and health are all satisfied by different formal social support services like the authorities, the *Kleiderkammer* or the *TAFEL*. The needs for leisure activities, social contacts, and religion are served by different organization e.g. religious institutions, sports clubs as well as by the *Café Willkommen*. In addition, the *Café Willkommen* meets the need of having a local contact person and for motivation and encouragement. The need for mobility can be met by the *Bürgerbus* project. Several formal social support services are available to learn or improve the language skills. However, some official courses are not open to all asylum seekers (see 5.2.3). A few possibilities to get a job are offered by the municipality or the elderly home. Nevertheless, these possibilities are not enough to meet the need for a job for all asylum seekers. The need for emotions can possibly be met by the religious institutions or the sports clubs. However, it counts only for the religious and/or sportive asylum seekers. The needs for certain emotions are difficult to meet by any formal social support,

because the formal services mostly have a one-way character, while emotions are based on mutual giving and taking. Two needs of the asylum seekers cannot be met by any formal social support service. The first need is to have clarity about the legal status. The decision about the status is made by the regional authorities and the process can take a lot of time. Satisfying it lies not in the scope of any formal social support provider in the area of study. Even the local authorities cannot do anything about it. The second need is time to rest and to settle down.

Language, education and jobs, as well as clarity about their legal status were rank as most important needs by the interviewed asylum seekers. As we just saw, the need to have clarity about the legal status cannot be met by the formal social support services. So one of the most important needs of the asylum seekers is impossible to meet. The two most important needs are learning the German language and finding a job/finishing education, whereas learning the German language is ranked higher. For both needs formal social support is theoretically available and also used. Nevertheless, the number e.g. of places in the German courses or jobs is limited, so not all asylum seekers can participate and satisfy these very important needs. In contrast to the need of having clarity about the legal status, these two needs are not impossible to meet by formal social support services. A very effective as well as efficient solution for meeting them is actually the internship opportunities connected to a German course, which the elderly home is offering. More opportunities like that would be able to meet both needs in a more effective way.

Generally speaking, the formal social support mostly provides instrumental support. Two services additionally give information support. Only a few social support services are theoretically able to offer emotional support. The comparison of the available formal social support services with the needs of the asylum seekers shows that every formal social support service meets one or more needs and that nearly every need can be satisfied by one or more formal services. Only two needs cannot be met by the available formal social support services. Additionally, the satisfaction of some needs is not available for all asylum seekers because the services are limited or the asylum seekers are not allowed to participate. That applies especially to the two most important needs of the asylum seekers, learning the German language and finding a job. The available formal social support services are not able to meet this needs in a sufficient way for all asylum seekers. Additionally, not all available services are known or used by all asylum seekers in the same way and frequency. They might also satisfy the needs in another way already. In order to find out if it is true, I will have a look at the available informal social support services for the asylum seekers and if they are able to meet their needs.

6.3. Informal social support

While formal social support is provided by professionally, informal social support is offered by the social network of individuals. The network consists of family, friends, neighbors, teachers or other people. In chapter 6.2 I defined three groups of informal

social support, namely individual support, events and German courses. This three kinds of support will be the base for the analysis of the following chapter. I will first explore which function the informal support has. Furthermore, I will analyze the social support networks of the asylum seekers. I will have a look if their social contacts are able to act as a source of support for them, how the asylum seekers utilize the support and if it is effective to meet their needs. Finally, I will see if the three mentioned informal support services meet the needs of the asylum seekers.

First I will have a look, what kind of function the available social support has. As I described in chapter 2.3. social support can be divided in instrumental, emotional as well as in information support. Instrumental support includes material and services, emotional support includes feelings like respect, love or belonging, and information support includes the giving of information and connecting to higher institutions. All three support services, which I defined as informal in chapter 6.1, provide instrumental support. Especially the individual support mainly consist of material support or services, e.g. transport, organizing things, making phone calls. Besides that, it can provide information and connections to higher institutions, so it falls into the category of information support, too. Likewise, it has the potential to give emotional support. The different events offer emotional support, as well. They are organized mainly with the purpose to connect locals and asylum seekers. Thus, they give feelings of belonging, respect and being welcome. Finally, the German courses fall in the category of instrumental support. Summed up, the informal social support is able to cover all three sub-categories of support.

The social network of the asylum seekers consists of three different groups, which may act as a source of support. These are on the one hand locals and on the other hand other asylum seekers. In most of the villages a group of volunteers exists that support all asylum seekers that live there. The asylum seekers have either a local contact person or know one or two people they can ask for help, e.g. neighbors, owners of the house they live in, or private German teachers. These people are all very eager to help the asylum seekers to meet their needs. Of course, they cannot satisfy all the need of the asylum seekers immediately, but they always try to meet the needs as far as it is possible. When they are not able to satisfy the needs of the asylum seekers, they refer them to a social support service, which can satisfy the need, or explain them the reasons why it is not possible. All asylum seekers use those opportunities. They contact the volunteers frequently when they need help. All interviewed asylum seekers appreciate the help and are very thankful for it. The volunteers in Saulheim and Wörrstadt have the problem that they do not know all asylums seekers accommodations. So there it is not sure if all asylum seekers know local people that can support them. In Wallertheim and Vendersheim are individuals who support the asylum seekers. However, I do not have any further data in order to evaluate the use and efficiency of their resources. I assume they are comparable to the support of the volunteers in the other villages. According to an asylum seeker from Armsheim, he does not know any locals there who support the asylum seekers. Based on other observations, I assume the asylum seekers in Armsheim do not have much contact with locals and that their main informal sources of

support are the other asylum seekers, they live together with. I will go more into detail into that source in the next paragraph. I do not have any data about Spiesheim.

Another sources of help are the other asylum seekers who live in the same accommodations. In some situations they can help each other, so they do not need to approach the local contact person for it. The last possible source, which was mentioned by several interviewees, are other asylum seekers who do not live in the area of the VG Wörrstadt. They met them on their journey or when they registered in Germany. Some of them are still in contact. If they use them also as a resource to meet their needs, is not clear. However, one asylum seeker from Somalia mentioned, that he got the information about a language school from other Somalis in Germany, who already go there. He said that they have some kind of network between the Somalis, who live in Germany, through which they exchange information. Furthermore, a volunteer mentioned that the Syrians he supports, are in contact with other Syrians, who live everywhere in Germany. He experienced that through the network information and experiences are exchanged. Unfortunately, those information are, according to him, not always true. So the effectivity of those sources is questionable. The order in which the asylum seekers use the sources is as followed. First they always approach their local contact person, followed by housemates and lastly other asylum seekers, who live elsewhere in Germany. All these sources only consist of a few people, but these contacts seem to be used by the asylum seekers repeatedly and for a long time. For example, asylum seekers are often still in contact with the local people they got to know first, even after they moved somewhere else. That shows, how important initially contacts are for the asylum seekers. It might as well imply that those locals gained the trust of the asylum seekers.

The locals mostly offer instrumental and information support, which can be concluded from the content of the individual support reported to me by the volunteers. It includes material support e.g. clothes or furniture, services like transport or translation as well as the provision of all kinds of information the asylum seekers need. Emotional support is given in individual cases as well, e.g. through listening to the problems of the asylum seekers or taking them on a trip or to a restaurant. The interviews with the asylum seekers point out that the other asylum seekers can provide information support, especially the ones who are already in Germany for a longer time. They also provide instrumental support, but rather intangible like translations than material support. Finally, other asylum seekers can give emotional support, but some interview responses indicate that it also depends on the characteristics of the people. Some said that they do a lot together with their housemates and others do not have much contact with them besides for getting information support. The last group of contacts, other asylum seekers who live somewhere else in Germany, are a source of information, thus, they offer information support. On balance, are the three sources together able to provide all three kinds of support. Lacking on of the sources can, but must not necessarily lead to unmet needs. Using all three sources increases the chance of meeting one's own needs.

In chapter 6.1 I defined three groups of social support services as informal, namely individual support, private German courses and several events. When you compare the

needs of the asylum seekers with the available informal support, again nearly all of them can theoretically be satisfied. The services that are grouped under the topic of individual support are able to cover nearly all needs of the asylum seekers, like Table 9 shows. Not all needs can be met immediately by the individual support. However, according to the volunteers, who support asylum seekers on an individual base, they support them in all areas, depending on what the individual asylum seeker needs in that moment. They do not e.g. provide a job for them but they help them with finding one. Or they accompany them to the doctor, the sports club or the church. By doing that, they help to satisfy the corresponding need. The only need, they cannot satisfy, is the need of having clarity about their legal status (see 6.2). They can only help them with filling in the documents or to drive them to the authorities. Also, the private German support and the events play a role in the satisfaction of the needs of the asylum seekers. Especially the private German support is used a lot by the asylum seekers. Often in addition to the official German courses. Also the different events, like the *Café der Begegnung* or the *Willkommens-Café* in Partenheim, meet e.g. the need for social contacts. Together with the individual support, they cover all needs of the asylum seekers besides one.

Table 9 Needs and informal social support

Needs	Informal social support
Clarity about legal status	
Clothes	Individual support
Education and Jobs	Individual support
Emotions	Individual support / Events
Food	Individual support
Health	Individual support
Housing	Individual support
Infrastructure	Individual support
Language	German support
Leisure activities	Events / Individual support
Local contact person	Individual support
Motivation and Encouragement	Individual support
Religion	Individual support
Social contacts / relationships	Individual support / Events / German support
Time	Individual support

Looking again at the most important needs of the asylum seekers, we see that the need of having clarity about their legal status cannot be met by the informal social support, too. The two other important needs, language and working, are theoretically covered by the individual support and private German support.

Like this chapter shows, the informal social support functions as instrumental, emotional, and information support. Furthermore, informal sources of support are available for the asylum seekers in order to meet their needs. Summarized, the asylum seekers have three different informal sources to meet their needs. Locals, other asylum seekers, who

live in the same accommodation or somewhere else in Germany. They are all used differently and for different purposes. The opportunity to ask locals or housemates is used frequently and is most effective to meet the needs of the asylum seekers. Often the local contacts are the first persons who the asylum seekers ask when they need something. The local contact person either can satisfy the need by itself or refers the asylum seekers to a service, which can meet the need. Networks between asylum seekers from the same country exist as well and are used sometimes. However, there is no prove about the effectivity of the resources. The other way around, all needs of the asylum seekers can theoretically be met by the available informal social support services. Sometimes, the social support does not provide the final solution for a need but assists in finding a solution. Here it is again important to mention, that this is not the case for all asylum seekers in the area of the VG Wörrstadt. Some have and use all three informal sources mentioned above and receive all informal social support services. Others e.g. do not know any locals or do not know/go to events or participate in any private German courses.

6.4. Comparison of formal and informal social support services

The evaluation of the formal social support services revealed that they all serve one or more needs. Additionally, it showed that most of the needs of the asylum seekers can be met by the available formal social support services. The same is true for the available informal social support services. Now I will compare the formal and informal support services concerning their utilization. Furthermore, I will discuss some barriers to access formal social support services.

It seems that more different formal social support services are exist than informal ones. However, the informal individual support has the potential to cover nearly all needs of the asylum seekers at once, while the formal social support services often just serve a smaller number of needs or just one. The interviews and observations emphasized that the asylum seekers prefer to use the informal social support services rather than the formal social support services, even when they know the formal services. This is affirmed also through the comparison of the time the volunteers, who offer individual support, spend and the volunteers, who work in the *Café Willkommen* spend. Sometimes it happens, that no one comes to the *Café Willkommen* when it is open. In contrast, the volunteers who support asylum seekers individually spend up to 2-3 days per week to help them. That most of the asylum seekers prefer informal support, does not mean, that they do not use formal social support services at all. As I described above, nearly all asylum seekers go to the *Kleiderkammer*. The asylum seekers, who do not live in Wörrstadt, often are brought to the *Kleiderkammer* by car from a volunteer from their village. So they use an informal service to reach a formal service. The same counts e.g. for appointments at the authorities. Sometimes also formal and informal services complement each other to meet a need effectively. I already discussed this in chapter 6.1. Another example is, that some asylum seekers who participate in an official German course get private German lessons, too. Let alone, both services would not be

efficient enough as they are together. It seems that the availability of both services and their connections to each other are important for the satisfaction of the needs. Without each other a lot more needs would be unmet.

A barrier to the utilization of formal services is the access. Especially the asylum seekers who live in the smaller villages have problems with the transport. They can, of course, go by public transport, but it costs a lot of time and money. Sometimes volunteers bring them by car, when they have no other possibility. So for the asylum seekers there it is just easier to ask e.g. their neighbor for help, instead of going to Wörrstadt or Alzey. Asylum seekers from Wörrstadt or Saulheim use the formal social support services more often because for them they are easier to reach. For example, going by train to the *TAFEL* in Alzey or to a German course in Mainz is not very complicated for them. Another problem is the language. Not all asylum seekers speak enough German or English to solve problems alone. Even when they speak German quite well, they prefer to ask a local person to help them, because the locals can solve problems much faster than they can do it. So they chose the informal social support services because they are more effective to solve their problems and meet their needs. Sometimes a barrier to us a formal support service is a lack of information. Trust might also play a role. The asylum seekers know the local contact persons better and might build up a relationship with them. It is easier to approach them for something, than a person they do not know. The last barrier to meet some needs of the asylum seekers is actually the German asylum law. This is the case for the need of working. One or the other asylum seeker gets a job offer, but cannot start working because the asylum law does not allow it. The asylum law also does not allow certain types of asylum seekers to join German courses as I explained in 5.2.3. All that again shows, theoretically formal social support is available, but in reality, it is not accessible to all asylum seekers.

In conclusion, formal support services are indeed important, although they are less frequently used. Informal support services are used frequently by the asylum seekers and are often the first choice. Leave aside constraints by the asylum law, together, formal and informal support services have theoretically the opportunities to meet all needs of the asylum seekers. In reality I can only say that it counts for most of the asylum seekers living in Wörrstadt, Saulheim, Partenheim, Wallertheim and Schornsheim. I do not have any information about the asylum seekers who live in the other villages. However, the services for meeting the needs in fact exist. Therefore, the most important thing is that the asylum seekers get the information about the services. Then also the other barriers to accessing the services can be solved.

6.5. Comparisons of views of the stakeholder groups

The social support that is offered by the social support providers is, of course, based on how they evaluate the situation of the asylum seekers and what they think is important for them. Therefore, I explored the opinions of the social support providers, which I

described in chapter 5.3. In this chapter, I will compare their views with the ones of the asylum seekers.

The views of the social support providers on the needs of the asylum seekers fits quite well with the statements of the asylum seekers. Nearly no gap exists between the assumptions of the volunteers and the opinions of the asylum seekers. They all agree that it is important to first welcome the new asylum seekers. After that, they need some time to rest and settle down. Next to that, the asylum seekers, of course, need to satisfy their basic needs like housing, food, and clothes. After an adjustment time, the social support providers say that new people need a contact person who shows them around and explains them, how everything works. From the point of view of the asylum seekers, that is also very important, but the person can be another asylum seeker, who is in Germany already for a longer time and knows everything, too. In general, both groups see the need to have contact with other asylum seekers, who understand what they experienced. Finally asylum seekers and volunteers agree that asylum seekers need opportunities to learn the German language. Both groups agree on the point, that without speaking the German language you cannot start a new life in Germany. This is also visible in the prioritization of the need made by the asylum seekers themselves. Learning the German language was mentioned by all interviewed asylum seeker. It was seen by all of them as essential before satisfying other needs they have, like finding a job.

The evaluation of the situation of asylum seekers made by themselves and by the social support providers do not differentiate a lot. The social support providers assess the situation as good and the atmosphere as positive. I did not hear anything different from the asylum seekers. No one really mentioned any major problems, e.g. in their neighborhoods. The asylum seekers appreciate, like the social support providers, that they do not have to live in mass accommodations, like sports halls or tents. However, some asylum seekers are not completely satisfied with their housing situations, but on that point the social support providers agree upon, too. They also criticize that some things e.g. need to be repaired. Both groups confirm to the fact that it is good to live together with other people from the same country. The social support providers assume they help each other as well, which is confirmed by the asylum seekers.

It seems that the volunteers know the asylum seekers and their situations very well. The social support providers have a realistic view of the whole situation and have a good feeling what the asylum seekers need. Their evaluation of the needs of the asylum seekers fit together quite well with the self-evaluation of the asylum seekers. When you compare the statement of the social support providers that the needs of the asylum seekers are met, with the results from the above chapters, you see that they were mostly right. There are services available for all the needs of the asylum seekers.

7. Discussion and Conclusion

The aim of this research was to explore how the needs of asylum seekers can be satisfied by the available social support. It explored the needs of the asylum seekers as well as the available social support services and compared them to each other. The focus was intentionally put on a rural area because it did not get any attention from the migration research until now. With regard to the current situation in Germany, where more and more asylum seekers are placed in rural areas, the integration of asylum seekers on a local level becomes very important. In order to support the integration of asylum seekers, the thesis at hand attempted to answer the following research questions:

How does the available social support satisfy the needs of the asylum seekers?

- a) What are the needs of asylum the seekers?
- b) What formal social support is available to satisfy the needs of the asylum seekers?
- c) What informal social support is available to satisfy the needs of the asylum seekers?
- d) What discrepancies exist between the available social support and the needs of the asylum seekers?

In this concluding chapter, I will first answer the research questions and connect the answer to the objective of the study at hand. After that I will discuss what my findings mean in connection to the need assessment model that was used. It will be followed by an evaluation of the findings in the context of the current state of research. Then I will connect the findings to the current situation in Germany and give some policy recommendations. After that, I will reflect on the process and limitations of this research. Finally, I will provide some suggestions for further research.

First, I briefly want to recap the results of the need analysis. The basic needs of the asylum seekers are housing, food, clothes, and transportation. Furthermore, they need a local contact person, who supports them with all their questions and problems. Other needs are social contacts, leisure activities. For some asylum seekers also religious services are important. Less tangible needs include emotions, like love, respect, and belonging, as well as motivation and encouragement. Besides that, the asylum seekers need time to rest, especially shortly after arrival. The most important needs of the asylum seekers are learning the German language, education and working as well as having clarity about their legal status.

The social resource analysis showed that several formal and informal social support services exist. Four of the formal support services are exclusively for asylum seekers, namely the services of the municipality, the *Café Willkommen*, the *Café Asyl* and the internship opportunities at the elderly home. The other identified formal support services, which are available for the asylum seekers as well as other people, are the *Kleiderkammer*, German courses, the *Bürgerbus*, religious services, leisure

associations, libraries, the *TAFEL* and the authorities in Alzey. Altogether, the formal services offer instrumental, information and sometimes emotional support. Informal support is provided by locals and other asylum seekers. It includes individual support, German support, and the organization of events for the asylum seekers. The individual support covers topics of daily life, authority issues and sometimes emotional support. The informal support often does not satisfy the needs directly but makes the connection to another support service that is able to satisfy the needs.

In theory, nearly no discrepancies between the needs of the asylum seekers and the available social support services exist. The comparison of the needs with the available formal as well as informal support indicates that for every need, besides one, a corresponding social support exist. One gap that cannot be closed by the social support is the decision about the permission to stay. Serving this need lies out of the scope of the services. Furthermore, every social support service meets, at least, one or sometimes several needs of the asylum seekers. However, in reality, not all asylum seekers have access to all available social support services. Especially the ones who do not have an informal local contact person they can ask for help have less access to the social support services than asylum seekers who know someone. So the main barrier to accessing the social support services is a lack of knowledge on the side of the asylum seekers.

Coming back to the main research question, on how the available social support satisfies the needs of the asylum seekers. The social support is only able to satisfy all the needs of the asylum seekers by working together. Standing alone, most of the available support services are not able to serve the needs of the asylum seekers in a sufficient way. The analysis of the formal social support showed that it is able to satisfy the needs of the asylum seekers directly, by offering a solution for specific needs. In contrast, the informal social support rather meets needs indirectly by providing help to serve the needs than provides direct satisfaction. In other words, the informal support often provides a way to achieve the satisfaction of the need, while the definite satisfaction of the specific need is given by a formal social service. The evaluation of the efficiency of the services indicated that some specific needs of the asylum seekers are best met when formal and informal services complement each other or are used parallel to each other. Another important result is that informal social support often closes the gap between what the formal support services are able or willing to offer and what the asylum seekers need. This is demonstrated by the fact that informal services and formal services exist for serving the same need. Furthermore, these informal support services are often used more frequently than the formal social support services. A reason for this is that informal support is easier to access for most asylum seekers. Additionally, social support is provided by different sources, which serve different kinds of needs. If available, informal support is the first choice of the asylum seekers, followed by the formal sources. However, when the asylum seekers perceive formal sources as more effective, they use them as well. The analysis also highlights, that the satisfaction of a need often starts with asking a local contact person. The person either is able to meet the needs or refers to a service, which can serve the need. So again, formal and

informal sources both are able to serve different needs of the asylum seekers by being both available next to each other. Nevertheless, the social support services at hand are only in theory able to satisfy the needs of all asylum seekers. In reality, they are not able to offer the same support to all asylum seekers to the same extent. So the available social support services only provide a partly satisfaction of the needs of all asylum seekers, because they only can serve the needs of the asylum seekers who know about the services. They do not reach the people who do not know about them. Finally, the most important point is, that the social support services are able to meet the needs of the asylum seekers because they are flexible. This is shown by the fact that formal or informal services are used interchanging and are adapted to the individual needs of the asylum seekers in order to serve them.

With the above answers in mind, I want to come back now to the objective stated in the introduction chapter. The objective was to contribute to the integration of asylum seekers into the German society in rural areas by investigating the available social support and its ability to satisfy the needs of the asylum seekers. My findings do not provide a way how integrations is working nor does it proposes a fixed set of interventions to support integration. It rather gives a direction, which might be worth to follow. Integration is a process rather than a single event. It is also a two-way process, where the hosting society as well has to make a step towards the integrating people. The findings of this research contribute to the integration of asylum seekers by delineating what the hosting society can possibly contribute to the two-way process. By serving the needs of the asylum seekers, the hosting society shows that they are open for the asylum seekers, that they care about them and they want that the asylum seekers become part of their society. So the right social support can support the integration of the asylum seekers into the German society. In this case, the right social support is a mixture of formal and informal social support sources, which take into account the individual needs of the asylum seekers. Of course, it is not a guarantee for a successful integration of the asylum seekers into society because as I said integration is a two-way process. However, it makes it easier for the asylum seekers to contribute also their part the process of integration.

After I presented my practical conclusions in the previous paragraphs, I now want to close the circle and discuss what my findings mean for the theoretical model used in the thesis at hand. First I will have a look at the social resource analysis. My findings confirm the importance of informal sources of support for asylum seekers like the need assessment model by Hernandez-Plaza et al. (2004) proposed it. Nevertheless, I was, like I explained in chapter 6.1, not able to make a clear distinction between formal and informal support. This problem already emerged during the data collection phase, when I recognized that some social support providers are actually involved in both, formal and informal services. So I decided to not look separate at them but just examined all available social support the asylum seekers get. Later in the analysis phase I made a distinction between the formal and informal social support services based on the characteristics mentioned in chapter 2.3. This also proved to be difficult again because some social support services showed characteristics of formal as well as informal

support, they also complemented each other or even overlapped. Finally, informal services are often a means to an end to satisfy needs. These findings indicate that a distinction between formal and informal support seems to be inefficient, during the data collection, the analysis as well as the evaluation. My results also show that especially the overlapping or complementing of both kinds of support make them more effective and efficient. A pure assessment of both kinds of support apart from each other might not discover these connections and its benefits. Based on that, I propose to go beyond the distinction of formal and informal support, which means seeing both not as two different networks or systems but as one. Nevertheless, I would not get rid of the distinction between formal and informal support at all, because my conclusion emphasize the importance of informal support sources. However, I would see it more as characteristics and less as a clear distinction. It would also allow to have social support services that have characteristics of both kinds. Then it would also be possible to explore which characteristics foster utilization of the social support services. Coming back to the model of Hernandez-Plaza et al. (2004), I would propose the following changes in the social resource analysis. I would get rid of the distinction between formal and informal support. Instead, all social support available for the target group should be examined as one system or network, paying special attentions to overlaps and connections between different support services. Later in the analysis of the data, I propose to have a look at the formal or informal characteristics of the social support. Besides that, I suggest to use the proposed leading questions by Hernandez-Plaza et al. (2004) for the evaluation of all social support services but together and not apart from each other with a closer look on the connections between them.

Secondly, I want to reflect on my findings of the needs of asylum seekers in connection to the theory at hand. The model by Hernandez-Plaza et al. (2004) does not suggest any further analysis of the needs besides a prioritization. My overview about the needs of the asylum seekers indicates that the needs can be grouped in three main categories, namely basic needs, needs connected to education and working including language, and social needs, which include relationships, emotions or entertainment. Based on this categorization you see that the formal support services mostly meet the basic needs, while the other two categories are mostly satisfied by informal support. It seems that the informal support services close the gaps between unmet needs and what the formal support is not able to offer. My findings also show that different levels of needs exist. When one level of needs is satisfied, the next one becomes more important. That also explains why the most important needs are not the basic needs, because they are already satisfied, but education and working. Furthermore, this findings show that the formal support services seems to be better able to satisfy the basic needs, while the informal service might be more effective in meeting the needs of the other two categories. I think for designing new effective and efficient interventions the knowledge about the different levels of needs and which kind of support services meet which kinds of needs can be very important. Therefore, I suggest to include a more detailed analysis of the needs in the model of Hernandez-Plaza et al. (2004), which covers more than just examine priorities. In detail, I propose to look at different categories and levels of needs

as well as at emerging patterns between certain needs and the characteristics of the corresponding social support services.

Comparing the findings of the needs of the asylum seekers in the area of study with the needs mentioned in the literature, you see that they are quite similar. For example, a study with Hispanic immigrants pointed out that their needs are concerned with the topics of health care, housing, working, transportation as well as education and language (Strug & Mason, 2001). Another research conducted in Cairo, Egypt found similar needs of refugees like medical services, food, shelter, help with UNHCR cases, language, education and working (Briant & Kennedy, 2004). Furthermore, the studies all show that refugees, as well as immigrants, all have instrumental, emotional and information support needs (Barnes & Aguilar, 2007; Ryan et al., 2008; Strug & Mason, 2001). Despite these similarities, also differences between my findings and the literature exist. When you look at the priorities of the needs you will find different results. Hernandez-Plaza et al. (2004) found out that the three most important needs of Moroccan immigrants in Spain are housing, working and legal situation. For refugees in Cairo, the most important need is medical services, followed by help with their UNHCR cases as well as food and shelter (Briant & Kennedy, 2004). In contrast, my findings indicate that the most important needs are learning the German language, working and clarity about their legal status. This has several reasons. First of all, the target groups of the studies were slightly different. Although they are all migrants, refugees and asylum seekers are often forced to leave their country because of violence and war, while immigrants leave their country voluntary. For example, the refugees in Cairo are mostly from war zones, so many of them might have traumata and mental health problems and therefore rank medical services very high. The general context and setting plays a big role, too, and influences the ranking of the needs. For example, I did not find that medical services are needed that much by the asylum seekers, whereas in Cairo it was ranked as the highest need. That might have to do with the legal situation and laws. In Germany, every asylum seekers can use the basic medical services for free, while that is not the case in Cairo. Another example is housing. The Moroccan immigrants in Spain are partly illegal immigrants, so they need to search for housing by themselves and have to pay for it, while in Germany every asylum seekers is provided with shelter by the government free of costs. So they do not have to think about it and can concentrate e.g. on learning the language. So because their needs of shelter and health are already met, they have other priorities. These reasons indicate that the needs of immigrants are influenced by a lot of factors like legal status, laws of hosting countries but also setting and environment play a role. These factors play such a big role, that a generalization and comparison of findings is not possible, even when the sample is very big. It is only valid for a limited area. When comparing different findings, it is important to take into account the wider context in order to understand and explain the differences.

My analysis of the sources of social support mainly found the same results as other studies. In general, the sources mentioned in the literature are informal sources, like friend, families or neighbors as well as formal sources like NGO`s or government agencies (Hernandez-Plaza et al., 2004; Hynie et al., 2011; Ryan et al., 2008; Strug &

Mason, 2001). Furthermore, they state, that the people prefer rather informal support than formal support. Whereas, the first choice of informal support are other people from the same country of origin. Only when they are not available, they ask local people for help. My findings agree with the fact that the first choice of support is the informal one. However, in my interviews the asylum seekers always mentioned a local German person first. Only second they mentioned other asylum seekers. I assume the different findings come from the same reasons I mentioned above. Moreover, I think that the attitude towards asylum seekers, refugees or migrants also plays a role here. The general attitude towards asylum seekers is positive and there is a big readiness to help the asylum seekers. That counts especially for the area of study. It makes using the source of support more easy and comfortable. In contrast, other studies reported discriminating treatments of refugees and immigrants, which were also reasons to not use that kind of sources any more (Briant & Kennedy, 2004; Strug & Mason, 2001). As I explained in the literature chapter, not many studies about need satisfaction are available. Making a meaningful comparison is also nearly eliminated through the huge influence of external factors. Nevertheless, there is one study with a similar result as mine concerning the ability of social support to serve the needs of asylum seekers (Berger et al., 2015). It was conducted in Germany as well, so most of the external factors influencing the situation of the asylum seekers are the same. They concluded that the needs of the asylum seekers can theoretically be met by the available social support services. However, in reality they also see constraints, mainly through the German asylum law. Their findings agree with what I found out, although they did not investigate informal support but only formal support. Additionally, they looked at the difference between rural and urban areas. However, their conclusion is only that both areas are offering enough services to cover all the needs, whereas in rural areas more services are available in general than in urban areas. Concerning my findings about the interplay between formal and informal support in the need satisfaction I did not find any other evidence in the current literature about asylum seekers, refugees or immigrants. It seems to be a topic that has not been explored yet.

There are, besides the one I just mentioned, no similar studies on needs and social support services done, either in rural or in urban areas. However, Aumüller & Bretl (2008) gave a description of social support providers for refugees in four German cities with different sizes. Their findings are described in chapter 3.2. My findings add another town size to the examined one there and also confirm the general trends found there. My results indicate an even smaller amount of actors involved but also a denser network between them, as in bigger cities. The focus is also mostly on serving individual needs of people like it was found in the smallest explored town by Aumüller & Bretl (2008). In my area of study also the local municipality takes over organizational tasks connected to the available support. Furthermore, nearly all social support is offered by volunteers. This also continues the trend seen in Aumüller & Bretl's (2008) report, which showed a high involvement of professionals in the big cities that declined with the decreasing size of the city. Nevertheless, I think that these findings about the social support providers in five different settings are not enough to draw general conclusions, but the fact that my

findings fit to them might point in the direction of some general findings and are worth to investigate.

In the light of the above mentioned points, I will conclude that my findings partly confirmed, but also contributed new insights to the existing knowledge about the topic at hand. They confirmed the general topics of needs of asylum seekers found in previous research. My contribution to the existing literature is that I added a new target group in a new setting to the already explored one, namely asylum seekers in a rural setting in Germany. I also discovered that formal and informal services overlap and complement each other. This insights are interesting on a practical level when designing interventions but it also contributes to the adaption of the theoretical concept of support services in the context of asylum seekers. In the absence of enough and adequate data from urban areas about the needs of asylum seekers in Germany to which I can compare my data, I cannot say anything about the truth of the assumptions, on which the study at hand was based on initially. The assumption was that the needs of the asylum seekers in rural areas are different to the needs of asylum seekers who live in urban area. As the last paragraph showed, the social support offered in urban areas is different to my findings. Based on that, I assume that also the needs are different and can be met in a different way than in rural areas. I expect that informal sources of support play a role in urban areas, too. However, I assume that they might be less easy to access than in rural areas due to the higher anonymity in urban areas.

After I discussed my findings in the light of previous research, I will now present some practical recommendations specific for the area of study, which derived from the findings of the thesis at hand. In the investigated area most of the needs of the asylum seekers can theoretically be met. However, it is not clear, if really all asylum seekers know the services. In order to inform all asylum seekers to the same extent, every asylum seekers should have a local contact person or at least get the information, e.g. about the *Café Willkommen* and how to get there. As the analysis demonstrated, informal local sources are often the first source the asylum seekers approach, when the need something, so it is important that all asylum seeker have access to this sources. It could be e.g. done though an information letter, the asylum seekers get, when they arrive in the VG Wörrstadt. Partly, that is already done, but not everywhere. In regard to one of the most important needs, learning the German language, the interviews showed, that a combination of formal and informal support serves it most effective. If possible, more formal courses would be good. However, I think most of the possibilities of formal courses are already in place in the investigated area. That makes the informal support even more important in my opinion. For that, already existing support should be extended, e.g. the language tandems, events or inclusion in leisure time activities. In the matter of the second most important need, namely finding a job, it is more difficult to support the asylum seekers, because of the constraints of the asylum law. Nevertheless, what is possible, is to provide information to the asylum seekers, what possibilities they have now and later, if they get their residence permit. Furthermore, arrangements like the one in the elderly home might be a solution in order to meet the needs of language and work together. More opportunities like that should be available. All in all, I think the

social support services in the VG Wörrstadt are on a right path, but there is still potential to increase the need satisfaction of the asylum seekers.

Based on the fact that informal local sources are preferred by the asylum seekers, these sources need to be strengthened by the government as well. In other words, local volunteers, who support asylum seekers, should be supported by the government. The support can have different forms. It can be in the form of information, e.g. trainings about different topics connected to asylum, or providing resources to them e.g. material or money. The informal support I observed grew out of itself. I think, that this is a reason why it is so successful. I am not sure, if a formal organization of the informal support is possible or intended. Nevertheless, I think it is important that the volunteers have someone, they can ask for support. A professional person, who is trained for it, can give meaningful advice and makes sure that everyone, volunteers or asylum seekers, get what they need, from an organizational point of view. As my findings showed, formal and informal social support services are very effective and efficient when they complement each other or overlap. In the area of study it happened spontaneously and based on individual contacts. I think, that this can also be fostered more systematically, e.g. through regular meetings between social support providers. It could also be an additional task for the professional, which assists the volunteers. The professional can serve as a contact person between formal and informal social support providers. I will not go more into detail here because I think the practical implementation also very much depends on the context and setting. Furthermore, a lot of research is done already on the integration of different health services. Their results might be, with some changes, adaptable for the context of asylum seekers, but exploring this in detail is out of the scope of this discussion chapter. What is important, I think, is to bring the different social support providers together so that they can jointly coordinate their support. As far as I know, a professional was hired by the municipality of the VG Wörrstadt after I left in order to support the volunteers. However, I think it is a very good model for other areas, too.

Looking back on the implementation of the research at hand, it turned out that a qualitative approach was adequate for answering the research questions. The combination of participant observation and semi-structured interviews complemented each other quite well and offered the opportunity to explore the topic from different points of views. Cornering the data collection, the first participant observation phase took more time than initially planned. In retrospect, it was worth it. Due to the fact that the social support providers were somewhat fragmented and only more or less connected, I needed the time to get an overview of all services and to make contact all the providers. Furthermore, I needed the time to connect to the asylum seekers and win their confidence. I think this was very important, so if I would do the research again, I would spend maybe even more time to explore the area of study and to get to know the stakeholders, especially the asylum seekers better. Connected to the topic of gaining trust from the asylum seekers, I want to reflect on finding the right balance between being a neutral observer and becoming involved actively. During the data collection phase, especially during the participant observations, I got more and more involved with the stakeholder groups I was investigating. On the one hand, that was good, because I

got deeper insights into the social support provision and was able to understand how the social support works from an insider perspective. On the other hand, becoming too much involved can also be a barrier for the data collection. I had to be careful not to lose the focus of my data collection while I got more and more involved. Another danger of becoming too much involved in the situations is that you might lose your objectivity and neutrality about the topic because you do not want to critique your own actions. Nevertheless, I think becoming involved to some extent was very helpful for the understanding of the topic as well as for my acceptance from the stakeholder groups. I think I found a good balance between becoming involved and staying neutral and critical. I would do it again in the same way.

While reflecting on the method and implementation, some limitations became visible. Firstly, it was not possible to speak to all key social support providers. It was due to time problems of the social support providers or because of unwillingness of them to talk to me. The reasons for the unwillingness are not known by me. So I relied on other social support providers or on public information about the social support, they were offering. However, this did not influence my general conclusions. A more important limitation of the research is that all of the interviewed asylum seekers were frequent users of the available social support services. I met them while they used the social support services, which gives the impression, that all asylum seekers need and use the social support services very often. So I might not have reached asylum seekers who do not get social support. These asylum seekers might have reported more or other unmet needs like the frequent receivers of social support services. Furthermore, my findings show that the services are all used frequently, which might only be the case because I just interviewed users of the services. However, this fact might just draw a more positive picture about the use and knowledge of the support services but would not change a lot with additional response of less frequent or non-users. It might have just given a more detailed and differentiated picture of the needs of the asylum seekers, which does not mean that my findings are wrong. Only that there might be other needs, which I did not discover. Additionally, I only spoke to asylum seekers who spoke English or German. Asylum seekers without knowledge of one or the other language might face other problems and have different needs in contrast to the asylum seekers I interviewed. The fact, that a lot of the asylum seekers do not speak at least English just emerged during the data collection phase. Therefore, I had not enough time anymore to organize a translator. The asylum seekers I spoke to all just spoke enough English or German to do the interviews but not to translate for me. Furthermore, a volunteer told me that e.g. for Arabic you need a translator who just not translates literally but also has a feeling for the content. The reason is, that the structure of the Arabic language is very different to German or English, so in the remaining time of the data collection phase, it was not possible for me to organize a translator. Again, this limitations affect my findings in the way that there might be some needs which I did not find or it would yield in different priorities. However, both limitations do not influence the overall conclusion that theoretically nearly all needs of the asylums seekers can be satisfied in the area of study. Nevertheless, I would try to avoid them next time. I do not know if the answers

from asylum seekers, who do not speak English or German might be so much different, but I assume they might differ in certain topics. Anyway, including them would make the sample more representative and would give further insights. The same counts for the asylum seekers who do not use the social support services. I would try to reach them to be able to make more reliable statements about their situations and needs. To achieve that, more time would be needed to get to know them. I would also try to reach an agreement with the local authorities that they provide me with the addresses of the asylum seekers' accommodations in order to get a more representative sample. Besides the described limitations, the study only took place in a limited area with a small sample. Additionally, the results are very much influenced by the context e.g. by laws and the setting. Therefore, the findings cannot be generalized for the whole asylum seeker population in Germany but it was also not the aim of the study at hand. Nevertheless, some more general findings might be valid for other asylum seekers or for other areas within Germany, which have similar characteristics as the studied area, as well.

Despite the mentioned limitations of this thesis in the last paragraph, I hope my findings and conclusions will provide some helpful information for the implementation of effective and efficient social support services for asylum seekers, especially in rural areas. In any case, it gives a first overview about the situations and needs of asylum seekers in rural areas as well as new and interesting insights into the topic of need and need satisfaction, which might guide further research. Given that the topic of asylum as well as migration in general is very broad and interconnected, a lot of possible areas of research exist, which are not yet explored. Therefore, I will briefly outline some possible areas of research, which deviated from the thesis at hand and I think are interesting to explore. My recommendations primarily aim at the group of asylum seekers. I think, it is possible to explore these topics for refugees or immigrants as well. However, I would advise to not mix the groups or if so, taking into account the differences that come along with the different legal statuses of the groups. Firstly, I suggest that more research is needed on the theoretical level. As my results showed, the strict distinction between formal and informal services is inefficient in the migration context. So more research is needed to find out how social support services can be measured more efficiently. Also the changes of the assessment model I proposed need further testing in order to explore their practicability. Secondly, more research is needed that compares the situations of asylum seekers in rural and in urban areas to be able to make more valid statements about their situations, similar to the one at hand. Furthermore, I propose to have a closer look at the interplay between different social support services and how they together serve the needs of asylum seekers. In that context it would also be interesting to look at which factors support or hinder the interaction between them. It would give more detailed insights into how the needs develop and how they can be met more effectively. Follow-up research is needed to investigate if the assumption I made earlier in the conclusion about the role of formal and informal support in urban areas is valid. Research questions for urban areas could be 'Which social support sources are available for asylum seekers in rural areas?' 'Which social support services are used and preferred by asylum seekers in rural areas?' 'Which role does informal social

support play for asylum seekers living in rural areas?` The last topic that caught my attention during the analysis of the data was the network of people around the asylum seekers in the area of study. I only gained a sketchy overview about how the asylum seekers and social support providers, formal as well as informal, are connected to each other as well as within their groups. However, I saw that the network consists of a lot of connections between many different actors and that these connections also contribute to the satisfaction of the needs of the asylum seekers. Possible research questions could be `How does the network around the support of asylum seekers look like and how did it develop?` `How are the social support services connected and how do they work together?` `How do asylum seekers build up their support network?` `What is the function of the network for the asylum seekers?` Understanding how the network is build up and works, would give the opportunity to facilitate the network building of asylum seekers more purposeful.

Despite lots of critics from German policymakers that Germany is not able to handle the huge amounts of asylum seekers, which came in 2015, the thesis at hand showed something else. It demonstrated that the people in the investigated rural area are in fact willing and even able to handle it. They are not only welcoming the asylum seekers but are able to accommodate them and to satisfy most of their needs. Clearly, this is not the end and still some challenges remain, but the findings are pointing to a positive direction.

8. References

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9. Appendix

9.1. Appendix 1 Map of the VG Wörrstadt

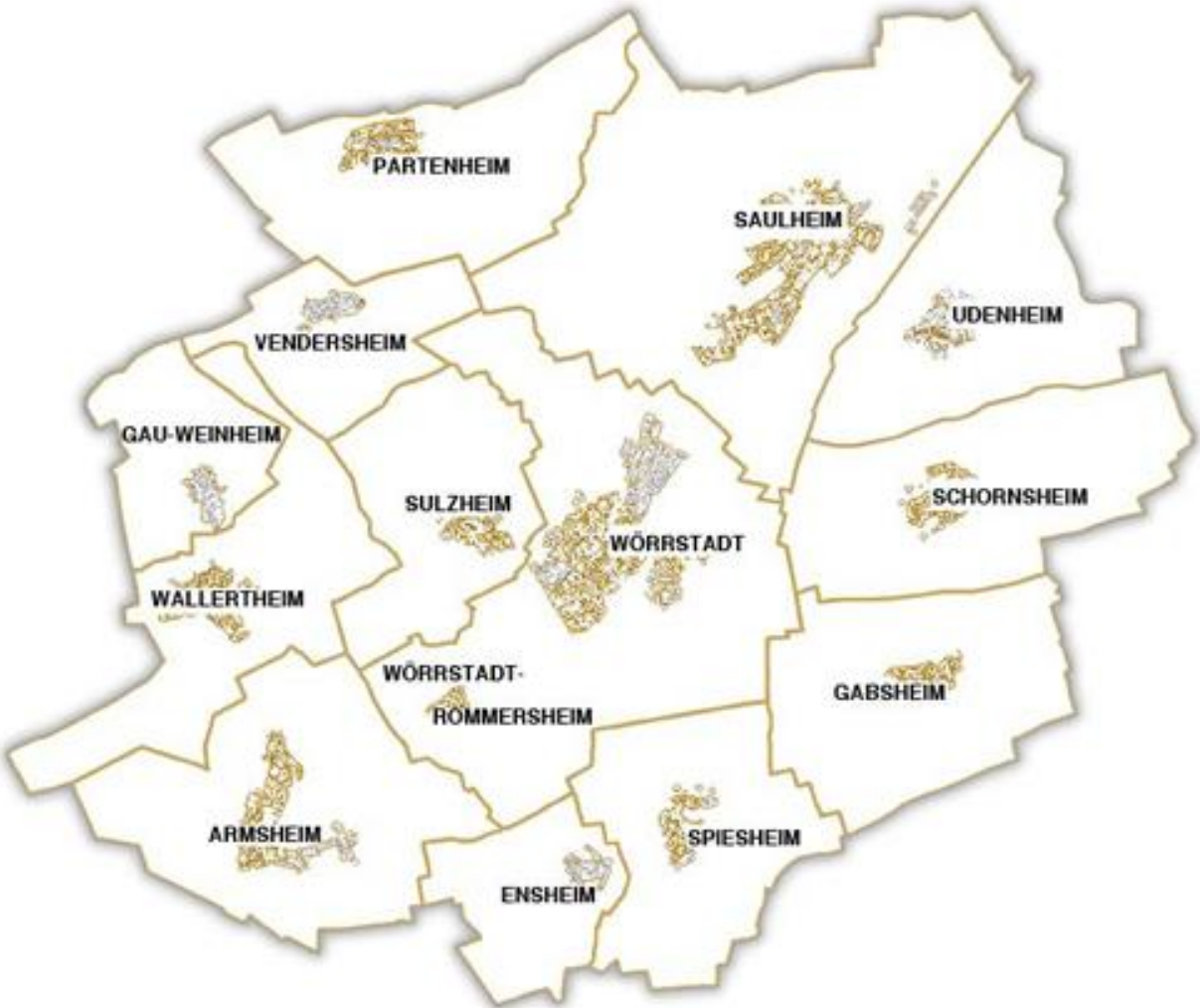


Figure 3 Map of the VG Wörrstadt (area of study) (VG Wörrstadt, 2016b)

9.2. Appendix 2 Interview guides

Interview guide for interviews with asylum seekers

General Questions

- Where are you from? How long are you in Germany / VG Wörrstadt?
- Where do you live here? With whom?
- How old are you? Do you have Family?

Living & Daily life

- How do you like Germany and the town/village you live in? Why do you like it / not like it?
- Do you like the flat/house you live in? Why/ Why not?
- Do you need more (space, furniture....) or something else? Why? Why do you not get it?
- Do you know where you can get it or whom you can ask for help? Why are you not asking?
- What do you do when you have problems with living & daily life? Who do you ask when you have problems with living & daily life (Person or institution)?
- Which problems /barriers do you see? What do you like about it?

Free time & Social contacts

- Did you already make social contacts here in Germany? With whom (nationality, age...) and how? Why not? What are the problems /barriers?
- Do you have social contacts outside your refugee accommodation? Why/ Why not? With whom (nationality, age...) and how? Are there problems /barriers?
- Do you know activities/offers where you can meet people and make social contacts? Do you use them? Why/Why not? Do there problems /barriers? What do you like about them?
- How do you communicate with the people in Germany?
- Do you need/ want more social contacts?

- What do you do in your free time?
- What activities/offers you know? (e.g sport, art,)
- Which do you use? Why/ Why not? Where are they?
- What do you like about it? What do you not like?
- How do you get there? Are there problems /barriers?
- What would you like to do in your free time? Why can you not do it? What do you need for that?

- If you are religious, can you practice your faith? Why not? Do you know institutions/services connected to your faith here? Are you use them? Why/Why not?

Institutions & Services

- Which institutions/organizations do you know who can help you with problems/questions?
- Which institutions/organizations do you use/ask for help if you have problems/questions?
- Why or why not do you use them? What do you like about them? Are there problems /barriers to us them?
- Who supports you with administration things?

Education & Language

- Do you have a graduation or professional education? Which?
- If yes, would it be possible to work in Germany? Why not? What do you need to do it?
- If everything would be possible, what would you like to learn/work?
- What would you need for that?
- Who do you ask when you have questions about education and work?
- Which educational institutions/services do you know? Do you use them? Why/why not? What do you (not) like about them?
- Which institutions/services do you know where you can learn German? Do you use them? Are there problems /barriers to us them? What do you (not) like about them?

Health

- What do you need for being healthy? What is missing?
- Where do you go when you need medical help? Do you know any institutions/services which help you with health issues?
- Do you know any doctors here? Do you go there?
- Are there problems /barriers? What do you (not) like about them?

Needs of newly arrived AS

- What do newly arrived AS need when they arrive in the VG?
- What information/resources/services/institutions do they need?
- What would you do to facilitate their integration? What services would you offer?

Last questions

If you would be able to change everything you want. What would you like to change? It can be everything.....

Interview guide for social support providers

Wie sind sie dazu gekommen? (*How did you get involved?*)

Projekt/Service/Event/Angebot (*Project/Event/Service*)

- Was bietet ihr an? Was macht ihr? (*What do you offer?*)
- Wie oft? Wie lange? Wo? Wie hoch ist der Zeitaufwand? (*How often? How long?*)
- Für wen ist das Angebot? (*Who is your target group?*)
- Wie wird es angenommen? Wer nimmt das Angebot in Anspruch (Alter, Background)? Wie viele Leute kommen? Woher kommen die Leute (Herkunftsland + Wohnort)? (*Who uses it?*)
- Wie ist das Feedback? (*What feedback do you get?*)
- Wie informiert ihr die Zielgruppe? (*How do you inform the target group?*)
- Gibt es Probleme? (*Are there any problems?*)

Organisation (*Organization*)

- Wie seid ihr organisiert? (*How are you organised?*)
- Wer ist der Träger/ Ansprechpartner? Wer ist alles involviert? (*How is involved in the project?*)
- Wie finanziert ihr euch (z.B. Miete, Ausstattung)? Woher kommen die Ressourcen/Material? (*How do you finance the project?*)
- Ehrenamtlich oder hauptamtlich? Hauptamtliche Unterstützung? (*Is it voluntarily?*)
- Wer engagiert sich/hilft (Alter, Background)? Wie viele seid ihr? (*Who helps?*)
- Gibt es Probleme? (*Are there any problems?*)

Ziel & Wirkung (*Aim*)

- Woher kam die Idee? Wer hatte die Idee? Wie hat sich das Angebot entwickelt? (*How did the project develop? Where did the idea come from?*)
- Was ist das Ziel? Wurde das Ziel erreicht? (*What is the aim of the project?*)
- Seht ihr noch Potential, die Wirkung zu vergrößern? (*Do you see any further potential to reach more people?*)

Integration (*Integration*)

- Wie ist die Situation der Asylbewerber und Flüchtlinge vor Ort? Gibt es Schwierigkeiten/Probleme? (*How is the situation of the asylum seekers here?*)
- Was brauchen neu angekommene Asylbewerber? Welche Hilfe/Unterstützung brauchen Asylbewerber und Flüchtlinge? Vor Ort? (*What do newly arrived asylum seekers need?*)

- Was ist das Wichtigste, was sie brauchen? (What is most important for them?)
- Werden diese Bedürfnisse erfüllt vor Ort? Durch welche Angebote? (*Are this needs met here?*)
- Was trägt euer Projekt dazu bei, die Bedürfnisse zu erfüllen? (*What is the contribution of your project to the satisfaction of the needs?*)

9.3. Appendix 3 List of individual social support topics

- Administrative issues at
 - Local authorities
 - BAMF
 - Alien Department
 - Bank
 - Job Center
 - Schools / kindergarten
 - Other institutions / organizations
- Support with documents, translations, registrations, phone calls, letters, meetings
- Provide furniture / household goods / Clothes
- Support with health issues (e.g. accompany to doctor/hospital)
- Shopping
 - On-site / Off-site
 - TAFEL
- Mobility
 - Provide bike / explain traffic rules
 - Public transport schedule / tickets / show bus and train stations
 - Transport services
- Integration
 - Introducing neighborhood
 - Translations
 - Language teaching
 - Explain German norms and values
 - Explain political structures
 - Explain important regulations and laws
 - German history
 - Explain waste separation
 - Sport associations / other leisure activities
 - Religious institutions
 - Personal conversations / emotional support
 - Organize / install TV / Internet access
 - Education and work
 - Trips (showing area – VG Wörrstadt + Alzey and Mainz)
 - Events (concerts, community feasts, sport events)