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CONTENTS

RESEARCH ARTICLES **4**

Jared KEYEL ◈ "It's Never Just One Thing:" Complexifying Migration Concepts and Categories through Stories of Movement from the Middle East and North Africa to the United States 4

Réka FRIEDERY ◈ Integration challenges of third-country nationals: frames of policy and measures regarding qualifications and the German labour market 21

Sanam VAGHEFI ◈ Refugee Mental Health during the Asylum Waiting Process: A Qualitative Study of Turkish and Canadian Contexts 33

Elijah YENDAW ◈ Ties and Powers that Bind: Demographics, Social Networks and Immigrants' Decisions to Stay in Ghana 59

Sehlaphi SIBANDA, Mondli HLATSHWAYO ◈ From home to the border: A critical analysis of Zimbabwean migrant women's migration strategies 77

Amanuel Isak TEWOLDE ◈ International migration and residential segregation: The case of Black African migrants in Johannesburg, South Africa 93

FOCUS **111**

Ana-Maria Teodora ANDRONIC ◈ Mental health and Migrant Acculturation- a journey of global change 111

BOOK REVIEWS **120**

Alina - Carmen BRIHAN ◈ Cristina Matiuţa and Raluca Viman-Miller (Eds.), *The War in Ukraine and its Impact on Global Politics and Security*, Cluj-Napoca: P resa Universitară Clujeană, 2023, 269 pages, ISBN 978-606-37-1958-5 120

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS **129**

GUIDELINES FOR AUTHORS **131**

Journal of Identity and Migration Studies
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RESEARCH ARTICLES

"It's Never Just One Thing:" Complexifying Migration Concepts and Categories through Stories of Movement from the Middle East and North Africa to the United States

Jared KEYEL

Abstract. Migration has been a ubiquitous human experience for millennia. Scholars have worked within and across disciplines to generate central theories and concepts about what it means to migrate. However, debates continue about fundamental categories to describe the movement of people. This article explores the challenges in conceptualizing multifaceted processes of migration. It draws on fourteen interviews conducted with individuals who came to the United States from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). Interviews illuminate how overlapping migration concepts play out within the lives of individuals. Based on insights from participants' narratives, I argue that the complexities of migration call for reconceptualizing categories as interconnected positions in a *multidimensional migration space-time*. I offer that as a metaphor with which to think throughout the research process. The article urges scholars of migration to remain sensitive to the need for flexible and adaptive frameworks to understand migration and the need to carefully construct studies to foreground nuance. This article concludes by arguing that while more elastic concepts offer opportunities, there are also important potential risks to consider.

Keywords: Migration; immigrants; asylum-seekers; refugees; mobility

Introduction

Migration is as old as human societies (Brubaker 2010).[1] Indeed, we can understand human history as complicated, ongoing processes of movement (Nail 2015). People leave one community, geography, or territory and enter another for many different reasons: conflict, opportunity, safety, adventure, love, and on and on. The contours of such movements are contextual and conditioned by the circumstances of particular times and places. Although migration has been a ubiquitous social, political, and economic experience for millennia, migration's complexities pose challenges for researchers.

Scholars have worked within and across many disciplines to generate central theories and concepts about what it means to migrate (Brettell and Hollifield 2014). However, debates

[1] I presented an early version of this article at the XII[th] Race, Ethnicity, Place/Middle Atlantic American Association of Geographers Conference in Washington, DC in October 2023. I then revised that presentation into a perspective article for the International Journal of Population Studies (Online First September 2024, open-access CC BY 4.0). Portions of this article have been adapted and expanded from that commentary.

continue about fundamental categories to describe the movement of people. Concepts such as migrant, asylum-seeker, and refugee have significant differences but also overlapping characteristics (Tsegay 2023; Crawley and Skleparis 2018). Disaggregating categories requires considerable effort. In fact, studies of migration "destabilize the rigid division of the world" (Bastia 2014, 238). The messiness of individuals' lived experiences of migration calls for scholars to critically examine how categories are constructed and mobilized (Crawley and Skleparis 2018).

In my previous and ongoing research, I have explored the lived experiences of those who have migrated to the United States. A recurring theme across that work has been the challenges intrinsic to categorizing migrations. For example, in a previous study with Iraqis who left their homes because of the 2003 US-led invasion and occupation, the multiple routes individuals took to seek refuge meant answering the ostensibly simple question, "who is a refugee?" was not straightforward. The US government runs at least three separate programs through which it grants (or denies) legal statuses to people who are displaced: the United States Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP), asylum, and the Special Immigrant Visa Program (SIV) (Keyel 2023).[2] I interviewed Iraqis who arrived through each program. In that work, I conceptualized all of them as refugees. However, that is not a universally accepted approach. Encountering those complexities prompted me to pursue engaging directly with the intricacies of theorizing types of migration.

Inspired by that previous study, this article explores some of the challenges conceptualizing the multifaceted processes of migration presents. To do so, it draws on fourteen interviews conducted with individuals who came to the United States from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. The experiences of the individuals with whom I spoke demonstrate the complexities of attempting to categorize migration(s). In many ways, my findings reinforce and reiterate the results and insights of earlier studies. The interviews I conducted illuminated how overlapping migration concepts play out within the lives of individuals and their families. Individuals may find themselves moving among multiple migration categories and concepts.

Based on my findings, I argue scholars could benefit from moving away from strictly delimited migration categories. Instead, reconceptualizing categories (immigrant, asylum-seeker, refugee, etc.) as interconnected positions in a *multidimensional migration space-time* can allow scholars to examine the myriad facets of movement in nuanced ways. Along with that analytical metaphor, scholars should also remain attuned to the reality that the intricacies of migration necessitate the (re)construction of adaptable concepts for understanding highly temporally, geographically, culturally, and politically contextual and contingent experiences. Therefore, for those of us studying migration, we need to exercise care in designing research projects that portray the subtleties, tensions, and contradictions in migration, even and especially if that nuance does not fit neatly into instrumentalized understandings used by governments and international legal regimes.

In this article, I first outline the interview process from which I draw empirical grounding. I then review existing literature that interrogates the challenges of defining key concepts in migration and categorizing the experiences of individuals who migrate. After that, I turn to interviews and

[2] Adding to the multiple schemes and statuses, the United States also has a program called Temporary Protected Status (TPS), which provides certain people and groups a limited and impermanent right to reside in the country if conditions in their former place of residence are deemed unsafe. None of the participants in the study had TPS but there are both similarities and significant differences between this program and asylum and refugee status.

examine research participants' narratives of migration with an eye toward how they illustrate the challenges of categorizing migration experiences. With those narratives in mind, I then argue that the complexities necessitate approaching understanding a *multidimensional migration space-time* rather than rigidly defined and bounded migration categories. I call for scholars of migration to remain sensitive to the need for flexible and adaptive frameworks to understand migration and the need to carefully construct studies to foreground nuance. I conclude by arguing that while more elastic concepts offer opportunities, there are also important potential risks to consider.

Interviewing Individuals who Migrate

The research that this article draws from is a follow-up project to previous work that examined the experiences of Iraqis who left their country and came to the United States after the 2003 US-led invasion (Keyel 2020; 2023). This time seeking a geographically wider set of participants, between July and December 2021, I conducted interviews with fourteen individuals who left the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region and came to the US.[3] I sought to open participation in the research as broadly as possible. Therefore, I allowed potential participants to self-identify as originating from the MENA region however they chose to define it. Additionally, I did not predetermine or restrict participation to any particular immigration status (or lack thereof). I spoke with individuals from Egypt (4), Iran (4), Syria (2), Bahrain (1), Lebanon (1), Morocco (1), and Palestine (1). Eleven of the individuals I spoke with identified as women and three as men. They ranged in age from 27 to 48 years old. I conducted most interviews via video calls on Zoom. In two cases I spoke on the phone with interviewees. Conversations were conducted in English. I recorded and transcribed twelve of the interviews. One participant asked not to be recorded. In that case, I took detailed, contemporaneous notes during our conversation. In the final instance, one participant agreed to an interview and recording, and then asked that I destroy the interview recording after we finished. Following their wishes, I did not retain a copy of the recording. That participant continued to give consent to participate in the study, however, and I include material about their experiences based on the notes I took during our conversation. All interviewees are referred to only by pseudonyms.

I conceived of this research as exploratory. As such, interviews were semi-structured. I approached each participant with a set of questions about themselves and their experiences migrating but allowed discussions to flow into unanticipated directions and topics. Conversations

[3] Like migration, there are ongoing debates about how to define the borders of the MENA concept and whether we can or should consider it a single region at all. Moreover, given MENA's connections to orientalist European projects of colonialism and imperialism, there have also been moves to replace it with the newer term Southwest Asia and North Africa (SWANA). See Armen (2023) for a discussion of SWANA as a descriptive geographic/cultural/political concept and as a decolonial praxis. For this project, I continued to use MENA for two reasons. First, it is a term that is still widely used and understood, and therefore I assumed that it would be clearer to a larger pool of potential interviewees. And, indeed, several people I interviewed defined themselves as Middle Eastern. Second, SWANA still seems to me to bring together a vast diversity of cultures, people, languages, and geographies to define a region based on largely arbitrary and homogenizing geographical reference to another point on the map (Asia in this case instead of Europe). Such redefining still implies a set of shared characteristics and experiences, even minimally. As Armen points out, one of the risks of moving from MENA to SWANA is substituting one hegemonic, homogenizing concept for another. I am not yet convinced that SWANA overcomes that risk.

covered several subjects including explorations of the processes and decisions to leave a country of birth and/or habitual residence and come to the US. During interviews, I also asked participants to elaborate on how they defined themselves and their backgrounds across characteristics including age, sex/gender identification, religious affiliation, ethnicity, and migration category—migrant, immigrant, asylum-seeker, refugee, resident, citizen, etc. Taking an inductive, iterative approach to analyzing the interview transcripts, I derived several major and subsidiary themes (Bailey, 2007; Saldaña, 2013). This article focuses on one of those themes: the overlapping migration statuses many interviewees experienced. By taking an inductive approach, I sought to allow research participants to self-identify with and/or challenge imperfect concepts of migration, background, and identity to understand the complexities of their experiences. To illustrate these nuances, I include significant passages from interviews in a later section, lightly edited for clarity. Per Collins, I sought to analyze interviews with a commitment to "experience as a way of knowing" that is always partial and in the process of construction and reconstruction (2019, 185). I have chosen to include many, though not all, relevant quotes in this article. I chose those incorporated below for their clarity in illustrating the theme of migration category complexities.

Existing Literature: Migration Categories as Contested Concepts

Over the course of decades, a number of scholars and practitioners have identified the challenges in defining and applying central migration categories such as migrant, immigrant, asylum-seeker, refugee, resident, alien, and others (Anderson and Blinder 2019; Devanney et al. 2021; Tsegay 2023; Crawley and Skleparis 2018; Lister 2013; Shacknove 1985; Gorodzeisky and Leykin 2020). Even with extensive exploration, ongoing debates persist regarding how to conceptualize multifaceted and contextually specific movements of people (Tsegay 2023). Migration concepts may be simultaneously analytical, practice, and/or legal categories (Triandafyllidou 2022).

Moreover, widely used migration categories often (unintentionally) oversimplify complicated experiences. Concepts such as immigrant or refugee often assume that an individual occupies only one such mutually exclusive category (Devanney et al. 2021). Furthermore, determining whether migration is "voluntary," "involuntary," "forced," "economic" or otherwise is not straightforward. Varied experiences of movement may involve some compulsion and some exercises of agency. Some migration is temporary, and some is permanent. Yet those with temporary statuses (guest workers, international students, etc.) may wish to remain in their countries of migration but cannot because of circumstances and legal regimes beyond their control (Triandafyllidou 2022). In a complex social and political world, the boundaries among categories such as voluntary/forced and temporary/permanent are not as firm or distinct as they may be made to appear (Crawley and Skleparis 2018).

As Balibar and Wallerstein (1991) note, the concept "immigrant" is simultaneously unifying and differentiating. It flattens often-disparate experiences and processes into a single category as it simultaneously marks newcomers as apart from existing populations. Similar processes take place for those defined with other migration categories such as migrants, asylum-seekers, and/or refugees as well. Those and related concepts are neither natural nor transhistorical. Rather, societal actors of all kinds (re)negotiate and (re)define the meanings of such categories over time and in varied geographic and political contexts (Crawley and Skleparis 2018).

Additionally, individuals' self-perceptions of the type of immigration they have undertaken or category of immigrant they are can change as time passes and as their material conditions improve or diminish (Tsegay 2023). It is crucially important to note that the ways individuals define themselves and their experiences may not comport with the ways governments, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and other institutions and regimes at national and international levels categorize those who migrate. This matters because categories such as asylum-seeker and refugee do not simply describe specific displacement experiences. Those classifications are also legal terms with statutory definitions. As defined in national laws and international treaties, migration categories determine the rights and protections for which specific people are eligible (Bakewell 2008). Categorizing is not a neutral process; it is a political act embedded within structures of power relations. When an agent of a state, international or intergovernmental organization, or NGO defines someone as a refugee (or denies that individual such a status), there are life-and-death consequences for that individual's immediate safety and future life chances.

Like the debates throughout scholarship, there are intense contestations by governments and legal regimes regarding how to define and operationalize such categories. The stakes in answering the question of who is eligible to claim asylum or refugee status are high (Lister 2013). The modern international regime and many national ones that govern displacement and refugees grew initially out of the upheavals caused by World War II. Much has changed in the world in the intervening decades. Mass movements of people caused by war and violence both within and across international borders along with the rise in numbers of people displaced because of climate change-related disasters have presented numerous challenges to existing legal definitions and frameworks (Moszynski 2011).

To put it succinctly: foundational categories in the study of migration remain contested concepts (Tsegay 2023). Some have argued for the need for new categories or further disaggregation within existing categories to aid in the study of migrations' complexities (Devanney et al. 2021). Others suggest it is productive to view migration as a spectrum of experiences (Nail 2015). Some apply two-dimensional, four-quadrant typologies, matrices or taxonomies to map a field of migration possibilities beyond discreet categories (Delli Paoli and Maddaloni 2021; Triandafyllidou 2022). Such approaches facilitate robust explorations of migration concepts. As I argue below, I suggest an approach that goes even further, incorporating multiple axes and polyvalent meanings, and adding further, contingent, dimensions to that space.

Considering this, navigating a research path through the morass calls for embracing uncertainty and ambiguity. As the next section explores, the interviews I conducted with individuals who came to the US demonstrate that complexity and point toward the need for movement away from rigid categories and typologies.

Migration Experiences Speak to Categorical Complexities

Across the fourteen interviews that I conducted, I spoke with individuals who came to the United States as international students; as children with their families; for job opportunities; and who were seeking asylum. Many participants have convoluted journeys—literally and figuratively—that unfolded across time and geographic locations and saw them move among multiple migration categories. Within and across their stories are ambiguities and tensions. The narratives I heard complicate the boundaries between migration categories and unsettle a forced/voluntary migration binary. Furthermore, for some of those with whom I spoke, shifting

among various migration statuses often entailed multiple phases of migration in which an individual moved first to one location with a particular status and then moved on to a new location and/or migration status.

Ava, 46 and originally from Iran, for example, had multiple experiences of movement within and across societies. She left Iran and returned several times before leaving permanently in her twenties. As a child in fourth grade, she traveled to the United Kingdom to study for the year. She then returned to the UK to study again in high school. In her twenties, Ava left Iran for Montreal, Canada where she lived and worked for many years. She eventually became a Canadian citizen and considered herself Iranian-Canadian. At the time of our interview, Ava was living in Nebraska in the United States. She came to the US on a work visa and told me if she could find a similar job in Canada, she would rather return there. Ava's experience was unique among the individuals I interviewed as she had been an immigrant and later a citizen in a second country before coming to the US. Her story illuminates the possibilities of oscillation among various migration categories. Her experiences also speak to the need to question linear migration narratives wherein movement, arrival in a new society, and eventually gaining citizenship are assumed to be the normal and permanent end goal.

Layla, 34 and originally from Egypt, came to North Carolina in the United States as a child with her family. She told me that she considered herself "One hundred percent, an immigrant. Even though I've been here for a really long time, we came in 1998. So, I pretty much lived most of my life here, [but] I still identify as an immigrant." She went on to say that her mother brought her and her brother to the US originally on tourist visas. Once they arrived, Layla's mother claimed and received asylum for herself and her family. Layla's story incorporates three migration categories, some of which changed over time: tourism, asylum, and immigration. Despite living in the US since she was a child and now having US citizenship, Layla perpetually located herself in the position of an immigrant, a sentiment that recurred in multiple interviews. I interviewed Layla's older brother Isaac, 37, as well. Like Layla, Isaac became a US citizen when he was eligible to do so. Interestingly, unlike his sister, he definitively told me he no longer views himself as an immigrant. Isaac also never mentioned that his mother claimed asylum in the US. I would not have known about this aspect of his migration story had I not also spoken with Layla.

Dina, 31 and also originally from Egypt, described how she initially came to Boston as an international student. However, her experience of migration placed her "between both" agency and compulsion. Dina began by very succinctly outlining definitions of common migration categories. She said:

I feel like I use immigrant most of the time when someone asks me. That's the one that I feel like I identify with the most. My understanding, the way I see it, is migrant is someone who moved … but I feel like immigrant is someone who is just staying here in a more permanent way. And a refugee is someone who had some kind of a force or a difficult reason that pushed them to move, against their choice.

She went on to elaborate on her experiences with those categories:

I feel like I'm *between both*, the refugee, and the immigrant. The immigrant is an easier one for me to identify with because I came here, I used to work as a journalist in Egypt and I moved to the US because towards the end of my time in Egypt, it was getting really difficult for me to work. I had to hide all the time. I got harassed several times. I got my social media accounts hacked repeatedly. So, it was already becoming difficult for me but at the same time, I came here to the US kind of by choice, I applied for school. I came here to study and then after school, I

worked really hard to actually be able to stay and get a job and switch my immigration status and everything. But I'm still able to go home. I know it would be risky for me to work in Egypt. But I'm here by choice, kind of. So, that's why I always struggle with it because there is a part force, but there is also a part choice.

Dina went on to say that she had worked with the Committee to Protect Journalists and that at the time she left, Egypt was one of the most dangerous countries for members of the media (Beiser 2015). She was followed and had people call the police on her while reporting. Dina said that:

[I]t got significantly worse in 2013 when the military took over.[4] There used to be red lines before 2013. And after 2013, you just don't know what the red line is anymore. It's just anything. And it's actually by law, like the laws in Egypt now officially say you can be fined or jailed if you publish information that contradicts with the government's official narrative or statement.

After coming to the US, she considered applying for asylum "multiple times." However, she worried if she were to apply, she would never be able to return to Egypt unless the conditions changed significantly. So, she said she kept the possibility of applying as a "last resort." Dina's experiences speak to the strategic choices those who migrate may attempt to enter particular migration categories. In some cases, people can choose among feasible options what will provide them with the most safety, the most opportunity, and so forth. And, while Dina could choose to apply for asylum or not, ultimately the decision of whether she could move into that position is one the US government has control over.

Halima, 27 and originally from Bahrain, also came to the United States initially as an international student. As her studies in New York City ended, Halima made the difficult decision to apply for asylum, primarily on the grounds of her sexual orientation. When I asked her what terms she used to define her migration story, she said: "I would say I'm an immigrant. … [And] a big part of my identity is that I'm an asylum-seeker. That defined my life as soon as I applied for asylum, but like defined my identity." I asked Halima whether she defined herself as an asylum-seeker or whether it was a definition imposed upon her and she said:

Both, because I feel like I defined it for myself. But also, once I applied for asylum, my life was defined for me, based on the circumstances of the path that my life was taking, that was out of my control, like things that were out of my control.

Halima's story reveals how individuals may locate themselves in multiple migration categories at the same time.

In Halima's case, she called herself both an immigrant and an asylum-seeker. Halima went on to detail the difficult process of deciding to claim asylum and the shame she felt about that decision. Like Dina, Halima investigated alternatives including work sponsorship before applying for asylum but was unsuccessful. Before applying for asylum, Halima had worried that her family would be disappointed with her. Unfortunately, her fears were confirmed as her parents

[4] In January 2011, mass uprisings, trade-union organized strikes, and other peaceful actions overthrew the 30-year rule of autocratic Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak. The military ruled the country until June 2012 when Mohammed Morsi was elected to the presidency. In July 2013, Morsi's government was overthrown by a military coup led by General Abdel Fattah el-Sisi. During the coup, the military massacred thousands of Morsi's supporters and imprisoned thousands more including Morsi himself (Cleveland and Bunton 2016). The country has been ruled by el-Sisi's increasingly authoritarian government since 2014.

reacted negatively to her asylum claim. They were upset both because Halima had claimed asylum and because the grounds for that asylum were Halima's membership in the LGBTQ community. As Halima explained:

The fact that I claimed asylum was sort of like a betrayal. It sort of felt like: How can I not feel safe in a place that nurtured me, and with a family that cared for me? And that was the association that I had with it. And it's true, all of the things that I had assumed about it were completely true, because I eventually told my family. Two years after I claimed asylum, I told them the truth. The whole time, they thought that I was in the US because I was about to get sponsored [for a job]. And the process took long, because I just had a really hard time coming to terms with it myself, that I claimed asylum. I was struggling with it for myself. And then also, knowing that it would be really hard for my parents to understand. And if I told them I claimed asylum, they will ask me why. And I wasn't ready to tell them why. And eventually, they found out [about my sexual orientation] and all the assumptions that I had were true. And they felt like I let them down by claiming asylum. They said that they were not proud of the direction that I was going.

Halima's story demonstrates that migration categories can be influenced not only by state actors and policies but by social pressures and expectations from family and other community members as well.

Like Dina and Halima, Ahlam, 27 and originally from Morocco, came to the US as an international student to attend a university in Virginia. At the time of our interview, she had recently graduated and was starting a new job in the Washington, DC area that would allow her to stay in the US beyond her studies. She said that being "international" played a significant role in her life and that:

I've never actually put that label [of immigrant] on, which is funny. But maybe I'll have to transition into it now that I'm no longer a student. … It makes most of the decisions on my behalf, in the sense of, I have to be on top of my immigration matters. I cannot have the same mobility that another person would have. … I came here as an international student, and that was the label that was assigned to me. … And that's really how I've kind of defined myself. But, now it's slowly changing because I just recently graduated … and I started my Optional Practical Training. So, I started basically this experience. … And then I actually got a new job at a nonprofit and this nonprofit is actually undergoing a process of sponsoring me. … In this process of sponsoring me, this implies that I'm going to work here under a different kind of visa that was not a student anymore, so maybe then I'd be an immigrant?

In addition to the transition from international student to immigrant, Ahlam explained how she encountered several other categories that are used to describe those who come to the US:

The reason why it's also kind of tricky for me to embrace this [immigrant] label is because in the US, and maybe they've dropped this appellation, but I'm a non-resident alien. And even though I've been here for almost eight years, I'm considered non-resident. So, I don't know, it's just hard for me to think of myself as such for now. … But I think I'm just in a shift in my life where I kind of have to embrace what immigrant means. And maybe that's kind of the next step for me is to ask myself those questions on a deeper level.

Ahlam experienced moving between several temporary statuses: international student, Optional Practical Training, and the process of sponsorship by an employer. There was significant ambiguity in how Ahlam discussed and understood those categories. Rather than a straightforward process of claiming or having a category of movement assigned to her, she described needing to think about it and make a conclusion herself.

Finally, Mariam, 28 from Gaza, was seeking asylum in Canada at the time of our interview. She had recently left the US, where she had lived for several years while completing a graduate degree in New York City. Mariam's story illustrates the inadequacies of narrowly defined and mutually exclusive migration categories. It also speaks to the constraints on agency in pursuing particular migration statuses. At various points in her life, Mariam has occupied positions as a non-national born in a foreign country, a refugee, an international student, and an asylum seeker. Mariam's grandparents were victims of the Nakba: the ethnic cleansing of 750,000 Palestinians by pre-state Zionist militias from what became Israel in 1948 (Pappe 2006; Khalidi 2006; Kimmerling 2001). Both of Mariam's parents were born in Gaza as refugees. Mariam was born in Saudi Arabia. Her father was one of the tens of thousands of Palestinians who sought economic opportunities in the Gulf countries in the decades after the Nakba (Rouleau 1985). In the mid-1990s, Mariam's family returned to Gaza from Saudi Arabia. As Mariam explained:

I lived my whole life as a refugee, I feel. I've always had this feeling of displacement, that anywhere I lived was temporary, even as a child. My parents own their home, and we were very lucky to own a house. But I was brought up to believe that I was a refugee. I went to an UNRWA [United Nations Refugee Works Administration] school,[5] which was for refugees. And I learned about the story of how my grandparents lost their homes and how despite living in Gaza, and my parents building their lives there, I didn't feel like that's where I belonged. And that feeling just like continued my whole life. When I traveled to the UK, and when I went back home, and when I went to the US, I just always felt a sense of displacement. It doesn't just come from that historical narrative. It also comes from a lot of other insecurities, be it financial or feelings of safety, and stuff like that. I've never viewed myself as an immigrant. Maybe because I've always been a student wherever I went. That was my primary goal wherever I went … to get a degree or something. And right now, I view myself as a refugee because there's a true urgency. And a real sense of not being safe if I went back home.[6] And maybe going through the legal process is also … why I feel

[5] Palestinians who fled their homes in what became Israel in 1948 are members of a group that constitutes the longest-lasting refugee crisis in modern history. At the end of the war that created the State of Israel, Palestinians were, and continue to be, denied the right to return to their homes in the new state, their property was seized, and the Israeli government "effectively and retroactively deprived [them] of their citizenship" (Goodwin-Gil 2022). Israel's actions have created and perpetuated a multi-generational refugee crisis for millions of Palestinians. Additionally, Palestinian refugees are formally excluded from international legal protections guaranteed under the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (Goodwin-Gil 2022). Instead, UNRWA, established in 1949, has a mandate to provide support to Palestinian refugees (Cory 2020).

[6] Israel maintains de facto military occupation of Gaza and has illegally blockaded it since 2007 (B'Tselem 2021). At the time of our interview in summer 2021, Gaza had recently suffered another in a long line of intense Israeli bombings that together killed 5,365 Palestinians and injured 153,431 more between January 2008 and October 6, 2023 (OCHA n.d.). As of writing in October 2024, conditions in Gaza are catastrophic. For the past year, Israel has been committing genocide against the Palestinian people (UNHR 2024). In response to the Hamas-led attack on October 7, 2023, that killed 1,139 people and injured at least 8,730 more, mostly Israelis, Israel launched an assault on Gaza that has killed at least 42,126 people and injured 98,117. Another 10,000 people are missing and presumed dead (AJLabs 2023). In an open letter published on October 2, 2024, a group of 99 physicians who have volunteered in Gaza in the last year estimated that including indirect deaths such as those due to disease and lack of medical care, the actual death toll in Gaza is nearly 119,000 ("Letter to President Biden and Vice President Harris" 2024). Israel is preventing food and other life-saving necessities from reaching more

afraid, and why I'm seeking Canada's help in protecting me, personally. … Right now, legally, they call me an asylum claimant. And I view myself as a refugee in Canada, but I've always felt like a refugee my whole life.

Mariam's story illuminates the deep nuances of migration. Indeed, she told me:

The thing that I want to stress is that displacement and moving around and having to leave anywhere is a complex combination of things. The factors that lead you to it, the experience of moving itself and arriving at the new place are all complex. And it's never just one thing. It's always a combination of things that lead you to do it and it's always a combination of experiences while doing it.

Mariam located her narrative within a multi-generational story of migration involving conflict, displacement, and movement between multiple countries. She very clearly positioned her experience as a Palestinian refugee—a position legally, socially, and politically distinct from others with refugee status under the 1951 Refugee Convention (Cory 2020; Goodwin-Gil 2022). Yet she also noted she had been an international student and, at the time of our interview, an asylum-seeker in Canada. Mariam explained that even though she had lived her entire life as a Palestinian refugee in Gaza under Israeli military occupation, her asylum application in Canada did not take that existing status—or the persistent violence and risk to her safety that it entailed—into account. For Mariam, the categories of migration she has had to navigate, claim, and contest are polyvalent. They involve personal perceptions with social meanings. They are also legal categories, defined differently by various regimes of movement, each with histories and ongoing practices of colonial and imperialist violence. Moreover, critically, for Mariam and millions of other refugees from Palestine and many other places, those categories have imminent material implications for basic safety and the possibility to live a life without fear of instability and violence.

An Interpretive Metaphor: Multidimensional Migration Space-Time

Considering the nuances and conceptual interconnections that participants' experiences in the foregoing section have illuminated, I argue that scholars could benefit from rethinking existing categories of migration. To do so, I develop an understanding of concepts as located within a *multidimensional migration space-time.* I offer this as a *metaphor to think with* throughout the research process—question development, participant recruitment, analysis, theorizing, and so forth.

Rather than identities or individual characteristics, such an approach understands categories such as immigrant or refugee as positions, unstable and changing, that anyone can occupy to varied degrees (Nail 2015). Such positions impose expectations on those occupying them about what behavior is appropriate (Agier 2008; Malkki 1996; Nguyen 2012). Refugees, for example, are often expected to be grateful for the limited protections governments provide them and to be silent about their conditions (Malkki 1996; Nguyen 2012). Through ongoing processes

than two million people in Gaza, intentionally creating famine and starvation (UNHR 2024). The Israeli onslaught has displaced 90 percent of Gaza's population, and destroyed the majority of civilian infrastructure including homes, medical facilities, schools, mosques, roads, and farmland (Wood 2024). Ongoing Israeli attacks have also killed at least 751 Palestinians and injured 6,250 more in the occupied West Bank (AJLabs 2023), and killed 2,306 people and injured more than 10,598 in neighboring Lebanon (Pietromarchi 2024).

of movement, displacement, and/or expulsion, those who were formerly settled can always find themselves occupying one or more, interconnected (Tsegay 2023), migration position(s).

Migration frequently requires navigating intersecting and/or contradictory social positions and legal statuses. Migratory journeys can have several phases of various durations, from a few days to multiple decades in each location. Movement can also be multi-directional: departing, arriving, returning, remaining. In this way, migratory journeys may incorporate not only mobility within a country and across its borders but also periods of immobility. For instance, someone might leave their country and apply for asylum in the United States. As Halima's story demonstrated, once that process begins, the individual is "stuck." They must remain in the US until their case is resolved. That enforced immobility puts them in a liminal space with no final determination about whether they can remain permanently. Moreover, as several of the stories of interviewees demonstrate, an individual may occupy positions as an immigrant, asylum-seeker, and/or international student in succession and/or simultaneously.

Thus, instead of precisely bounded migration categories and concepts, we can think about migration as a *multidimensional space-time* in which socially, politically, geographically, and temporally specific migration positions are located. Each position has fuzzy edges, bleeding into other locations in space-time in different permutations. For example, with travel along geographic and time axes, individuals may move from a refugee to an immigrant to a citizen to an immigrant again. Normative dimensions in migration space-time will change as well. The definition and qualities of asylum, for example, will likely shift over time as different political regimes pass new laws, discourses about who has a right to cross borders change, and members of societies support alternatively more open or restrictive responses to newcomers. With that in mind, we can approach definitions and categories as always provisional and meaningful only within the context of their generation and use.

Interpreting migration in this way is a practice of stretching our analytic imaginations. We should try to identify how migration positions are entangled with other concepts and experiences in complicated ways (Raghuram 2021). Migration spaces intersect with class, race, sex/gender, states, borders, war, technology, governance, and many other concepts, each of which comprises its own multidimensional space-time.[7]

The contingent circumstances and fluidity of positions such as migrant or guest worker make developing a universal theory of migration difficult (Nail 2015; Cameron 2014). And, as I argue here, we should avoid attempting to do so. Rather, if we conceive of migration positions as contextual and mobile in multidimensional space-time, then we need to (re)construct adaptable

[7] Much like the migration categories interviewees put themselves into, participants' self-perceptions of identity were similarly complicated. To give one example, siblings Layla and Isaac, who grew up in the same household, described themselves in quite different ways. Layla said she is Arab, Middle Eastern, American, and Egyptian. Isaac specifically noted that he was not Arab. He said that Egypt is diverse because it had been conquered "many, many times over." As a result, because he and his family come from a Coptic Christian tradition "we're technically coming from a Greek background. So, I would say, I'm not Arab. I'm more of a Greek-Egyptian than anything. But, of course, I came here to the US. I just say I'm Egyptian-American." This example demonstrates how like migration broadly, identity categories can be mapped in multidimensional space-time that intersects with geopolitics, religion, class, immigration, etc. Further publications will explore the identity aspects of participants' experiences in greater detail.

concepts to explore that space. We should endeavor to understand how boundaries between flexible migration positions blur in specific contexts.

If scholars define migration categories and concepts too narrowly, we may inhibit possibilities for participants to explore the intricacies, tensions, and contradictions within their lives. In such cases, we can (even unintentionally) constrain the self-perceptions of migration understood by those who migrate. In this way, scholars may perpetrate and perpetuate epistemic injustice on research participants (Fricker 2007). If researchers, typically in positions of relatively greater interpretive power, are predetermining narrow, rigid, and/or binary migration categories into which participants must fit their experiences, then we may prevent those who migrate from using and/or developing critical concepts to describe and interpret their own experiences. Therefore, ideally scholars should work with those who migrate to co-create adaptable concepts that remain open to reconsideration and revision (Dahinden, Fischer, and Menet 2021).

Likewise, who has the power to define individuals and groups matters (Raghuram 2021). How we categorize people, and their experiences, has material implications for their lives. For that reason, scholarship should disentangle legal regimes that govern migration statuses (international student, temporary resident, etc.) and the conceptual contours of those categories. Legal definitions cannot, and do not seek to, portray the full nuance of lived experiences. As border and immigration authorities operationalize legal definitions, they impose assumptions on those who migrate and either fulfill or deny rights and protections. Therefore, we need to consider that policy relevance and conformity should not be the final criteria of empirical clarity or research significance (Bakewell 2008).

Migration scholars should be careful in designing studies so they can capture the nuances, tensions, and contradictions in migration experiences. When enrolling research participants, for instance, we need to pay close attention to how we create and communicate recruitment materials. There may be research projects for which it is important to delineate precisely which migration category an individual "fits into;" however, that is certainly not required in every situation. Narrowly defining and communicating participation criteria risks forcing potential participants to choose an either/or answer to what category they belong to (importantly, *at the time of recruitment for the study*). Scenarios like that may leave out those with complicated migration stories who may originally conceive of themselves as occupying only one category (immigrant *or* refugee). But, if we can leave open sufficient interpretive space for individuals to contemplate and define their own lives, they may reframe their stories as navigating multiple positions simultaneously (immigrant *and* refugee). They may also then have the opportunity to explore temporal dynamics of shifting among various categories (international student *then* asylee; immigrant *then* citizen *and* former migrant). This was certainly the case in the stories elaborated in this article.

As the interview narratives explored above make clear, if I had set out to recruit only "immigrants" for the present research project, I would likely have unduly excluded several participants. The same would be true if I had formed recruitment criteria around refugees or asylum-seekers. The insights from the interviews explored in this article informed the development of the *multidimensional migration space-time* metaphor and I plan to conduct future research using this approach.

Conclusion

By way of conclusion, I note a potential opportunity that comes from adopting flexible categories and a possible risk in doing so. First, we should ponder how complicating migration category binaries could support those who move in challenging exclusions and articulating alternative conceptions of justice, belonging, and citizenship that can integrate the ambiguities and tensions as people shift among various positions in a *multidimensional migration space-time*. Affording opportunities for those who migrate to develop their own self-conceptions, rooted in norms of welcoming and justice and sensitive to power dynamics, may facilitate the development of language around which to articulate demands and build coalitions across communities otherwise assumed to have discrete goals, needs, and concerns. For example, provided opportunities to explore their experiences in nuanced ways, those with legal status as refugees in the US might find that they share interests, goals, and experiences with visa lottery winners or recipients of family reunification visas. Additionally, they may not only locate grounds for developing relationships of solidarity with those in other migration categories but also with members of native-born populations across further intersecting dimensions. This is, of course, not a foregone conclusion. People do not always interpret their experiences in ways that point in progressive directions. Nevertheless, opening space for deep reflection may aid in emancipatory struggles.

Second, despite the importance of concepts that can engage the manifold facets of migration, destabilizing existing categories has risks. Researchers should be careful about how the information we collect and analyze may be instrumentalized by authorities that might seek to use it to harm rather than help people on the move. Those seeking safety from violence and instability often already struggle to secure the rights and protections they are guaranteed under existing legal frameworks. Generally, the international refugee regime and national-level governments force individuals seeking safety to prove they are either a refugee or not, with no ambiguity. States, then, have an interest in enforcing binary categorizations of migration used to judge who they permit to cross their borders and for what reasons.

In addition to dichotomous conceptions of migration categories, governments, humanitarian NGOs, and news media frequently use rhetoric that frames migration through binary assumptions of immigrants and refugees as good/bad, friend/enemy, guest/alien, and/or deserving/undeserving (Dhaliwal and Forkert 2016; Szczepanik 2016; Raghuram 2021; Chauvin and Garcés-Mascareñas 2014; Sassen 1999). Agents and representatives of states often seek methods to exclude and deny protections to those they assert are not “bona fide” asylum-seekers or refugees (Bohmer and Shuman 2008). Therefore, when seeking to understand the nuances of migrations, we should be careful not to portray complexity in ways that undermine already insufficient protections for those seeking refuge. We should orient engagements with subtlety toward opening spaces for newcomers to describe their own experiences. Individuals like Halima may consider themselves both immigrants and asylum-seekers, for example, and they may make strategic decisions about how to ensure their safety. We need to be proactively ready to confront the possibility that governments and exclusionary social movements could try to use such research to undermine claims for asylum, refuge, and the rights and protections of newcomers generally.

To close, let me reiterate that migration scholars (and many others) have long acknowledged the difficulties categorizing presents to interpreting the social world in which we live. In this article, I have argued that one way to work through those difficulties is by using the

metaphor of a *multidimensional migration space-time* to explore the scope of phenomena that fall under the broad label of migration. I propose that notion as a metaphor through which to destabilize categories, reflect on contingent particularities, and consider new possibilities. Working through those processes can aid scholars in becoming more comfortable with ambiguity, messiness, and contradiction.

I am not proposing a predefined, alternative typology or taxonomy of migration categories. Rather, I suggest we should *play* in that vast space throughout the planning, execution, and iteration of research projects. Toying with *multidimensional migration space-time* can be an integral element of reflexive practice (Dahinden, Fischer, and Menet 2021). That process should remain method agnostic and undertaken without predefined parameters; it could be adapted to myriad data collection and analysis strategies, both qualitative and quantitative. Finally, I return to the reality that migration is a fundamental human social, political, and economic experience with urgent implications for the rights, security, and opportunities of tens of millions of people. Migration has been a central part of human life and will remain so. Because of this, scholars and practitioners should continue to develop approaches to understanding the movement of people that are sensitive to all the phenomenon's multifaceted dimensions.

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Integration challenges of third-country nationals: frames of policy and measures regarding qualifications and the German labour market

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Abstract. Germany represents a promising opportunity for third-country nationals seeking to join the labour force. The objective of this article is to present a framework of policies and measures that could potentially facilitate the integration of third-country nationals (TCNs) into the German labour market, with a particular focus on the realm of qualifications. It could be argued that although Germany has previously experienced labour immigration, it was based on agreements between states and the integration of foreign labourers was not a topic of contention at the political or societal level. It was only after it became evident that there was a requirement for foreign labour in light of the declining number of domestic workers and the necessity for German economic growth that significant measures were initiated. The considerable influx of non-German nationals after 2015 presented the political level with the prospect of a new source of labour and the challenge of integrating them into the German labour market.

Keyword: third-country nationals (TCNs), migration, integration, German labour market, qualification

Introduction

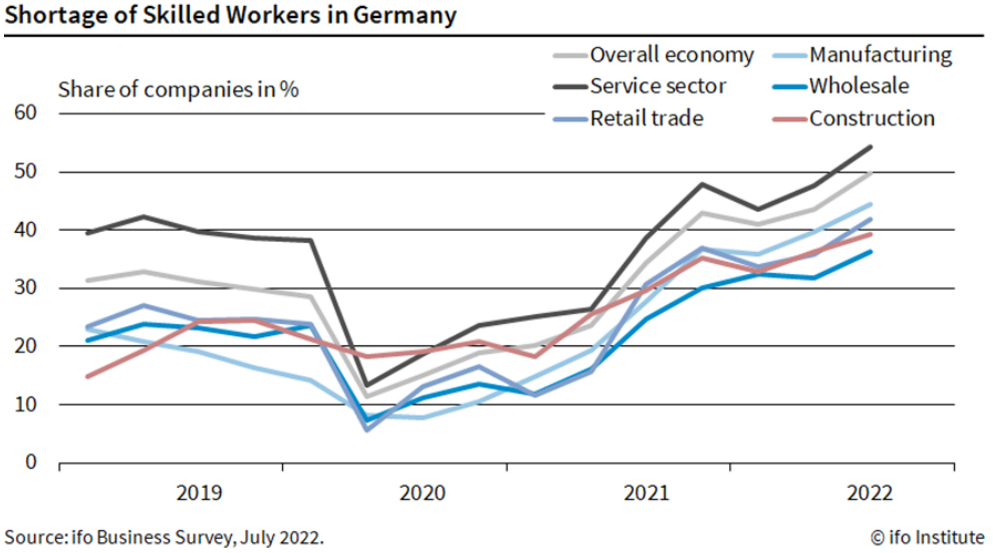
The concept of integration is employed to delineate the social, political, cultural and economic processes that occur upon the arrival of migrants in a novel societal milieu, but it is also a normative category (Martiniello 2012). National models and integration programmes have frequently been superseded by changing contemporary realities, political and economic priorities and dramatic events (Carrera 2006). There is no legal definition of 'labour market integration' or 'successful labour market integration' in Germany (Tangermann and Grote 2018), but key to integration is social inclusion, and all the measures that have been developed to achieve this (Guild 2006).

At EU level, the Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021–2027 (COM(2016) 377 final) was adopted with the objective of fostering social cohesion and the construction of inclusive societies for all. The concept of 'inclusion for all' entails the guarantee that all policies are accessible to and beneficial for all members of society, including migrants and EU citizens with a migrant background. This plan encompasses actions within four sectoral domains, namely education and training, employment and skills, health, and housing. Additionally, it incorporates measures to facilitate effective integration and inclusion across all sectoral domains at the EU, Member State, and regional levels, with a particular focus on young people.[1]

[1] Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, Action plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027 COM/2020/758 finalhttps://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-

Integration shall be a central concern for OECD countries, with 141 million immigrants representing over 10% of the population, and 12% of the population in the EU, comprising approximately 54 million foreign-born individuals. As for Germany, it was the largest host country in the EU, with 25% of all foreign-born residents in the Union residing there,[2] added that two major humanitarian crises – the Syrian conflict in 2015 and more recently the war in Ukraine – have contributed to an increase in the number of refugees since Germany was one of the countries that received a significant number of refugees. Despite the recent substantial influx of individuals into Germany, the country's economy continues to experience challenges related to labour shortages, particularly in the context of high-skilled workers. As illustrated in Table 1, worker shortages have increased significantly across all industries and significant proportion of professions in Germany rely on the contributions of immigrants, with approximately 25% of all employees aged between 15 and 64 having a history of immigration in 2022 (Hanewinkel 2024).

Table 1



https://www.ifo.de/en/press-release/2022-08-02/shortage-skilled-workers-germany-reaches-all-time-high

Furthermore, notable disparities in employment persist for individuals born outside the European Union, with a particularly pronounced gender gap observed in the employment rates of non-EU-born women.[3] By the end of 2023, approximately 419,000 individuals from outside the

content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52020DC0758 COM/2020/ 758 finalhttps://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52020DC0758

[2] OECD/European Commission, Composition of immigrant populations and households, in OECD/EUROPEAN COMMISSION: Indicators of Immigrant Integration 2023: Settling In, Paris, 2023, p. 48. https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/052e7ca9-en.pdf?expires=1718461450& id=id&accname =guest&checksum=DA40353638CCDABB65BA0A89CE091C85

[3] European Commission Directorate-General for Economic and Financial Affairs Secretariat-General Recovery and Resilience Task Force: 2023 Country Report Germany. European Economy Institutional Papers 229,

European Union (EU) with a temporary residence permit for work purposes were registered in the Central Register of Foreigners in Germany (AZR).[4] Furthermore, data from the Federal Statistical Office (Destatis) indicates a consistent increase in the number of non-EU migrants coming to Germany for employment since 2010 (85,000 at that time).[5]

Milestones during the development of the integration policy

In the aftermath of the Second World War, Germany underwent a significant transformation, becoming a country reliant on a substantial influx of guest workers. These workers were state-organised and recruited in accordance with the German-Italian agreement of 1955, with the largest influx occurring between 1955 and 1973. This resulted in 14 million workers arriving from southern European countries, the former Yugoslavia and Turkey, primarily to work in the industrial and service sectors (Bade 2000). At that time, German politicians held the view that guest workers would not remain permanently in the country but would return to their country of origin. The initial integration measures implemented in 1970 demonstrated that the government was aware of the considerable number of foreign workers in the country and thus addressed the issue specifically in the context of the labour market.[6] In 1973, the government's objective was twofold. Primarily, it sought to facilitate the integration of these workers into the German society. Secondly, it aimed to reduce the number of foreign workers in the country. Despite the majority of the approximately 11 million migrant workers returning to their country of origin, 4 million remained permanently in Germany (Die Beauftragte der Bundesregierung für Migration, Flüchtlinge und Integration 2011a).

The 1980s are regarded as the 'lost decade' (Bade 1993), as a period of missed opportunities for integration, despite the implementation of several initiatives. The initial, temporary employment of foreign labour had evolved into a pattern of permanent residence following the implementation of the recruitment ban in 1973,[7] with family members joining them and foreign children born in Germany. This led among others to challenges in housing, healthcare, and education. To deal with the situation, in 1978 the Federal Government appointed a 'Commissioner for the Promotion of the Integration of Foreign Workers and their Family Members' to coordinate integration measures within the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.[8] Commissioner Kühn's published Memorandum 'Stand und Weiterentwicklung der Integration der ausländischen

JUNE 2023 15. https://economy-finance.ec.europa.eu/document/download/0a4f6da6-f64d-4974-a3de-08d409113036_en?filename= ip229_en.pdf

[4] Erwerbsmigration im Jahr 2023 erneut stark gestiegen. Pressemitteilung Nr. 177 vom 2. Mai 2024 https://www.destatis.de/DE/Presse/Pressemitteilungen/2024/05/PD24_177_125.html

[5] Erwerbsmigration im Jahr 2022 stark gestiegen. Pressemitteilung Nr. 165 vom 27. April 2023 https://www.destatis.de/DE/Presse/Pressemitteilungen/2023/04/PD23_165_125.html?nn=639742

[6] Grundsätze zur Eingliederung ausländischer Arbeitnehmer. Bundesarbeitsblatt Nr. 4/1970, Verlag W. Kohlhammer.

[7] The recruitment ban (Anwerbestopp), set forth in a directive on November 23, 1973, marked the end of the era of foreign labor recruitment to West Germany. The ban completely blocked the entry of 'guest workers'from lands which were not members of the European Economic Community (EEC). See Migration history in Germany, https://www.domid.org/angebot/aufsaetze/essay-migrationsgeschichte-in-deutschland.

[8] Die Bundesregierung, Heinz Kühn. https://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-de/suche/heinz-kuehn-456900

Arbeitnehmer und ihrer Familien in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland' was a pioneering document, advocating for integrative measures in education policy, a right to choose naturalisation for young people born and raised in the Federal Republic, and the introduction of municipal voting rights for foreigners (Das Kühn-Memorandum 1979). The central argument was that Germany is a country of immigration underlined by the significant proportion of guest workers choose to remain in the country for an extended period. This was in stark contrast to the previous German position that Germany is not a country of immigration, based on the assumption that integration only occurs during the period of guest work, and that it does not extend beyond this limited timeframe (Kühn 1979).

Although steps were taken in 1987 to promote labour market integration,[9] there was continued support for the return of immigrants to their countries of origin. In 1990, following the German reunification, a new law on the residence of foreigners included a number of integration instruments, such as equality before the courts, the right to social security and better coordination of integration.[10]

In 2005, Angela Merkel became German Chancellor, and there was a focus on the necessity for a long-term, multi-level dialogue on integration. Furthermore, the concept of a 'Willkommenskultur' (literally, a culture of welcome) gained prominence at the societal level. This term is not legally defined and is associated with immigration and integration policy. (Bade 2014).

In 2005, the Immigration Act[11] was introduced that profoundly reformed the status of foreigners, asylum and citizenship law. As one of the Act's key provisions, the Act on the Status of Foreigners was replaced by the Act on Residence, Employment and Integration of Foreigners.[12] The legislation approached integration from a number of different angles, such as with the so-called integration courses, which comprised German as a foreign language and German social and cultural studies for immigrants, with a compulsory examination at the end.

The National Integration Plan was established in 2007 with the objective of promoting education, vocational training, employment, and cultural integrationand provisions for integration courses provided by the federal government (Die Bundesregierung 2007). In 2017, a nationwide Integration Programme started to standardise the multitude of co-existing integration measures undertaken by the federal, state, and local governments. The outcome was the implementation of a needs-based orientation programme and enhanced collaboration between integration offers.

In 2012, the National Integration Plan turned into the National Action Plan on Integration that created instruments to facilitate the measurement of the results of the integration policy, with objectives of general nature and timeframes and indicators to verify the attainment of the set goals.

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[9] Maßnahmen zur sozialen und beruflichen Eingliederung.

[10] Gesetz zur Neuregelung des Ausländerrechts aus Nr. 34 vom 14.07.1990, Seite 1354 https://www.bgbl.de/xaver/bgbl/start.xav?startbk=Bundesanzeiger_BGBl&jumpTo=bgbl190s1354.pdf#__bgbl__%2F%2F*%5B%40attr_id%3D%27bgbl190s1354.pdf%27%5D__1718199659484

[11] Gesetz zur Steurung und Begrenzung der Zuwanderung und zur Regelung des Aufenthalts und der Integration von Unionsbürgern und Ausländern (Zuwanderungsgesetz) vom 30. 07. 2004 (BGBl. I 1950), http://www.bgbl.de/xaver/bgbl/start.xav?startbk=Bundesanzeiger_BGBl&start=//*%255B@attr_id=%27bgbl104s1950.pdf%27%255D#__bgbl__%2F%2F*%5B%40attr_id%3D%27bgbl104s1950.pdf%27%5D__1468072874715

[12] Act on the Residence, Economic Activity and Integration of Foreigners in the Federal Territory[1] Residence Act, BGBl. 2024 I Nr. 152, https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/englisch_aufenthg/index.html

The National Integration Plan saw the government of Germany commit itself to measuring the progress of social integration within the country. An important element of the plan was the decision to produce an annual integration report. The first report was published in 2009, outlining a novel approach to integration and utilising integration indicators as a foundation for subsequent steps and enhancements (Die Beauftragte der Bundesregierung für Migration, Flüchtlinge, und Integration 2011b). A variety of measures have been implemented at the provincial and local levels across the country with the objective of addressing the needs of young people. These measures have focused on the following areas: education, careers, the prevention of early school leaving, and parental involvement in the school system.

The before-mentioned National Action Plan on Integration, published in 2012, comprised over 100 concrete measures (core projects) designed to promote integration at all levels and in all areas of life. The plan aimed to strengthen social cohesion with the federal government, federal states, local authorities and in recent years, civil society organisations have collaborated to achieve a number of common goals. These included the strengthening of individual initiatives to identify opportunities for children, adolescents and young adults, the promotion of the recognition of foreign qualifications, and the increase in the employment of immigrants in federal and provincial offices (Die Bundesregierung 2021). Moreover, the issue of immigrants in public services and health/social care has emerged as a new topic of interest (Die Bundesregierung 2011).

In 2016, at the Cabinet meeting in Meseberg, the Cabinet adopted the Integration Act and the Meseberg Declaration on Integration that declared several support, training and job opportunities for immigrants, as well as obligations to cooperate on integration measures. The Declaration asserted that integration involves the offer of services, but equally entails an obligation on the part of incomers to make an effort. It was therefore concluded that integration can only work as a two-way process.[13] Since 2006, the Federal Chancellery has hosted a regular event known as the Integration Summit. At the 10th summit in 2018, the National Action Plan on Integration was extended, as was the migration and integration procedure.

Milestones during the development of measures regarding the labour market

The European Union (EU) has established a set of regulations pertaining to the duration of stays in Schengen member states, including Germany. In Germany, there are three temporary residence permits (Residence permit, EU Blue Card, Visa), and two permanent residence permits (EU permanent residence, Settlement permit). The regulations stipulate the conditions for stays of up to three months, while longer stays exceeding this period are subject to the laws of the respective member state. Such stays are permitted for specific purposes, including reuniting with a spouse or for employment-related reasons. The Residence Act classifies migration based on its purpose, delineating distinct pathways for different types of migrants. The Council Directive 2009/50/EC[14] (EU Blue Card) was first introduced into the Residence Act in 2012, regulating

[13] The Federal Government: Cabinet meeting comes to a close. Integration Act is a milestone says Chancellor, https://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-en/service/archive/archive/integration-act-is-a-milestone-says-chancellor-464382

[14] Directive (EU) 2021/1883 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 October 2021 on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purpose of highly qualified

the entry and employment of highly qualified third-country nationals in Germany. The recently introduced provisions pertaining to the EU Blue Card in Germany are set forth in Sections 18g, 18h, and 18i of the Residence Act, which also includes additional facilitations. It is important to note that unskilled or low-skilled workers may only remain in the country on a temporary basis and are not eligible for permanent residence.

The immigration of workers, the legal measures

In Germany, both the federal government and the federal states regulate the recognition of differents professional qualifications. The legal basis are the Recognition Act of the Federal Government (the Recognition Act), Recognition Acts of the Federal States, the Law for the Amendment of the Professional Qualifications Assessment Act (BQFG) and sectoral laws of the federal government and federal states.

One of the principal objectives of the National Integration Plan was the implementation of the Assessment and Recognition of Foreign Professional Qualifications Act (Anerkennungsgesetz)[15], also known as the Recognition Act which relates only to occupations under federal jurisdiction. The objective of this legislation was to enhance the assessment and recognition of vocational and professional qualifications, as well as vocational education and training qualifications obtained abroad. The Act established a unified national procedure and criteria for the assessment and recognition of foreign professional and vocational qualifications, while simultaneously preserving the right to a recognition procedure and regulating it. The legislation regulated the recognition of foreign qualifications for professions for which the federal government was responsible, thus encompassing almost 600 professions.

In addition, the federal states have enacted recognition laws for professions that are regulated by the federal states, including educators, teachers, engineers, and architects.

It is important to note, that Art. 1 of the Recognition Act contains the Professional Qualifications Assessment Act, (Berufsqualifikationsfeststellungsgesetz, BQFG)[16] which regulates the recognition procedure.

The Skilled Workers' Immigration Act[17] of 2019 sought to establish a legislative framework for the selective and increased immigration of skilled workers from third countries and to enhance the integration of skilled non-European foreigners into the labour market. This

employment, and repealing Council Directive 2009/50/EC, PE/40/2021/REV/1, OJ L 382, 28.10.2021, p. 1–38.

15 Gesetz zur Verbesserung der Feststellung und Anerkennung im Ausland erworbener Berufsqualifikationen Vom 6. Dezember 2011 (BGB I S. 2515), https://www.bgbl.de/xaver/bgbl/start.xav?startbk=Bundesanzeiger_BGBl&start=//*%5b@attr_id=%27bgbl111s2515.pdf%27%5d#__bgbl__%2F%2F*%5B%40attr_id%3D%27bgbl111s2515.pdf%27%5D__1720532294694

16 Gesetz über die Feststellung der Gleichwertigkeit von Berufsqualifikationen (Berufsqualifikationsfeststellungsgesetz – BQFG von 6. dezember 2011, (BGB I S. 2515), https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/bqfg/BQFG.pdf

17 Fachkräfteeinwanderungsgesetz vom 15. August 2019, BGBl. I 2019, 1307 https://www.bgbl.de/xaver/bgbl/start.xav#__bgbl__%2F%2F*%5B%40attr_id%3D%27bgbl119s1307.pdf%27%5D__1718454120656

pertained to foreign citizens who had applied for asylum in Germany and individuals applying for a work visa in a third country (Bathke 2019).

The Act was in accordance with the demographic shift and the shortage of skilled labour, which presented a different political dynamic. The general public and most political parties demonstrated support for moderately generous entry rules. Furthermore, Germany occupied a leading position among the Member States with the most liberal immigration rules for the highly skilled (Thym 2019).

For the first time, the term 'skilled worker'was defined by law in Section 18 of the Act on the Residence, Economic Activity and Integration of Foreigners in the Federal Territory (Residence Act) [18]. This definition pertains to a skilled worker with vocational training. The term 'skilled worker' is defined by law as an individual who has completed vocational training in Germany or holds a foreign vocational qualification that is equivalent to one acquired in Germany. Alternatively, a skilled worker is defined as an individual who has completed a university degree in Germany, a recognised foreign university degree or a foreign university degree that is comparable to a German one. We shall emphasise that section 18c (3) of the Residence Act sets out a specific category of highly qualified workers, namely those whose residence is of special economic and societal interest to Germany and is the only category that is granted a permanent residence permit upon arrival.

In 2023, the new Skilled Workers Immigration Act[19] amended several existing Acts and also implemented Directive 2021/1883[20]. Since 2020, the first Skilled Immigration Act has also made it easier for skilled workers with vocational training from non-EU countries to enter and stay in Germany for the purpose of employment. Furthermore, the opportunities to obtain a residence permit with vocational training were also expanded with the new Act.

The objective of the reform was to facilitate the entry of skilled workers from non-EU countries into the German labour market. The amendments introduce a three-pillar system for skilled workers, comprising the following: the first pillar addresses skilled workers in general; the second pillar concerns required professional experience; and the third, entitled 'potential', addresses skilled workers without a concrete job offer (Der Deutscher Bundestag 2023).

The initial stage primarily encompassed facilitation for the 'EU Blue Card' and for recognised skilled workers. The second stage, which commenced in March 2024, encompassed more straightforward access for foreign skilled workers and workers with professional experience, as well as trainees, and enhanced recognition of professional qualifications. The third stage, which

[18] Act on the Residence, Economic Activity and Integration of Foreigners in the Federal Territory[1] Residence Act, BGBl. 2024 I Nr. 152, https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/englisch_aufenthg/index.html

[19] Gesetz zur Weiterentwicklung der Fachkräfteeinwanderung, BGBl. 2023 I Nr. 217 vom 18.08.2023 https://www.recht.bund.de/bgbl/1/2023/217/VO

[20] Directive (EU) 2021/1883 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 October 2021 on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purpose of highly qualified employment, and repealing Council Directive 2009/50/EC PE/40/2021/REV/1 OJ L 382, 28/10/2021, p. 1–38

will commence in June 2024, will result in the full applicability of all provisions of the Skilled Immigration Act.[21]

The amendments to the Skilled Immigration Act address a number of key issues, including the entitlement of skilled workers with professional or academic training to a residence permit in the event that all requirements are met. This encompasses skilled workers who have obtained a higher education qualification. Furthermore, the possibilities for immigration to Germany from third countries with an EU Blue Card will be expanded. Additionally, skilled workers are permitted to enter Germany to take up employment as part of a recognition partnership, and to complete the recognition procedure of their professional qualification at the same time. We shall mention the so-called Western Balkans regulation which allows nationals of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia to access the labour market for any type of employment in non-regulated occupations. This is overseen by the Federal Employment Agency. Despite the fact that the arrangement was originally planned to expire at the end of 2023, the Regulation on the Further Development of Skilled Immigration will extend the Western Balkans Regulation indefinitely..

According to Section 81a of the Residence Act[22], the so-called fast-track or accelerated procedure for skilled workers is intended to provide a solution to reduce the time required for the entry procedure. In the event that the company is duly empowered by the skilled worker in question, the company may initiate the requisite procedure with the responsible immigration authority. This may be done in the case of a concrete job offer for €411. Furthermore, the procedure for the recognition of foreign qualifications may also be accelerated in this way. Besides the accelerated procedure for skilled workers, the standard entry procedure for employment remains an option.

A beginning of a new direction? The Chance Residence Permit and the Chance Card

In 2022, two migration packages announced introduced the right of opportunity to stay and the residence permit with the opportunity card. The so-called right of residence with opportunities is regulated in Section 104c of the Residence Act, and the primary objective was to provide foreign nationals who are permitted to reside in the country with the opportunity to obtain legal residence status and to enable them to access the labour market. The conditions for obtaining a residence permit are set out in Sections 25a and 25b of the Residence Act and these include demonstrating sufficient oral proficiency in the German language at the A2 level, providing evidence of financial independence, presenting proof of identity, and demonstrating a commitment to the principles of the free democratic basic order of the Federal Republic of Germany.

The Chance Residence Permit is granted to all foreign nationals residing in Germany for a minimum of five years as of the cut-off date of 31 October 2022. These individuals are subject to deportation due to the absence of a residence permit, yet are unable to be deported and are therefore considered tolerated. Foreign individuals who have been residing in Germany for a

[21] Bundesministérium des Innern und für Heimat, Modernes Einwanderungsrecht für ausländische Arbeitskräfte, https://www.bmi.bund.de/SharedDocs/schwerpunkte/DE/einwanderungsland/fachkraefteeinwanderung-artikel.html

[22] Act on the Residence, Economic Activity and Integration of Foreigners in the Federal Territory[1] Residence Act, BGBl. 2024 I Nr. 152, https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/englisch_aufenthg/index.html

minimum of five years as of 31 October 2022, with a tolerated or permitted status or with a residence permit, and who fulfil certain criteria, will be granted a 'right of residence opportunity' in Germany for a period of 18 months.

The objective of this period is to enable individuals to fulfil the requirements for a right of residence. These requirements include demonstrating the ability to secure a livelihood, knowledge of the German language, and proof of identity. It should be noted that criminals and individuals who pose a risk are generally excluded from the right of residence. The right of residence with opportunities is intended to prevent the perpetuation of chain tolerations and to reduce the number of long-term tolerated persons. With regard to well-integrated young people, the opportunity to obtain a right of residence will be extended from four to three years of residence in Germany, up to the age of 27. Furthermore, the integration achievements of tolerated persons will be recognised by granting them a right of residence after six years or after just four years if they are living with minor children. Consequently, the periods of prior residence required for a right of residence will be reduced by two years in each case.

The process of family reunification with skilled workers from third countries will be facilitated by the removal of the requirement for family members to provide proof of language skills. In the future, all asylum seekers will have access to integration courses and vocational language courses, subject to availability. The federal government is making an important contribution to participation and social cohesion through early language support programmes. The right of opportunity to stay is a one-time special regulation. If the open requirements are not fulfilled within 18 months, the persons concerned revert to tolerated persons. However, it should be noted that the right of opportunity to stay must be distinguished from the opportunity card.

According to Section 20 a, b of the Residence Ac, the Chance or Opportunity Card, which the Bundestag passed on 23 June 2023, is a temporary residence permit, and enables third-country nationals to seek employment in Germany. The permit is intended for individuals who do not have a specific job offer but demonstrate potential in the labour market due to their specific skills and are seeking employment or opportunities to have their foreign vocational qualifications recognised as equivalent. The procedure is based on a points system that evaluates the following criteria in particular: professional qualification, German language skills, previous work experience and age. The opportunity card allows the holder to enter Germany to look for a job. During the opportunity card residence permit period, one may take up a part-time or trial job. If someone has already found a permanent position, they can easily apply for a corresponding residence permit for employment purposes.

Final remarks

The admission of foreign workers to the German labour market represents a fundamental tenet of the country's immigration policy. A pivotal element in the evolution of German integration policy was the realisation by the German social and political elite that a significant number of immigrants would not be departing in the immediate future, but would instead be remaining in the country for an extended period and even establishing permanent residences. It was necessary for them to acknowledge that Germany had become a country with a significant immigrant population and to develop an integration policy that reflected this reality. Accordingly, an effort was made to construct an integration policy by convening all relevant parties involved in the issue of integration.

However, the integration process previously involved migrant workers who had resided in Germany for an extended period and their subsequent relatives. The events of 2015, however, presented a wholly novel situation. New, effective measures were and are still required to integrate the considerable number of migrants arriving in a relatively short period of time as rapidly as possible. However, the long-term integration policy is still being formulated. While skilled immigration can assist in addressing shortages of skilled labour, it is vital to implement measures that facilitate labour market integration and social cohesion, with particular consideration for their implications for educational institutions and social services. This will enable a more effective utilisation of this potential.

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Refugee Mental Health during the Asylum Waiting Process: A Qualitative Study of Turkish and Canadian Contexts

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Abstract. While the literature suggests that forced migration negatively affects mental health, fewer studies focus on the mental health of refugee claimants waiting to be granted asylum. In addition, despite the high numbers of refugee claimants in the Global South, fewer studies compare refugee experiences globally. This study attempts to fill these gaps by addressing the mental health of refugee claimants from Iran during the asylum waiting process. Focusing on the Turkish and Canadian contexts, this study asks the following questions: How does the waiting process affect Iranian refugees' mental health and wellbeing? How do their lived experiences of mental health and wellbeing differ based on the country of temporary asylum? In-depth interviews were conducted with 15 Iranian refugees. Nine of them spent their waiting process in Türkiye, and six others spent it in Canada. The analysis results showed that the waiting process is characterized by a sense of temporariness, lack of belonging, precarity, and uncertainty of the future, which lead to adverse mental health outcomes.

Keywords: Iranian refugees, mental health, refugees in Canada, asylum waiting process

Introduction

Canada is commonly known and represented as a welcoming country for refugees (UNHCR Canada 2019) as well as one of the major countries of refugee resettlement (Labman 2019). However, most refugees seek asylum in their country's neighbors first (Moore and Shellman 2006), resulting in Türkiye being the host of the largest refugee population globally (European Commission 2021). Most of the refugees in Türkiye are temporary asylum seekers, who are referred to a third country by the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) once their refugee status is granted (Baban, Ilcan, and Rygiel 2017). The process of waiting for status determination and resettlement can last five years or longer. (Loyd, Ehrkamp, and Secor 2018). Many of those who spent a waiting process in Türkiye become resettled in Canada (Labman 2019; Loyd, Ehrkamp, and Secor 2018) as government-sponsored refugees (Government of Canada, n.d.). Those who apply for a refugee status directly in Canada also spend a waiting process as refugee claimants, before being granted a permanent status by the Immigration and Refugee Board (UNHCR Canada 2019). While in general these periods are characterized by uncertainty and limbo (Baban, Ilcan, and Rygiel 2017), less is known about the mental health impacts of the waiting process on refugees. In addition, global comparative studies are not frequent in the refugee mental health literature. This study attempts to address these gaps by asking the following questions: How does the waiting process affect Iranian refugees' mental health and wellbeing? How do their lived experiences of mental health and wellbeing differ based on the country of temporary asylum? The methodological perspective and research results will be discussed in the rest of this paper, concluded with recommendations.

Methods

This study uses a qualitative phenomenological framework, which focuses on the significance of the subjective lived experience (Mapp 2008). A phenomenological framework makes it possible to prioritize refugees' own narratives about their experiences and to create a discursive space for those who are willing to tell their own stories through interviews (Dyck and McLaren 2004). As a non-refugee Iranian who was raised in Türkiye and lived in Canada, the subjective position of the researcher was simultaneously an outsider and insider. This position had complex consequences during the recruitment and interview phases. Speaking Farsi and having cultural knowledge about Iranian migrant life in Türkiye and Canada made it easier to build a rapport with the participants. At the same time, the researcher's nationality has reinforced Iranian migrants' widespread and well-documented mistrust towards other members of their community (Bailey 2008; Darvishpour 1999). This mistrust, alongside the conditions imposed by the COVID-19 Pandemic preventing face-to-face contact, made it challenging to recruit a large number of participants.

In-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted online or through the phone with fifteen Iranian refugees in British Columbia between May 2020-February 2021. Nine participants had spent a waiting process in Türkiye, while six others came to Canada directly from Iran. At the time of the interviews, four of them were still going through their waiting process in Canada. All of the participants left Iran during or after Summer 2009 when a post-election uprising led to increasing political pressure and a subsequent migration trend (Rivetti 2013; Saluschev 2014).

The sample consists of nine women and six men, including a gay man and a lesbian woman. The ages of the participants were between 29 and 64 at the time of the interviews. In terms of ethnic identity, six participants were Persian, four of them were Azerbaijani Turks, three of them were Gilaki, one was a Bakhtiari, and another one was half Azerbaijani-half Persian. Six of the participants had children, and five of them came to Canada together with their children. Participants' names and detailed personal information were not included in the study results to protect anonymity and confidentiality. An ethics approval was received from the University of Victoria Human Research Ethics Board (HREB) before the start of the participant recruitment. Both verbal and written informed consent was obtained from each participant before the interviews.

The interview questions consisted of two parts, the first of them attempting to obtain information about participants' migration trajectories, and the second one focusing on health trajectories. These included asking about their mental health and well-being during the waiting process in Türkiye or Canada, factors and incidents affecting their mental health during that process, as well as the presence of social support and community support. The interviews were transcribed and coded by the researcher using Dedoose, an online analysis software for qualitative and mixed methods (Salmona, Lieber, and Kaczynski 2019).

Results

A majority of the research participants (n=9) spent a waiting process in Türkiye, before being resettled in Canada. This process ranged from 19 months (n=2) to 5 years (n=2). The Turkish asylum laws assign asylum-seekers to specific towns, named 'satellite cities', where they are prohibited from arbitrarily leaving (Ustubici and Karadag 2020, 11). The participants of this research have spent their waiting processes in six different towns which are Bolu, Denizli,

Eskisehir, Kayseri (n=3), Van, and Yalova (n=2). The other six participants had spent, or were spending, a waiting process in Canada, at the time of the interviews. For two of them, the waiting process had lasted three years.

All participants, except one (F, 64) described the waiting process as the most challenging phase of their migration trajectory, characterized by a sense of temporariness, lack of belonging, precarity, and uncertainty of the future. Four general themes emerged from the interviews, characterizing the Iranian refugees' lived experiences of mental health and wellbeing during the waiting processes in Türkiye and Canada. These themes are categorized as trauma; grief and depression; stress, worry, and anxiety; social isolation, and economic challenges.

Trauma

In the context of this study, trauma refers to deeply distressing events shaping the Iranian refugees' mental health and wellbeing during the migration trajectories. The participants' lived experiences of trauma in Türkiye and Canada are reviewed below.

Türkiye

A majority of participants who sought asylum in Türkiye mentioned the impact of trauma on their mental health and wellbeing. This included the impact of pre-migration traumatic events experienced in Iran and those experienced during the migration trajectory. An example of the impact of pre-migration trauma can be seen in the lived experience of a participant (F, 41) whose husband was a political prisoner in Iran. In the interviews, she shared the traumatizing effects of the encounters she had with Iranian judicial and police authorities, with whom she had to regularly deal due to her husband's political activism. She reported facing sexual harassment by these authorities, which left her mentally and physically distressed during her time as an asylum seeker in Türkiye. She described going through visible physical symptoms when recalling these traumas during her refugee application interviews, as below.

"At those times (in Türkiye) I used to always feel faint…You know, it really affected me very badly. It was to the extent that whenever I repeated them, all my body would shiver. I remember that when we were at the UNHCR office, when I was talking to them, all my body was shaking and it was like I constantly had to interrupt my own talk." (F, 41)

Some Iranian refugees experienced the migration itself as a traumatic incident due to the restricted and involuntary nature of refugee migration. One of the participants (M, 34), who left Iran by crossing the land border to Türkiye illegally through human smugglers, mentioned that the physical conditions during the border crossing, as well as the behavior of human smugglers and fear of being caught, were traumatizing. He described the physical and emotional hardships of the process as below:

"My journey to Türkiye was very uneasy, it was very stressful, it was not comfortable… Crossing that mountain… not even normal, I mean, it was scary. Because first of all, you are crossing the border illegally as a fugitive, and this has its own stress and fear by itself...Then, in the second place, the journey itself is not easy either, that is, your relationship with the smuggler, your relationship with the smuggler from Türkiye is not very secure either, it isn't an easy one." (M, 34)

Even those who didn't go through traumatic incidents had witnessed deeply distressing or violent incidents within their local Iranian refugee communities in Türkiye. One of the most significant examples of this situation is the case of a participant (F, 54) whose neighbor's child

was taken hostage and later killed by her father, who was also an Iranian refugee. The participant described going through an intense emotional and mental toll because of this incident, as the main provider of emotional and practical support to the child's mother both before and after the homicide.

"We went to the home and they (the police) opened the door, and we saw that the child was dead. See, this is a big nightmare in my life. For four months I was…I was even losing my mental balance. I felt extremely bad... My whole body still shakeswhen I remember this." (F, 54)

After the incident, this participant had to testify in the Turkish court against the father, in his close physical presence. She described her feelings of fear and distress during that process, in the following way.

"You wouldn't even believe it, but even though I took two anti-stress pills and this kind of stuff before it, my whole body was shaking…I had such a bad feeling, such a bad situation. A strange fear and terror took my whole body. I was almost going to faint because of how bad I was feeling." (F, 54)

Canada

Traumas experienced in Iran, which led or contributed to the migration decision-making, often shaped refugees' mental health during the waiting process in Canada. In these cases, refugees arrived in Canada under the impact of the trauma, which reduced their capacity to cope with additional mental health challenges such as stress and uncertainty. For example, a participant who claimed refugee status in Canada due to gender-based violence (F, 37), reported harassment and threats by her former fiance as a traumatizing experience. In another case, a participant went through trauma when trying to navigate the healthcare system in Canada, through which she was diagnosed with a disability. She commented about being upset with the "cold attitude" of a doctor who diagnosed her with a lifetime disability, after "ignoring her complaints and symptoms for a long time".

"I mean when she told that to me, I became really upset. And she was cold, and I was on the edge of crying. I started to cry and I just told her that I don't know what to say. I mean, what kind of doctor is this? You are a doctor, so you should do your job!" (F, 38)

Underlining the contrast between her physical health in Iran and Canada, the participant commented:

"I think these are even more traumatic for me because I was always a very healthy person in Iran...Both mentally and physically. Maybe it's because we experienced the conditions of war back there. Maybe living in Iran made us suffer a bit more, but I was a very healthy person physically, I mean, I didn't have any problems anywhere in my body. My body wasn't disabled. It wasn't fragile. Nothing bad had happened to me in a physical sense." (F, 38)

Grief and Depression

A majority of the participants (n=14) mentioned experiencing grief, characterizing their emotional response to loss, as well as depression or intense sadness, during the waiting processes in Türkiye or Canada.

Türkiye

Several Iranian refugees mentioned dealing with grief during their waiting process in Türkiye, often due to the loss of a close person. For some, these losses were often linked with traumatic events experienced before migration. For example, one of the participants had experienced a miscarriage as a result of the police violence during a house raid in Iran.

Another participant (M, 42), has lost his young brother just before leaving Iran, who was a political activist executed by the Iranian government. As a result, he has reported dealing with intense feelings of grief, sorrow, rage, and vengeance, even after leaving Türkiye for Canada. In his words, refugees "carry their issues with themselves while leaving their countries behind". In some other cases, refugees experience grief in the context of refugee migration where it is impossible to visit their loved ones who live in their home country before their death, and participate in their funeral. One of the participants (M, 40) reported the loss of his mother, which not only affected himself but also his teenage son in an emotionally intense way.

Canada

In the context of refugee migration, the notion of grief can be applied not only to the loss of loved ones, but also to the loss of 'home' and the previous sense of self. The loss of 'home' is often connected with belongings that are inside the home, some of which cannot be carried by the individuals throughout their migration trajectories. Thus, grieving for more abstract and symbolic losses of home and the previous sense of self become intertwined with longing for the material objects or belongings that are left behind in one's previous home. For example, a participant (F, 37) reported sadness due to having to leave her artwork in the house of their parents and relatives in Iran.

"Unfortunately, I couldn't bring any of my art supplies or artwork here. Because my sister and her family requested some stuff, and then we had some personal stuff which was necessary, so we didn't have any place left for additional stuff…Still, when I call Iran after a few months (of being here), my mom tells me what I'm going to do with 'these stuff' and whether she should throw them into the garbage or not. She's talking about my artwork and sculptures! I tell her that she's going to give me a stroke, (I say) please don't even touch them or I will die, they mean the whole life for me!" (F, 37*)*

Stress, Worry, and Anxiety

For a majority of the participants (n=14) the waiting process was associated with the uncertainty of the future, therefore a feeling of lack of control and agency. These, in turn, led to adverse mental health consequences characterized by stress, worry, and anxiety for the Iranian refugees.

Türkiye

For asylum seekers in Türkiye, the waiting process starts right after the refugee application, while its ending time is indefinite, depending on various institutional and political factors going beyond the control of the individuals (Biehl, 2015). One participant described the daily life impacts of this temporariness and lack of control as below:

"In Türkiye, our situation was as if we were left hanging in the air, we couldn't take action about anything...I'm talking about even renting a house and buying furniture..Every day when we

used to go shopping, even when we wanted to buy some basic cutlery, we wouldn't feel comfortable about buying anything. We would tell ourselves that 'well, I might have to leave these here and move (to the country of resettlement) after a few months or a year…'And that wasn't only about spending money, the fact is that we could only bring two pieces of luggage with us, not heavier than 23 kilograms." (M, 34b)

Even after one's refugee claim is accepted by the UNHCR, national and global events can affect the country quotas and assignment of a receiving country to refugees. Multiple participants have mentioned the impacts of the Syrian refugee crisis, the American elections, and Trump's immigration policy changes in their migration trajectories, unexpectedly extending their waiting processes in Türkiye. For example, a gay refugee whose case was assigned to Canada had to wait more than two years to hear back from the Canadian Embassy.

"In Türkiye, my process with the UN has finished in one year...Actually, they sent my case file to the Canadian Embassy after eight months...but that coincided with the (beginning of the) Trudeau government, and the (Syrian) refugee crisis, and these sort of things...So the Canadian government stopped receiving (Iranian) refugees...For exactly 27 and half months, every day, every day except the weekends, I was waiting for a call from the Canadian embassy...For almost two and half years I waited for that call." (M, 34b)

Another participant (M, 40) described how the delays in his migration process affected his feelings about the future, even after he was resettled in Canada:

"Well, imagine that you are constantly waiting and preparing yourself for receiving news, telling yourself that 'Well I'll be going to Canada', and then they call you referring you to the USA, so you prepare yourself again, this time for going to the USA, and then again...So here we are now. So that's why I feel like no one ever knows what will also happen tomorrow." (40, M)

Once they enter Türkiye, asylum seekers' towns of residence are assigned by the Turkish government based on the available spaces or quotas, unless the asylum seeker has a first-degree relative living in one of the satellite towns. Thus, asylum seekers have minimal agency in choosing their towns of residence during the waiting process in Türkiye. Iranian asylum seekers are not allowed to leave the satellite town that they are assigned without applying for and obtaining official permission (Turkish: 'izin'). They have to regularly provide signatures in the local police stations to prove residency (Ustubici and Karadag 2020, 11).

Still, some asylum seekers do live in larger cities with better living conditions and only visit their satellite towns to provide signatures. One of the participants who lived in such a situation described his exhaustion from the constant sense of fear, worry, and anxiety.

Comparing his situation with other migrants who were among his circle of friends, he mentioned that rather than being excited about his country of destination, his main motivation was to be freed of the restrictions shaping his daily life in Türkiye.

"I wasn't excited at all and it really didn't matter for me where I would go...I just knew that I wanted to get rid of the uncertainty...I wanted to know what I am going to do with my life...I wanted to have a proper legal status so I wouldn't constantly act like a fugitive...I wouldn't fear from police anymore...I wouldn't be forced to go (back) to another town for providing a signature anymore...Or (I wouldn't be forced to) obtain permission for leaving the town, and constantly worry about being caught by the police (when you are out of the satellite town without permission)" (M, 35)

Worrying about accompanying children, and relatives back in Iran, is another feeling that was mentioned by three participants, as a factor perpetuating stress and declining mental health.

A participant shared her feelings of worry about her child who witnessed their persecution before migration, as below.

"My first child was too young, he was two and half years old when we left Iran. He used to be harmed a lot during our detentions. He used to fear a lot when they used to come to our house to search for it. To torture us more, they wouldn't allow us to keep the child away from that surrounding. The child always thought that they were thieves who came to our house. He always talks about remembering a thief. These (incidents) were so difficult for me, (and) to take care of this child in such a situation. I myself was also affected a lot, both physically and mentally." (F, 41)

Another participant (M, 40) also mentioned feeling worried about his children's mental health and wellbeing. In his case, the worry was intertwined with feelings of intense guilt for 'dragging his children and wife' with himself, since his political activism led them to leave Iran.

Canada

For those who spent their waiting process in Canada, stress during that phase was impacted by the language barrier and communication issues. For them, the COVID-19 Pandemic led to further isolation, uncertainty, and delays in the paperwork. Feelings of worry were reported to be more intense by refugees who have left Iran just before or during the Pandemic, therefore worrying about the life of their loved ones who have experienced the Pandemic most severely in Iran. A participant reported her lived experience in the following words.

"It doubled everything in effect...The virus, my nephew's illness, both of these doubled everything else. So in these ten months, I ended up tolerating twenty months' worth of stress, you know? Some people say that the first two years are difficult, but for me, it was like I had double the amount of stress in these ten months, as if I had experienced those two years already. Anyway…I'm just praying for finding a job, and nothing else is too important for me." (F, 52)

Social Isolation and Economic Challenges

A majority of the Iranian refugees (n=10) reported experiencing social isolation and loneliness in various phases of their migration trajectories, while all of them (n=15) mentioned going through economic challenges which negatively affected their mental health and wellbeing.

Türkiye

The Iranian refugees in Türkiye were legally not allowed to work or seek registered, formal employment. This lack of employment, alongside the lengthy processes of waiting, led to challenges for all participants seeking asylum in Türkiye. One of the participants expressed his lived experience in the following words.

"The process was long and difficult…Plus, imagine that in those 5 years we didn't have work permits, and we weren't receiving any financial assistance from the Turkish government, and I had to feed a family with two children… With the living costs in Türkiye, so just imagine the mess!" (M, 40).

In the absence of work permits and formal employment opportunities, A majority of participants (n=8) mentioned working informally or voluntarily in Türkiye. Despite not having any social rights or contract because of the informal and unregistered nature of informal employment, working provided the participants not only with economic means but also with opportunities for socialization and gaining respect in the community. For example, two participants (M, 34; F, 64)

mentioned working for the local Turkish immigration police as Farsi-Turkish interpreters informally. Two others (M, 34; F, 41) recounted their experiences of voluntarily collaborating with the local Turkish NGO branches working with Iranian and Afghan asylum seekers. One participant stated:

"I used to be the one who brought the newcomer asylum seekers to their doctor appointments in Türkiye because I learned the Turkish language. The police used to call me and say "Abla gel" (Turkish: Come here, sister). I used to work there as an interpreter. For example when they detained trafficked Afghan asylum seekers. I would be their interpreter. I can't tell you how much the police respected me. They (Turkish people) loved me so much, regardless of where I went...From hospitals to various doctor clinics. All doctors used to know me because I used to bring them (newcomer asylum seekers) to different doctors." (F, 64)

Another interviewee commented:

"I used to work at the office of ASAM (Association of Solidarity with Asylum Seekers and Migrants)...That NGO was like a bridge between the UN and the asylum seekers...I mostly worked there as a volunteer...My intention was both to keep myself busy and also to be able to provide some help to the newcomer asylum seekers." (F, 41)

While this participant mentioned eagerly and easily learning Turkish, partially due to her ethnic Azerbaijani Turkic background, her husband's experience was significantly different as he (M, 42) described below:

"In my workplace, there used to be around 40 or 50 Turkish people..and I learned the language from them. Actually..it is an interesting or rather sad story..but now that I think about it, it was a good experience..but it was sad during the first days...As you know, the younger generation of Türkiye is not good with migrants at all...So they used to insult us a lot..and it's interesting that I actually tried to learn Turkish in less than two months. The only reason for me to learn Turkish quickly was that I wanted to respond to their insults. So that's why I learned Turkish." (M, 42)

Alongside the interactions with the Turkish society, relations with the other members of the Iranian asylum seeker community were also significant in shaping the participants' experiences during the waiting process. Several participants (n=6) mentioned being close 'like a family' with other Iranian asylum seekers spending the waiting process in the same town with them. They have mentioned taking different kinds of community leadership roles and engaging in activities of solidarity such as collecting funds or providing emotional support for the community members in need. One of the participants commented:

"I was under a lot of pressure...Not only me, but those around me were in the same situation as well... And I had become something like their mom, I had to constantly comfort everyone...In Türkiye, I had four or five close friends that actually became like my family. I mean, in fact, they were closer than the family. At the end of the day we were all far away from our families, some of us hadn't seen them for one or two years. But with these people, we were near each other every day from the morning until night." (M, 34b)

Another participant (54, F) commented on her supportive role for a refugee neighbor of hers, who had lost her kidnapped child due to a family tragedy that made news in Türkiye. She mentioned helping her during the tragedy despite not belonging to the same religious community. Recalling other refugees' praise for her support, she commented:

"I felt a sense of responsibility. If one doesn't become useful in this kind of time, it wouldn't make sense to be with each other during good times as everyone can do that...The important thing is to help and rescue each other during hardship." (F, 54)

She talked about eventually gaining a community organizer role, in the following words:

"It made me feel useful in Türkiye. Feeling that I can solve someone's problems, or help someone. There were many newcomer refugees who, for example, didn't have money. The (refugee) folks in Kayseri, were sincere folks and they respected me. For example, when they wanted to go to the Bazaar, I would tell them 'Guys, we have newcomer compatriots who don't have money, who have problems, let's help them. Let's each of us buy something for their home from the Bazaar and bring it here and help them..''. So one would bring 5 Turkish liras, another one would bring 10...Everyone would help with so much kindness." (F, 54)

In sum, the participants mentioned having close ties, supportive relationships, feelings of productivity, and a sense of purpose through their relationships within the Iranian community. It can be argued that through these interactions, the participants have attempted to overcome the lack of support created by the absence of active official and non-governmental organizations.

Canada

In contrast with asylum seekers in Türkiye, refugee claimants in Canada were allowed to legally seek employment and work, or receive financial assistance in the absence of employment, if eligible. However, accessing financial help was not always a straightforward process for the Iranian refugees. A participant shared the challenges that she faced while navigating the welfare system during the waiting process as below:

"I got a social worker and they (the government) gave me 500 dollars a month...But I actually lost that (right to financial assistance) after a short time. And I'm actually so glad that it's over...Because at that time my (English) language wasn't strong and I didn't have an interpreter...The social worker used to sit behind glass and she was very distant to me... After starting to work, and receiving a check, she issued a fine to me! They told me that I haven't reported it (as my income). At that moment I was actually living in a shelter. I mean, because of my housing problems I ended up returning to shelter...So imagine, they issued a fine of 1000 dollars for me who is a refugee." (F, 38)

This participant mentioned having complex feelings about receiving financial assistance from the government, in the following words.

"I always advocated about not being dependent on the state, and encouraged my refugee friends to get out of the welfare system… but as a friend says to me that apparently the system is so fucked up that we actually deserved to stay in the system and keep receiving welfare. But it seems like it (the system) doesn't appreciate what we have done. You know, unfortunately, nobody here appreciates characteristics such as honesty and hard work that we brought with us from our home country." (F, 38)

In addition, a majority of the participants who spent the waiting process in Canada (n=5) mentioned that facing barriers during their search for employment was the most challenging aspect of their lived experiences. For several participants (n=4) these barriers were tied to employers' request for proof of Canadian work and education experience. As a result, participants have faced a social erasure of their past job experience, credential, and occupational status. Multiple participants (n=5) have mentioned experiencing severe downward mobility or sharp ups

and downs in their occupational history, in connection with their migration trajectory. For example, a refugee claimant (F, 29) who used to work in the public sector as a psychologist in Iran ended up working as a busser in an Iranian grill house after moving to Canada. Another participant, who was a lawyer in Iran, mentioned doing manual labor in the construction sector in Canada, due to his lack of Canadian credentials and official language proficiency. He commented:

"Well, this is a first-world country, you should work every day like a machine, otherwise, you know… (sarcastic tone). I work 8 hours a day...Including Sunday...It's really hard to do manual labor here. You end up being left behind in life because, during your free time you're so tired that you become like a dead body, you can just sleep at home until the next day. What kind of life is this? When someone migrates to a place, regardless of its reasons, one of the most important things is to raise one's living standards. I can't keep working from early morning until evening and then sleep like a dead body and go back to work again. Is this my standard (of living) now? It shouldn't be...Otherwise, I have my own house and own car in Iran, so what's the point (of living in Canada)?" (M, 40)

Employers' expectations of Canadian credentials become more challenging to navigate for older refugees, who can feel like they have fallen behind or that they have less time to achieve new credentials. A participant described her experience as below:

"When I came here I realized that they don't accept my documents or past experience at all, and I have to start from zero at this age...I mean I was shocked, I didn't think that it was going to be like that... Although everyone tells me that I can follow up in the upcoming years and later work in my own field, but well, in the end, I'm not a 20-year-old young folk who can wait five more years…"(F, 52)

For these participants, the transition from life in Iran to being a refugee claimant in Canada is embodied subsequently through the impact of manual labor and fatigue, as well as the self-perception of having an aging body. These experiences are also connected with the lived time and temporality as one constantly looks back into, and reconsiders their past experiences, credentials, and/or living standards while assessing future options and prospects. In some cases, these assessments were based on comparisons of one's past in Iran and present situation in Canada which resulted in feelings of remorse. One participant expressed the downward socioeconomic mobility that she experienced during the waiting process as below:

"When I came here, the first thing that I ended up remembering and thinking about was an Afghan woman, who was a maid in our home (in Iran)...And I felt like 'well, this woman has been suffering a lot' and I said to myself that now...I just felt that at that moment I was finally able to understand her. So imagine how (hard) my experience was here that I ended up thinking like that." (F, 38)

Another participant commented:

"We didn't have any job in the first 3 months...Until obtaining our work permit. Those 3 months were too stressful for me, way too much...I can say that I was even remorseful, at the beginning...I was always saying that at least there (in Iran) I had my job, at least I had my family there, we were able to have a cup of tea or have a chit-chat so I could ease the pressure on me...Here I can't do that." (F, 29)

This participant's comparison of her living conditions in Canada and Iran doesn't only focus on her employment issues but also underlines the absence of close family providing emotional support. Nevertheless, almost all of the participants who claimed refugee status in

Canada (n=5) already had one or more close relatives or family members there before leaving Iran. As a result of this community presence, in addition to the language barrier, none of the participants had formed close social relationships and friendships with Canadians from other backgrounds during the waiting process. Two of them (F, 40 and F, 37) mentioned perceiving Canadians as distant, cold, and 'too different from Iranians', mentioning that they don't see close relationships possible. One of these participants (F, 40) mentioned a brief casual interaction with her neighbors, where they didn't respond to her small talk as warmly as she expected: "*I felt like they don't want to be friends with us. Maybe they are racist. We would have been much warmer to them if they were in our country".*

While the presence of close family members, as well as a large Iranian community in Canada, had helped the participants to cope with social isolation, many participants mentioned problems that they had experienced with fellow community members. They often reported uncomfortable and complex interactions with the other members of the Iranian community, shaped by multilayered moral and character-based judgements. Two participants (F, 38; F, 37) mentioned avoiding close interactions with the other members of the community during the waiting process in Canada, due to the widespread mistrust and anti-refugee stigma that they faced from other Iranian migrants.

Discussion

While in general participants have associated the waiting process with uncertainty and being in limbo, there are significant differences in spending the waiting process in Canada compared to waiting in Türkiye. The first and the most tangible difference was that while all participants who had spent the waiting process in Türkiye have complained about the lack of work permits and financial assistantships there, the economic conditions are less restricted for the refugee claimants in Canada. In addition to being able to obtain a work permit and become employed, refugee claimants in Canada were also eligible for getting regular financial assistance, which several participants (n=3) mentioned receiving.

The second difference between spending the waiting process in Canada and Türkiye is that those claiming refugee status in Canada already lived in their country of destination.

Thus, unlike those in Türkiye, they did not have to expect to hear about their country of resettlement and go through the process of moving to a third country. As a result, compared to the resettled refugees, those who claim refugee status in Canada have time to adjust and acculturate before becoming permanent residents. Still, despite not having to deal with the additional uncertainty of their country of resettlement, those who move to Canada from Iran go through a sharp transition, which was described as "*a move from hell to heaven*" by one of the participants (F, 52).

Finally, the relational aspect of participants' lived experiences, that is, their interactions with local and Iranian communities were significantly different between those who waited for the asylum decision in Türkiye and Canada. Participants reported uncomfortable interactions with other Iranians in Canada, which led them to avoid building relationships with the members of the community. In contrast, participants had close relations with other Iranian refugees in Türkiye which were described as *"becoming like a family"* by four of them. Similarly, a majority of those applying for asylum in Türkiye (n=6) reported having friendly relationships with the local Turks, while those who spent the waiting process in Canada mentioned extremely limited or no contact

with local Canadians.

It can be argued that participants' conceptualizations of cultural proximity and difference play a role in building and sustaining close relationships with locals. Indeed, four of those (M, 34a, M, 34b; M, 35; F, 41) who reported close relationships with Turks came from Iran's own Azerbaijani Turkish ethnic community, which has linguistic and cultural similarities with Türkiye's ethnic Turks (Salehi and Neysani 2017). In comparison, several participants mentioned perceiving Canadians as "distant", "cold", and "too different from Iranians" (F, 40; F, 37). These differences, in turn, led to contrasting experiences of social and community support for the Iranian refugees in Türkiye and Canada.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study used a phenomenological perspective to discuss the Iranian refugees' lived experiences during the asylum waiting processes in Türkiye and Canada. The interview results illustrated that for the Iranian refugees, the waiting process is characterized by uncertainty, precarity, and temporariness. Thus, the waiting process affects Iranian refugees' mental health and wellbeing through four broad issues which are trauma; grief and depression; stress, worry, and anxiety; social isolation, and economic challenges. Despite these common issues, the social, economic, and policy-related context of the country of asylum also shapes the Iranian refugees' lived experiences. First, refugees were not granted work permits or financial assistance while waiting for obtaining their status in Türkiye, in contrast with Canada where they could be employed. Second, those spending the waiting process in Canada were not expecting to be referred to a third country, while refugees in Türkiye had to deal with the uncertainties about their country of resettlement even after their refugee status was granted. Finally, refugees spending the waiting process in Türkiye had stronger social and community support as they had close relationships with both the other Iranians and local Turks, while those in Canada reported minimum or no interactions with Canadians, and negative experiences with other Iranians.

While this study contributes to the literature by presenting rare empirical data, it is important to acknowledge the limitations. First, the sample size of the study is limited to fifteen people. Both due to its phenomenological framework, as well as its small sample size, this study does not claim to provide generalizable findings. Second, despite being relatively diverse, the sample is not representative of all different ethnic, religious, and political categories of Iran and it does not include any Kurdish, Arab, or Sunni Muslim individuals. The experiences of individuals with these backgrounds could be significantly different than the others in Türkiye, due to socio-political reasons including the presence of local Kurdish, Arab, and Sunni populations there. Thus, future research can look into the experiences of a larger and more representative group from Iran to better compare refugee experiences in Türkiye and Canada. Finally, not all of the research participants were at the same point in their migration trajectories during the interviews. Those who spent the waiting process in Türkiye had already been resettled, while four participants were still going through their waiting process in Canada. Future research can be conducted in an international comparative setting, in order to compare and contrast the experiences of refugees living in Türkiye and Canada during the same time period.

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Integration challenges of third-country nationals: frames of policy and measures regarding qualifications and the German labour market

Réka Friedery

Abstract. Germany represents a promising opportunity for third-country nationals seeking to join the labour force. The objective of this article is to present a framework of policies and measures that could potentially facilitate the integration of third-country nationals (TCNs) into the German labour market, with a particular focus on the realm of qualifications. It could be argued that although Germany has previously experienced labour immigration, it was based on agreements between states and the integration of foreign labourers was not a topic of contention at the political or societal level. It was only after it became evident that there was a requirement for foreign labour in light of the declining number of domestic workers and the necessity for German economic growth that significant measures were initiated. The considerable influx of non-German nationals after 2015 presented the political level with the prospect of a new source of labour and the challenge of integrating them into the German labour market.

Keyword: third-country nationals (TCNs), migration, integration, German labour market, qualification

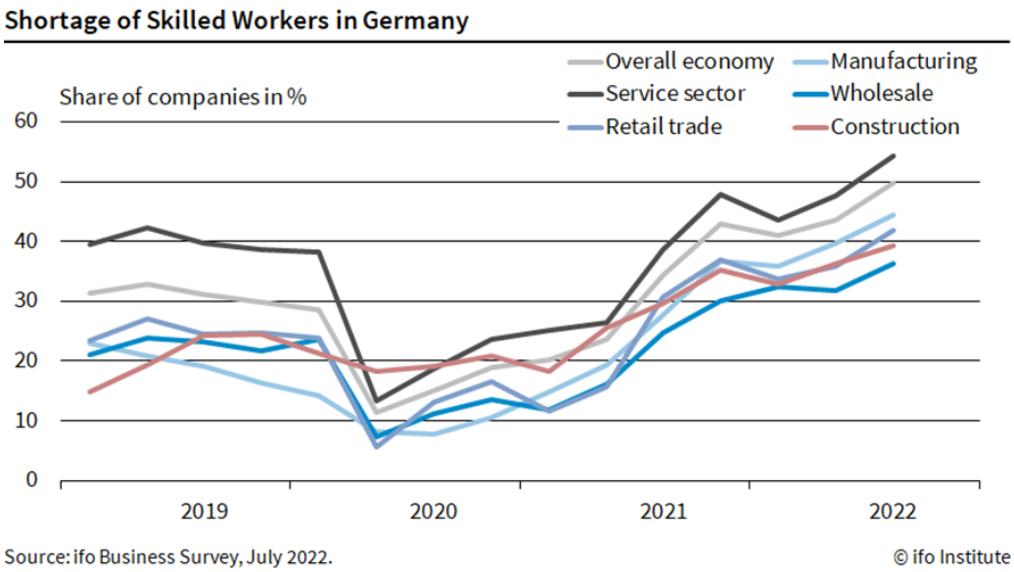
Introduction

The concept of integration is employed to delineate the social, political, cultural and economic processes that occur upon the arrival of migrants in a novel societal milieu, but it is also a normative category (Martiniello 2012). National models and integration programmes have frequently been superseded by changing contemporary realities, political and economic priorities and dramatic events (Carrera 2006). There is no legal definition of 'labour market integration' or 'successful labour market integration' in Germany (Tangermann and Grote 2018), but key to integration is social inclusion, and all the measures that have been developed to achieve this (Guild 2006).

At EU level, the Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021–2027 (COM(2016) 377 final) was adopted with the objective of fostering social cohesion and the construction of inclusive societies for all. The concept of 'inclusion for all' entails the guarantee that all policies are accessible to and beneficial for all members of society, including migrants and EU citizens with a migrant background. This plan encompasses actions within four sectoral domains, namely education and training, employment and skills, health, and housing. Additionally, it incorporates measures to facilitate effective integration and inclusion across all sectoral domains at the EU, Member State, and regional levels, with a particular focus on young people.[1]

[1] Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, Action plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027 COM/2020/758 finalhttps://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-

Table 1



https://www.ifo.de/en/press-release/2022-08-02/shortage-skilled-workers-germany-reaches-all-time-high

Integration shall be a central concern for OECD countries, with 141 million immigrants representing over 10% of the population, and 12% of the population in the EU, comprising approximately 54 million foreign-born individuals. As for Germany, it was the largest host country in the EU, with 25% of all foreign-born residents in the Union residing there,[2] added that two major humanitarian crises – the Syrian conflict in 2015 and more recently the war in Ukraine – have contributed to an increase in the number of refugees since Germany was one of the countries that received a significant number of refugees. Despite the recent substantial influx of individuals into Germany, the country's economy continues to experience challenges related to labour shortages, particularly in the context of high-skilled workers. As illustrated in Table 1, worker shortages have increased significantly across all industries and significant proportion of professions in Germany rely on the contributions of immigrants, with approximately 25% of all employees aged between 15 and 64 having a history of immigration in 2022 (Hanewinkel 2024).

Furthermore, notable disparities in employment persist for individuals born outside the European Union, with a particularly pronounced gender gap observed in the employment rates of

content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52020DC0758 COM/2020/ 758 finalhttps://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52020DC0758

[2] OECD/European Commission, Composition of immigrant populations and households, in OECD/EUROPEAN COMMISSION: Indicators of Immigrant Integration 2023: Settling In, Paris, 2023, p. 48. https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/052e7ca9-en.pdf?expires=1718461450&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=DA40353638CCDABB65BA0A89CE091C85

non-EU-born women.[3] By the end of 2023, approximately 419,000 individuals from outside the European Union (EU) with a temporary residence permit for work purposes were registered in the Central Register of Foreigners in Germany (AZR).[4] Furthermore, data from the Federal Statistical Office (Destatis) indicates a consistent increase in the number of non-EU migrants coming to Germany for employment since 2010 (85,000 at that time).[5]

Milestones during the development of the integration policy

In the aftermath of the Second World War, Germany underwent a significant transformation, becoming a country reliant on a substantial influx of guest workers. These workers were state-organised and recruited in accordance with the German-Italian agreement of 1955, with the largest influx occurring between 1955 and 1973. This resulted in 14 million workers arriving from southern European countries, the former Yugoslavia and Turkey, primarily to work in the industrial and service sectors (Bade 2000). At that time, German politicians held the view that guest workers would not remain permanently in the country but would return to their country of origin. The initial integration measures implemented in 1970 demonstrated that the government was aware of the considerable number of foreign workers in the country and thus addressed the issue specifically in the context of the labour market.[6] In 1973, the government's objective was twofold. Primarily, it sought to facilitate the integration of these workers into the German society. Secondly, it aimed to reduce the number of foreign workers in the country. Despite the majority of the approximately 11 million migrant workers returning to their country of origin, 4 million remained permanently in Germany (Die Beauftragte der Bundesregierung für Migration, Flüchtlinge und Integration 2011a).

The 1980s are regarded as the 'lost decade' (Bade 1993), as a period of missed opportunities for integration, despite the implementation of several initiatives. The initial, temporary employment of foreign labour had evolved into a pattern of permanent residence following the implementation of the recruitment ban in 1973,[7] with family members joining them and foreign children born in Germany. This led among others to challenges in housing, healthcare, and education. To deal with the situation, in 1978 the Federal Government appointed a 'Commissioner for the Promotion of the Integration of Foreign Workers and their Family Members'

[3] European Commission Directorate-General for Economic and Financial Affairs Secretariat-General Recovery and Resilience Task Force: 2023 Country Report Germany. European Economy Institutional Papers 229, JUNE 2023 15. https://economy-finance.ec.europa.eu/document/download/0a4f6da6-f64d-4974-a3de-08d409113036_en?filename= ip229_en.pdf

[4] Erwerbsmigration im Jahr 2023 erneut stark gestiegen. Pressemitteilung Nr. 177 vom 2. Mai 2024 https://www.destatis.de/DE/Presse/Pressemitteilungen/2024/05/PD24_177_125.html

[5] Erwerbsmigration im Jahr 2022 stark gestiegen. Pressemitteilung Nr. 165 vom 27. April 2023 https://www.destatis.de/DE/Presse/Pressemitteilungen/2023/04/PD23_165_125.html?nn=639742

[6] Grundsätze zur Eingliederung ausländischer Arbeitnehmer. Bundesarbeitsblatt Nr. 4/1970, Verlag W. Kohlhammer.

[7] The recruitment ban (Anwerbestopp), set forth in a directive on November 23, 1973, marked the end of the era of foreign labor recruitment to West Germany. The ban completely blocked the entry of 'guest workers'from lands which were not members of the European Economic Community (EEC). See Migration history in Germany, https://www.domid.org/angebot/aufsaetze/essay-migrationsgeschichte-in-deutschland.

to coordinate integration measures within the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.[8] Commissioner Kühn's published Memorandum 'Stand und Weiterentwicklung der Integration der ausländischen Arbeitnehmer und ihrer Familien in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland' was a pioneering document, advocating for integrative measures in education policy, a right to choose naturalisation for young people born and raised in the Federal Republic, and the introduction of municipal voting rights for foreigners (Das Kühn-Memorandum 1979). The central argument was that Germany is a country of immigration underlined by the significant proportion of guest workers choose to remain in the country for an extended period. This was in stark contrast to the previous German position that Germany is not a country of immigration, based on the assumption that integration only occurs during the period of guest work, and that it does not extend beyond this limited timeframe (Kühn 1979).

Although steps were taken in 1987 to promote labour market integration,[9] there was continued support for the return of immigrants to their countries of origin. In 1990, following the German reunification, a new law on the residence of foreigners included a number of integration instruments, such as equality before the courts, the right to social security and better coordination of integration.[10]

In 2005, Angela Merkel became German Chancellor, and there was a focus on the necessity for a long-term, multi-level dialogue on integration. Furthermore, the concept of a 'Willkommenskultur' (literally, a culture of welcome) gained prominence at the societal level. This term is not legally defined and is associated with immigration and integration policy. (Bade 2014).

In 2005, the Immigration Act[11] was introduced that profoundly reformed the status of foreigners, asylum and citizenship law. As one of the Act's key provisions, the Act on the Status of Foreigners was replaced by the Act on Residence, Employment and Integration of Foreigners.[12] The legislation approached integration from a number of different angles, such as with the so-called integration courses, which comprised German as a foreign language and German social and cultural studies for immigrants, with a compulsory examination at the end.

The National Integration Plan was established in 2007 with the objective of promoting education, vocational training, employment, and cultural integrationand provisions for integration courses provided by the federal government (Die Bundesregierung 2007). In 2017, a nationwide Integration Programme started to standardise the multitude of co-existing integration measures undertaken by the federal, state, and local governments. The outcome was the implementation of a needs-based orientation programme and enhanced collaboration between integration offers.

[8] Die Bundesregierung, Heinz Kühn. https://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-de/suche/heinz-kuehn-456900

[9] Maβnahmen zur sozialen und beruflichen Eingliederung.

[10] Gesetz zur Neuregelung des Ausländerrechts aus Nr. 34 vom 14.07.1990, Seite 1354 https://www.bgbl.de/xaver/bgbl/start.xav?startbk=Bundesanzeiger_BGBl&jumpTo=bgbl190s1354.pdf#__bgbl__%2F%2F*%5B%40attr_id%3D%27bgbl190s1354.pdf%27%5D__1718199659484

[11] Gesetz zur Steurung und Begrenzung der Zuwanderung und zur Regelung des Aufenthalts und der Integration von Unionsbürgern und Ausländern (Zuwanderungsgesetz) vom 30. 07. 2004 (BGBl. I 1950), http://www.bgbl.de/xaver/bgbl/start.xav?startbk=Bundesanzeiger_BGBl&start=//*%255B@attr_id=%27bgbl104s1950.pdf%27%255D#__bgbl__%2F%2F*%5B%40attr_id%3D%27bgbl104s1950.pdf%27%5D__1468072874715

[12] Act on the Residence, Economic Activity and Integration of Foreigners in the Federal Territory[1] Residence Act, BGBl. 2024 I Nr. 152, https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/englisch_aufenthg/index.html

In 2012, the National Integration Plan turned into the National Action Plan on Integration that created instruments to facilitate the measurement of the results of the integration policy, with objectives of general nature and timeframes and indicators to verify the attainment of the set goals. The National Integration Plan saw the government of Germany commit itself to measuring the progress of social integration within the country. An important element of the plan was the decision to produce an annual integration report. The first report was published in 2009, outlining a novel approach to integration and utilising integration indicators as a foundation for subsequent steps and enhancements (Die Beauftragte der Bundesregierung für Migration, Flüchtlinge, und Integration 2011b). A variety of measures have been implemented at the provincial and local levels across the country with the objective of addressing the needs of young people. These measures have focused on the following areas: education, careers, the prevention of early school leaving, and parental involvement in the school system.

The before-mentioned National Action Plan on Integration, published in 2012, comprised over 100 concrete measures (core projects) designed to promote integration at all levels and in all areas of life. The plan aimed to strengthen social cohesion with the federal government, federal states, local authorities and in recent years, civil society organisations have collaborated to achieve a number of common goals. These included the strengthening of individual initiatives to identify opportunities for children, adolescents and young adults, the promotion of the recognition of foreign qualifications, and the increase in the employment of immigrants in federal and provincial offices (Die Bundesregierung 2021). Moreover, the issue of immigrants in public services and health/social care has emerged as a new topic of interest (Die Bundesregierung 2011).

In 2016, at the Cabinet meeting in Meseberg, the Cabinet adopted the Integration Act and the Meseberg Declaration on Integration that declared several support, training and job opportunities for immigrants, as well as obligations to cooperate on integration measures. The Declaration asserted that integration involves the offer of services, but equally entails an obligation on the part of incomers to make an effort. It was therefore concluded that integration can only work as a two-way process.[13] Since 2006, the Federal Chancellery has hosted a regular event known as the Integration Summit. At the 10th summit in 2018, the National Action Plan on Integration was extended, as was the migration and integration procedure.

Milestones during the development of measures regarding the labour market

The European Union (EU) has established a set of regulations pertaining to the duration of stays in Schengen member states, including Germany. In Germany, there are three temporary residence permits (Residence permit, EU Blue Card, Visa), and two permanent residence permits (EU permanent residence, Settlement permit). The regulations stipulate the conditions for stays of up to three months, while longer stays exceeding this period are subject to the laws of the respective member state. Such stays are permitted for specific purposes, including reuniting with a spouse or for employment-related reasons. The Residence Act classifies migration based on its purpose, delineating distinct pathways for different types of migrants. The Council Directive

[13] The Federal Government: Cabinet meeting comes to a close. Integration Act is a milestone says Chancellor, https://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-en/service/archive/archive/integration-act-is-a-milestone-says-chancellor-464382

2009/50/EC[14] (EU Blue Card) was first introduced into the Residence Act in 2012, regulating the entry and employment of highly qualified third-country nationals in Germany. The recently introduced provisions pertaining to the EU Blue Card in Germany are set forth in Sections 18g, 18h, and 18i of the Residence Act, which also includes additional facilitations. It is important to note that unskilled or low-skilled workers may only remain in the country on a temporary basis and are not eligible for permanent residence.

The immigration of workers, the legal measures

In Germany, both the federal government and the federal states regulate the recognition of differents professional qualifications. The legal basis are the Recognition Act of the Federal Government (the Recognition Act), Recognition Acts of the Federal States, the Law for the Amendment of the Professional Qualifications Assessment Act (BQFG) and sectoral laws of the federal government and federal states.

One of the principal objectives of the National Integration Plan was the implementation of the Assessment and Recognition of Foreign Professional Qualifications Act (Anerkennungsgesetz)[15], also known as the Recognition Act which relates only to occupations under federal jurisdiction. The objective of this legislation was to enhance the assessment and recognition of vocational and professional qualifications, as well as vocational education and training qualifications obtained abroad. The Act established a unified national procedure and criteria for the assessment and recognition of foreign professional and vocational qualifications, while simultaneously preserving the right to a recognition procedure and regulating it. The legislation regulated the recognition of foreign qualifications for professions for which the federal government was responsible, thus encompassing almost 600 professions.

In addition, the federal states have enacted recognition laws for professions that are regulated by the federal states, including educators, teachers, engineers, and architects.

It is important to note, that Art. 1 of the Recognition Act contains the Professional Qualifications Assessment Act, (Berufsqualifikationsfeststellungsgesetz, BQFG)[16] which regulates the recognition procedure.

[14] Directive (EU) 2021/1883 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 October 2021 on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purpose of highly qualified employment, and repealing Council Directive 2009/50/EC, PE/40/2021/REV/1, OJ L 382, 28.10.2021, p. 1–38.

[15] Gesetz zur Verbesserung der Feststellung und Anerkennung im Ausland erworbener Berufsqualifikationen Vom 6. Dezember 2011 (BGB I S. 2515), https://www.bgbl.de/xaver/bgbl/start.xav?startbk=Bundesanzeiger_BGBl&start=//*%5b@attr_id=%27bgbl111s2515.pdf%27%5d#__bgbl__%2F%2F*%5B%40attr_id%3D%27bgbl111s2515.pdf%27%5D__1720532294694

[16] Gesetz über die Feststellung der Gleichwertigkeit von Berufsqualifikationen (Berufsqualifikationsfeststellungsgesetz – BQFG von 6. dezember 2011, (BGB I S. 2515), https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/bqfg/BQFG.pdf

The Skilled Workers' Immigration Act[17] of 2019 sought to establish a legislative framework for the selective and increased immigration of skilled workers from third countries and to enhance the integration of skilled non-European foreigners into the labour market. This pertained to foreign citizens who had applied for asylum in Germany and individuals applying for a work visa in a third country (Bathke 2019).

The Act was in accordance with the demographic shift and the shortage of skilled labour, which presented a different political dynamic. The general public and most political parties demonstrated support for moderately generous entry rules. Furthermore, Germany occupied a leading position among the Member States with the most liberal immigration rules for the highly skilled (Thym 2019).

For the first time, the term 'skilled worker'was defined by law in Section 18 of the Act on the Residence, Economic Activity and Integration of Foreigners in the Federal Territory (Residence Act) [18]. This definition pertains to a skilled worker with vocational training. The term 'skilled worker' is defined by law as an individual who has completed vocational training in Germany or holds a foreign vocational qualification that is equivalent to one acquired in Germany. Alternatively, a skilled worker is defined as an individual who has completed a university degree in Germany, a recognised foreign university degree or a foreign university degree that is comparable to a German one. We shall emphasise that section 18c (3) of the Residence Act sets out a specific category of highly qualified workers, namely those whose residence is of special economic and societal interest to Germany and is the only category that is granted a permanent residence permit upon arrival.

In 2023, the new Skilled Workers Immigration Act[19] amended several existing Acts and also implemented Directive 2021/1883[20]. Since 2020, the first Skilled Immigration Act has also made it easier for skilled workers with vocational training from non-EU countries to enter and stay in Germany for the purpose of employment. Furthermore, the opportunities to obtain a residence permit with vocational training were also expanded with the new Act.

The objective of the reform was to facilitate the entry of skilled workers from non-EU countries into the German labour market. The amendments introduce a three-pillar system for skilled workers, comprising the following: the first pillar addresses skilled workers in general; the second pillar concerns required professional experience; and the third, entitled 'potential', addresses skilled workers without a concrete job offer (Der Deutscher Bundestag 2023).

The initial stage primarily encompassed facilitation for the 'EU Blue Card' and for recognised skilled workers. The second stage, which commenced in March 2024, encompassed

[17], Fachkräfteeinwanderungsgesetz vom 15. August 2019, BGBl. I 2019, 1307 https://www.bgbl.de/xaver/bgbl/start.xav#__bgbl__%2F%2F*%5B%40attr_id%3D%27bgbl119s1307.pdf%27%5D__1718454120656

[18] Act on the Residence, Economic Activity and Integration of Foreigners in the Federal Territory[1] Residence Act, BGBl. 2024 I Nr. 152, https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/englisch_aufenthg/index.html

[19] Gesetz zur Weiterentwicklung der Fachkräfteeinwanderung, BGBl. 2023 I Nr. 217 vom 18.08.2023 https://www.recht.bund.de/bgbl/1/2023/217/VO

[20] Directive (EU) 2021/1883 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 October 2021 on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purpose of highly qualified employment, and repealing Council Directive 2009/50/EC PE/40/2021/REV/1 OJ L 382, 28/10/2021, p. 1–38

more straightforward access for foreign skilled workers and workers with professional experience, as well as trainees, and enhanced recognition of professional qualifications. The third stage, which will commence in June 2024, will result in the full applicability of all provisions of the Skilled Immigration Act.[21]

The amendments to the Skilled Immigration Act address a number of key issues, including the entitlement of skilled workers with professional or academic training to a residence permit in the event that all requirements are met. This encompasses skilled workers who have obtained a higher education qualification. Furthermore, the possibilities for immigration to Germany from third countries with an EU Blue Card will be expanded. Additionally, skilled workers are permitted to enter Germany to take up employment as part of a recognition partnership, and to complete the recognition procedure of their professional qualification at the same time. We shall mention the so-called Western Balkans regulation which allows nationals of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia to access the labour market for any type of employment in non-regulated occupations. This is overseen by the Federal Employment Agency. Despite the fact that the arrangement was originally planned to expire at the end of 2023, the Regulation on the Further Development of Skilled Immigration will extend the Western Balkans Regulation indefinitely..

According to Section 81a of the Residence Act[22], the so-called fast-track or accelerated procedure for skilled workers is intended to provide a solution to reduce the time required for the entry procedure. In the event that the company is duly empowered by the skilled worker in question, the company may initiate the requisite procedure with the responsible immigration authority. This may be done in the case of a concrete job offer for €411. Furthermore, the procedure for the recognition of foreign qualifications may also be accelerated in this way. Besides the accelerated procedure for skilled workers, the standard entry procedure for employment remains an option.

A beginning of a new direction? The Chance Residence Permit and the Chance Card

In 2022, two migration packages announced introduced the right of opportunity to stay and the residence permit with the opportunity card. The so-called right of residence with opportunities is regulated in Section 104c of the Residence Act, and the primary objective was to provide foreign nationals who are permitted to reside in the country with the opportunity to obtain legal residence status and to enable them to access the labour market. The conditions for obtaining a residence permit are set out in Sections 25a and 25b of the Residence Act and these include demonstrating sufficient oral proficiency in the German language at the A2 level, providing evidence of financial independence, presenting proof of identity, and demonstrating a commitment to the principles of the free democratic basic order of the Federal Republic of Germany.

[21] Bundesministérium des Innern und für Heimat, Modernes Einwanderungsrecht für ausländische Arbeitskräfte, https://www.bmi.bund.de/SharedDocs/schwerpunkte/DE/einwanderungsland/fachkraefteeinwanderung-artikel.html

[22] Act on the Residence, Economic Activity and Integration of Foreigners in the Federal Territory[1] Residence Act, BGBl. 2024 I Nr. 152, https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/englisch_aufenthg/index.html

The Chance Residence Permit is granted to all foreign nationals residing in Germany for a minimum of five years as of the cut-off date of 31 October 2022. These individuals are subject to deportation due to the absence of a residence permit, yet are unable to be deported and are therefore considered tolerated. Foreign individuals who have been residing in Germany for a minimum of five years as of 31 October 2022, with a tolerated or permitted status or with a residence permit, and who fulfil certain criteria, will be granted a 'right of residence opportunity' in Germany for a period of 18 months.

The objective of this period is to enable individuals to fulfil the requirements for a right of residence. These requirements include demonstrating the ability to secure a livelihood, knowledge of the German language, and proof of identity. It should be noted that criminals and individuals who pose a risk are generally excluded from the right of residence. The right of residence with opportunities is intended to prevent the perpetuation of chain tolerations and to reduce the number of long-term tolerated persons. With regard to well-integrated young people, the opportunity to obtain a right of residence will be extended from four to three years of residence in Germany, up to the age of 27. Furthermore, the integration achievements of tolerated persons will be recognised by granting them a right of residence after six years or after just four years if they are living with minor children. Consequently, the periods of prior residence required for a right of residence will be reduced by two years in each case.

The process of family reunification with skilled workers from third countries will be facilitated by the removal of the requirement for family members to provide proof of language skills. In the future, all asylum seekers will have access to integration courses and vocational language courses, subject to availability. The federal government is making an important contribution to participation and social cohesion through early language support programmes. The right of opportunity to stay is a one-time special regulation. If the open requirements are not fulfilled within 18 months, the persons concerned revert to tolerated persons. However, it should be noted that the right of opportunity to stay must be distinguished from the opportunity card.

According to Section 20 a, b of the Residence Ac, the Chance or Opportunity Card, which the Bundestag passed on 23 June 2023, is a temporary residence permit, and enables third-country nationals to seek employment in Germany. The permit is intended for individuals who do not have a specific job offer but demonstrate potential in the labour market due to their specific skills and are seeking employment or opportunities to have their foreign vocational qualifications recognised as equivalent. The procedure is based on a points system that evaluates the following criteria in particular: professional qualification, German language skills, previous work experience and age. The opportunity card allows the holder to enter Germany to look for a job. During the opportunity card residence permit period, one may take up a part-time or trial job. If someone has already found a permanent position, they can easily apply for a corresponding residence permit for employment purposes.

Final remarks

The admission of foreign workers to the German labour market represents a fundamental tenet of the country's immigration policy. A pivotal element in the evolution of German integration policy was the realisation by the German social and political elite that a significant number of immigrants would not be departing in the immediate future, but would instead be remaining in the country for an extended period and even establishing permanent residences. It was necessary for them to acknowledge that Germany had become a country with a significant immigrant population and to develop an integration policy that reflected this reality. Accordingly, an effort was made to construct an integration policy by convening all relevant parties involved in the issue of integration. However, the integration process previously involved migrant workers who had resided in Germany for an extended period and their subsequent relatives. The events of 2015, however, presented a wholly novel situation. New, effective measures were and are still required to integrate the considerable number of migrants arriving in a relatively short period of time as rapidly as possible. However, the long-term integration policy is still being formulated. While skilled immigration can assist in addressing shortages of skilled labour, it is vital to implement measures that facilitate labour market integration and social cohesion, with particular consideration for their implications for educational institutions and social services. This will enable a more effective utilisation of this potential.

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Ties and Powers that Bind: Demographics, Social Networks and Immigrants' Decisions to Stay in Ghana

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Abstract. In migration discourse, scholarly theorizations of West African migrants have been widely undertaken but little literature exist, if any, on how their socio-demographic characteristics and social networks mediate their stay intentions in their host cities. Drawing on a mixed-methods research approach, this study examined how West African immigrants' socio-demographics and social networks shape their intentions to stay in Ghana. To do this, 779 itinerant immigrants were surveyed alongside the conduct of nine key informant interviews with immigrant key informants in the Accra Metropolis of Ghana. The results indicated that most of the immigrants intended to stay in Ghana temporarily, and advice from their social networks mainly familial ties influenced their stay intentions. A significant relationship was established between the immigrants' socio-demographic characteristics (i.e., gender, marital status, country of origin and duration of stay in Ghana) and their stay intentions. Hence, it was found that unmarried, immigrant women and those from Niger including those who stayed longer at the destination preferred a temporary residency. These findings have key policy significance for regulating and integrating permanent immigrants towards socio-economic development, including policy inputs on the complex roles of immigrants' social networks and socio-demographic characteristics on their stay intentions. The study further suggests a detailed register of all temporary immigrant residents nationwide for easy identification and monitoring of their activities, especially in an era characterized by rising insecurity within the West Africa region.

Key concepts: Ghana, social networks, socio-demographics, immigrants, West Africa

Introduction

The available literature indicates that studies on international migration have been largely focused on South–North migration (Short et al., 2017; Rahman & Salisu, 2023). That is, research on international migrants have mainly dwelled on the movement of people from less developed countries to destinations in the more advanced nations. However, statistics from the International Organization for Migration-IOM (2022) on international migration flows, reveal that more people migrate internally within the Global South (37 per cent) than from the South to the North (35 per cent). Moreover, another issue of significance is the general assertion in the literature that most migration movements within the Global South are generally temporary, with limited intention for permanent settlement among most migrants. In support of this claim, studies by Castles and Wise (2008), and Short et al. (2017) reiterated that most migration flows in the Global South are generally less selective and more temporary in nature. For instance, similar studies by Anarfi (2003), Adepoju (2005), and Olsen (2011) in West Africa equally reaffirmed that seasonal, circular or temporary migration are the common migration configurations in the region. Consequently, policy discussions on South–North migration often revolve around the potential for migrants to attain citizenship, residency, or reunion with family members, while scholarly debates regarding

South–South migration generally focus on migrant-worker-treatment, and human rights issues with less scholarly attention on their intents to stay in their host destinations.

According to Massey et al. (1993), Yendaw (2018) and Conduah (2023), migrants' social networks are a complex array of interpersonal ties that bind new migrants, returned migrants, and non-migrants in areas of origin and destination through family and kinship bonds, friendship, and shared community origins. These network connections do not only serve as critical conduits for information exchanges between migrants and non-migrants, but also function as a power of influence in their migration and stay intentions (Yendaw, 2018; Lin & Zhu, 2022). In the literature, scholarly publications on the central role of migrants' social networks and demographic characteristics have been limited to how they mediate their livelihood strategies, migration motivations, decision-making and destination selections, housing choices and conditions, and how their activities underwrite local economic development (Awumbila et al., 2016; Yendaw et al., 2019a; Yendaw et al., 2019b; Koczan et al., 2021; Ryan et al., 2022; Abdulai et al., 2023; Yendaw et al., 2023; Abdulahi et al., 2024). However, a thorough scrutiny of the literature reveals that limited knowledge exists on whether the socio-demographic characteristics of immigrants and their social networks shape their intentions to stay permanently with the host or otherwise. Drawing on this background, the current study seeks to examine West African migrants' intentions to stay in Ghana. In particular, the study focuses on how their socio-demographic characteristics (e.g., gender, age, marital statuses, education etc) as well as social networks at their origins and destination influence their stay intentions in Ghana. Indeed, this is identified as one of the very crucial topics in the literature that has been glossed over by the majority of academic publications (Yendaw, 2018; Gu et al., 2020; Lin & Zhu, 2022).

However, research by Awumbila et al. (2016) highlights that poor migrants in some parts of Ghana rely on their networks, notably family ties and friendships for their livelihoods and stay in their host communities. In line with this evidence, Black et al. (2022) found that Guinean migrants often prioritize broader family dynamics, such as economic pressures in their stay decisions at a destination over individual preferences. Additionally, Birchall (2016) emphasizes the crucial role of migrants' characteristics such as gender in migration experiences, affecting access to family reunification processes, and citizenship. Similarly, Cerase (1974), Ghosh (2000) and Goldstein et al. (2000) have identified age and gender as key personal attributes shaping migrants' intents to stay at a destination. For instance, whilst Goldstein et al. (2000) found permanent migration to be predominant among migrant women, Ghosh (2000) observed temporary migration among older migrants and those who have worked in their host destinations for a considerable period.

Informed by the theoretical perspectives of the neoclassical migration theory, new economics of labour migration theory and the social networks theory which examine conflicting claims regarding people migration motivations and settlement durations, as well as the binding role of networks in migration decisions, the study examined the following objectives:

1. To ascertain the prospects of immigrants' intents to stay in Ghana;
2. To assess the impact of socio-demographic characteristics on their prospective stay intents; and
3. To explore the influence of their social networks on the intention to stay in a destination.

This study manifests its relevance in two key ways. One, examining migrants'

stay intents at the host destinations and the critical role of their social networks and personal characteristics is crucial to extending our understanding of the nature and functioning of immigrants' social networks and characteristics in shaping migration and destination stay decisions. Two, findings from the study could potentially provide relevant, up-to-date information for policy framers in the design of key migration and integration policies to manage contemporary migration dynamics in Ghana. Following the introduction, the next section discusses the conceptual and theoretical review. This is followed by a discussion of the study methods adopted before presenting the results in the fourth section. In the fifth section, the discussion of the results is presented, while the conclusions and policy recommendations form the closing phase of the paper.

Conceptual and Theoretical Review

The term migration is variously defined as the permanent, semi-permanent or temporary change of residence from one geographical area to another and this change according to Yendaw et al. (2017) generally entails the detachment and relocation of activities. Migration can also be categorised as internal or international, and concerning duration, it could be permanent or temporary. However, this study focuses on transnational migrants from different West African countries who dwell in Ghana and undertake itinerant retail activities in urban and peri-urban Ghana. These immigrants, who are usually termed in the local Hausa Language as 'Aboki' (which means a friend), are a group of small-scale immigrant merchants who carry local and foreign manufactured wares of various kinds and retail them on the principal streets and pavements of African cities.

A thorough search of the literature indicates that most studies on this category of immigrants in West Africa focus more on the reasons and motives for their migration and livelihood activities, with limited attention on their stay intentions in host cities, especially on how their social networks and socio-demographics influence their stay decisions. The terms 'stay intention' or 'stay decision' are used interchangeably in this study, and mainly denote migrants' free will to decide whether to reside permanently or temporarily at their destinations. For instance, adherents of the neo-classical theory portray financial and psychological factors as the driving forces of migration (Todaro & Steven, 2006; Kurekova, 2011). According to this theory, owing to global imbalances in the supply of capital and labour, including wage disparities and standards of living across world regions, most migrants go to areas where employment avenues and general economic conditions are better than in their origins (Kurekova, 2011; Yendaw et al., 2019b). From this review, the neo-classical writers linked migration to wage disparities and job opportunities, and suggested that people migrate permanently to raise and maximize their wages in receiving countries (Stark, 1985).

Moreover, in the literature, several studies (Gu et al., 2020; Koczan et al., 2021; Lin & Zhu, 2022) have highlighted the reasons that account for migrants' decision to permanently or temporarily stay in their destination areas. For instance, Koczan et al. (2021) suggest that the ability of migrants to withstand difficulties influences the decision to stay permanently in the destination areas while the reverse holds for those who cannot. Similarly, if the economic opportunities at the destination areas are more available and better than those at the origin, migrants are likely to stay longer (Gu et al., 2020; Görlach & Kuske, 2022). Moreover, immigrants'

socio-demographic characteristics such as age, level of education and skills influence the decision to stay longer or otherwise (IMF, 2016, 2020; Koczan et al. (2021).

Contrary to the neo-classical standpoint, the new economics of labour migration theory perceives migration as a temporary endeavour by individuals with target earning thresholds, mostly negotiated within the household or family unit. According to this theory, migration can be best explained within a wider societal context including wider network ties, and hence the family is the most appropriate decision-making unit (Stark, 1999). This thinking expands the scope for incorporating factors other than individual utility maximization perspective as affecting peoples' migration and destination stay decisions. Similarly, Arango (2000) and De Haas (2008) writing within the new economics of labour migration viewpoint reiterated the role of key meso-level factors, such as migrant households, friends and community-level influences in the migration and destination stay intentions of migrants.

Under the new economics of labour migration (NELM), return migration is the norm – the expected outcome of a successfully implemented strategy of migrating, earning, remitting, saving and, finally, returning to a more secure and comfortable life at their origins (King & Kuschminder, 2022). Barrett and Goggin (2010) for instance, find that wage premia affect Mexican, Albanian, Hungarian, and Irish migrants' decision to return. A study by Görlach and Kuske (2022) found that on average, 15% of migrants leave their host country in a given year, many of whom will return to their home countries. Temporary migration benefits sending countries through remittances, investment, and skills accumulation. Receiving countries benefit via increases in their prime-working-age populations while facing fewer social security obligations (Görlach & Kuske, 2022).

Although the above theoretical postulations have contributed significantly to explaining the study objectives, their basic analyses have not addressed the critical role of migrants' social networks and socio-demographic characteristics as critical powers shaping migration decisions, particularly on how social networks influence immigrants' stay decisions, which is one of the fundamental lacunas the current study sought to unpack. Hence, the study discusses the basic keystones of the social networks theory to supplement the theoretical explanations of the neoclassical and the new economics of labour migration theories. The social network theory depicts the migration of individuals as a network process in which migrants help each other by communicating with close relatives and friends who provide them with critical information about the migration and destination, including navigating challenges before, during and after the migration journey (Esveldt et al., 1995; Bina, 2013; Conduah, 2023). These ties of network can function effectively to the extent of providing diverse assistance such as financial support and even assisting colleagues to find jobs after exchanging information.

The social networks' theory maintains that social interaction and communication facilitate the movement of people by reducing the costs and risks associated with their movement, as well as facilitating their smooth integration through various assistances notably housing, job-finding and sometimes feeding (Massey, 1990; Hugo, 1981; Abdulai et al., 2023). Once migration connections have been formed, the presence of family ties, friendships, and other significant relationships with people from the same community of origin may form a strong incentive for many migrants to want to remain at their destinations. Hence, this study inferred that the decision of immigrants to settle at their destinations permanently or temporarily is influenced by wider social contexts, including family ties, friendships and other significant bonds established before and after their migration. Additionally, given the conflicting theoretical perspectives among the above

theories reviewed, the study conjectured that the destination stay decisions of immigrants is significantly shaped and influenced by their socio-demographic attributes such as age, gender, marital status, educational level, country of origin and the length of time spent at the destination.

Methodology

3.1 The study area

The data used for the analysis in this paper were sourced from much wider research, which was executed in the Accra Metropolitan Area (AMA) on the topic "Migration patterns and livelihood activities of West African immigrant traders in Ghana". The selection of AMA was informed by the fact that it is the largest and most developed city with more vibrant migrant flows relative to other cities or regions in Ghana (GSS, 2021; Yendaw et al., 2023). According to GSS (2021) and Yendaw et al. (2023), Accra constitutes a key destination for most West African immigrants. The 2013 GSS report suggests that more than 21% of all immigrants in Ghana reside in the Greater Accra Region (the highest in the country) and AMA hosts the majority of these immigrants. This phenomenon is due to the existence of key modern infrastructural facilities and other employment opportunities which continue to lure many migrants from all parts of Ghana and beyond (GSS 2021; Yendaw et al., 2023). Considering the built-up and congested nature of the study area in addition to the fact that the immigrants reside in clusters (GSS 2021), nine (9) neighbourhoods were identified to be the main residential places of the immigrants during a reconnaissance survey with community and immigrant leaders were purposively selected as the study sites. They comprised Abossey Okai, Abeka, Ablekuma, Agbogbloshie, New Fadama, Sukura, Lartebiokorshie, Nima and Mamobi.

3.2 Design, approach, population, and sampling

This study used a cross-sectional research design and mixed methods research approach to unpack how West African migrants' social networks and socio-demographics shape their stay intentions in Ghana. Creswell (2012) has emphasised that researchers using mixed methods are required to demonstrate the various stages of mixing the data in their research. Accordingly, the design of this study includes one phase of data collection in which the quantitative approach was given priority and guided the study, while the qualitative dimension was embedded into the study and provided a supportive role. The target population for this study was drawn from West African immigrants who resided in the AMA as itinerant retailers for a minimum period of six months or more, and who were not dual nationals, naturalized foreign citizens or nationals by marriage. After having considered the general difficulty in obtaining representative samples of itinerant populations like nomadic migrant retailers (Vigneswaran 2007), the snowballing procedure was used to select the respondents which produced a sampling frame of 842 respondents from the nine (9) study sites. The original intention for using the snowballing technique was to produce a sufficient sampling frame for a randomized sample selection as a result of the lack of accurate information on this group of immigrants in the country (GSS, 2012, 2021). However, being mindful of the fact that the study employed the mixed methods research approach and the argument in the central limit theorem that a large sample size is more likely to generate a normal distribution in a data set than smaller ones, the entire sampling frame of 842 was used in the study. For the qualitative aspect of the study, nine (9) immigrant leaders (one key

informant from each of the nine neighbourhoods) who possessed key knowledge about the immigrants' stay intentions were purposively selected for key informant interviews.

3.3 Development of Instruments, administration and ethics

Structured and semi-structured questionnaires (specifically interview schedule and interview guide) were used to collect the data from the respondents. The interview schedule aided because the questions were worded in English which many immigrant retailers can neither express nor understand, especially those from French-speaking states (GSS 2012). Hence, for all other languages, an interpreter was used where the author did not understand the language. The instruments were developed under two key sections. Section one elicited information on the immigrants' socio-demographic characteristics namely: country of origin, gender, age, educational level, marital status and duration of stay in Ghana. Section two asked questions related to their intentions to remain in Ghana. That is, whether they planned to stay temporarily or permanently, and the factors influencing their decisions to stay or otherwise.

The interview guide, on the other hand, consisted of open-ended questions and pre-scripted probes. Before the actual field data collection, the instruments were pretested and reworked in the Kumasi Metropolis (the second-highest destination of West African immigrants) which helped to improve the validity. All ethical questions that guide the conduct of social sciences research were thoroughly adhered to. In particular, topics concerning informed consent, anonymity, and confidentiality were followed throughout the field data collection. Regarding informed consent, the respondents for both the survey and the interview guide were briefed about the purpose of the study and the possible impacts on their participation in the study. Prior to the interview, a consent form was read and interpreted to them detailing their right to withdraw or avoid answering sensitive questions they deemed as private. In terms of anonymity, all personal identifiers that were likely to link the data to them were avoided. The research protocol was also reviewed and approved by the University of Cape Coast Institutional Review Board and assigned a protocol number UCCIRB/CHLS/2016/23 before the fieldwork was commenced.

The instruments were administered by the author and three final year master's students from the University of Ghana, who were fluent in the local languages (Asante Twi and Ga), French and Hausa which are the main languages spoken by the respondents. The questionnaires and key informant interviews were conducted face-to-face at the respondents' places of abode and workplaces. With the prior permission of the respondents and key informants, a voice recorder was used to record the interviews and was complemented by note-taking of the discussions. The average duration of each key informant interview was between 30-45 minutes. Concerning the socio-demographic characteristics of the participants, all of them were men and were between the ages of 28-45 years. Four out of them had no formal education, one was literate in Arabic, two attained basic education and the remaining two (one each) acquired basic and secondary level education. They were all Muslims and apart from two single participants, the rest were all married which contradicts GSS (2012) and Yendaw et al. (2019)'s findings that most itinerant immigrant retailers are generally unmarried and uneducated Muslim men.

3.4 Data processing and analyses

The data obtained from the survey questionnaire were validated by perusing the responses to ensure they were correctly filled and completed. Afterwards, it was realized that out

of the 842 questionnaires audited, about 779 were found useful giving a response rate of 92.5 per cent. The data from these questionnaires were processed and analysed via the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21. Descriptive statistics (frequency distributions, percentages, cross-tabulations) and inferential analytical techniques (binary logistic regression model) were used to analyse and present the results. Binary logistic regression was used to confirm whether key explanatory variables such as gender, age, marital status, level of education, country of origin and duration of stay of the immigrants had any influence on their intentions to stay at the destination (the dependent variable). The respondents' stay intentions at the destination were treated as a dichotomous variable (i.e., whether they intended to stay temporarily or permanently).

The data from the interviews were also validated by playing and listening to the content of the audio recordings several times to confirm if they were thorough and completed. After the validation, it was confirmed that all the audios were accurate and usable. The data were then processed and analysed manually using the thematic analysis technique. The thematic analysis procedure was employed to identify, analyse and report patterns that emerged from the interviews. The thematic analysis was performed by following the four steps indicated by Yendaw (2019): data preparation and close reading of text to get familiar with the raw data, development of categories from the raw data into a model or framework (coding of data), searching for themes and recognizing relationships (i.e. axial coding), and refining of themes through coding consistency checks such as independent parallel coding. As a way of guaranteeing the credibility and validity of the results, the participant validation technique was used by contacting three of the participants to ascertain the interview transcripts. The next section of the study presents the results, discussion, conclusions and implications.

Results

Socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents

This section presents the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents. Table 1 indicates that most of the respondents come from Niger (42.2%) with the least (1.1%) being those from other countries. The majority of them (89.1%) are men. About 62.0 percent of them are youthful (aged between 20-29 years) while a small percentage (7.1%) are between 40-49 years. The analysis also shows that about a sixth of them (60.0%) are unmarried and nearly 67.0 percent of them are without any form of formal education. Concerning their length of stay, the results reveal that 63.1 per cent of them stayed at the destination for 1-4 years (Table 1).

Socio-demographic profile of the respondents **Table 1**

Socio-demographics	N	Percent
Country of origin		
Benin	39	5.0
Burkina Faso	32	4.1
Mali	176	22.6
Niger	329	42.2
Nigeria	146	18.7
Togo	49	6.3
Other	8	1.1
Gender		

Socio-demographics	N	Percent
Men	694	89.1
Women	85	10.9
Age (completed years)		
<20	89	11.4
20-29	479	61.5
30-39	164	20.0
40-49	55	7.1
Marital status		
Never married	462	59.3
Married	294	37.7
Widowed	13	1.7
Divorced/Separated	10	1.3
Educational attainment		
No formal education	520	66.7
Basic education	188	31.1
Secondary/tertiary	16	2.2
Duration of stay		
1-4	492	63.1
5-9	261	24.3
>=10	26	3.3

Intended stay decisions at destination

The intended stay decisions of the immigrants were examined by looking at their intended length of stay (residential status) at the destination in terms of whether their stay in Ghana was temporary or permanent. This analysis was done using descriptive, bivariate and inferential statistical techniques. The decision on whether or not their residential status was permanent or temporary was examined against key socio-demographic attributes, such as gender, education, marital status, educational attainment, country of origin and duration of stay at the destination. The descriptive analysis in Table 2 reveals that most of the immigrants surveyed intended to reside temporarily (85.6%) as against 14.4 per cent who preferred a permanent stay in Ghana.

Intended stay decisions by Socio-demographic characteristics **Table 2**

Socio-demographics	N	Intended stay decision at destination	
		Permanent residence (%)	Temporary residence (%)
Stay decision	779	14.4	85.6
Gender of respondents			
Men	694	12.5	87.5
Women	85	29.4	70.6
Age of respondents			
Less than 20	517	9.1	90.9
20-29	246	9.8	90.2
30-39	11	16.6	83.4
40-49	5	20.0	80.0
Marital status			
Married	294	20.7	79.3

Socio-demographics	N	Intended stay decision at destination	
		Permanent residence (%)	Temporary residence (%)
Single	462	8.7	91.3
Widowed	10	40.0	60.0
Divorced/separated	13	53.8	46.2
Educational attainment			
No education	517	16.6	83.4
Basic education	246	9.8	90.2
Secondary/Tertiary	16	12.5	87.5
Country of origin			
Benin	39	14.0	86.0
Burkina Faso	32	25.0	75.0
Mali	176	9.4	90.6
Niger	329	8.0	92.0
Nigeria	146	17.8	82.2
Togo	49	29.5	70.5
Other	8	23.1	76.9

In terms of their gender, a higher proportion of men (87.5%) indicated that their residential status was temporary. As regards age, a higher percentage of them who were youthful (≤20-39) said their residential status was temporary. Contrary to what was expected, Table 2 reveals that a higher proportion of those who were unmarried (91.3%) expressed their desire to stay at the destination temporarily. Respondents who were divorced/separated (53.8%) indicated their willingness to reside permanently at the destination. The analysis indicates that respondents who had no formal education indicated their resolve to reside at the destination permanently as against a higher percentage of those with basic education who intended to stay temporarily. For example, whereas 16.6% of those who were uneducated indicated their stay at the destination was permanent, less than ten percent (9.8%) of those with basic education and a little over ten percent of those with secondary/tertiary education (12.5%) said their stay in Ghana was permanent. Concerning their countries of origin, the results show that a higher proportion of the respondents from Niger (92.0%) preferred a temporary residential status. On the other hand, a higher percentage of those from Togo (29.5%) preferred a permanent residential status when compared to their colleagues from the remaining countries (Table 2).

Following from the descriptive results, a binary logistic regression model (Table 3) was used to estimate the intended stay decisions of the respondents. In the model, temporary residential status was designated as one representing increasing odds in favour of temporary stay while permanent residential status was captured as zero signifying decreasing odds in favour of permanent stay. From the results, the model (binary logistic regression) demonstrated to be a good predictor of the intended residential status of the respondents as shown by the Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficients (model=223.328; df=14; $p<0.050$) and the Hosmer and Lemeshow Test ($\chi^2=16.324$; df=8; $p>0.050$).

According to Pallant (2005), a model is considered a good predictor, when the alpha value of the Hosmer and Lemeshow Test is greater than 0.05 and in the case of the output of this data, the alpha value is 0.254, which signifies a strong reliability of the model. The binary logistic regression model predicted nearly about 34.0% of variations in the intended length of stay at the

destination. However, the utility of the model in predicting the respondents' residential status in the country, not all the independent explanatory variables were significant in explaining length of stay. Similar to the results in Table 2, three out of the five independent variables were found to be significant to the model.

From the analysis (Table 3), gender emerged as a significant predictor of the respondents' stay intentions in Ghana. Table 3 indicates that respondents who were men were 0.397 times more likely to indicate that they would stay permanently in Ghana compared to their women counterparts. Moreover, age and educational attainment had no significant impact on how long respondents intended to stay in the country. This notwithstanding, the results indicate that respondents who were younger (20-29 years) and who had no formal education were most likely to opt for a temporary stay compared to those who were older (40-49 years) and had higher education (secondary/tertiary).

Binary logistic regression results of intended stay decisions **Table 3**

Socio-demographic features	**Intended length of stay (permanent or temporary)**	
	P value	**Odds ratio**
Gender		
Men	0.030*	0.397
Women (RC)		
Age		
Less than 20	0.877	1.964
20-29	0.607	4.524
30-39	0.386	0.819
40-49 (RC)		
Educational attainment		
No formal education	0.629	0.880
Basic education	0.932	0.491
Secondary/Tertiary (RC)		
Marital status		
Married	0.050*	3.676
Single	0.000*	12.580
Widowed	0.343	2.407
Divorced (RC)		
Country of origin		
Benin	0.004	3.857
Burkina Faso	0.484*	4.520
Mali	0.000*	8.359
Niger	0.006*	9.614
Nigeria	0.001*	4.657
Togo	0.183	1.507
Other (RC)		

Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficients (model=223.328; df=14; p<0.050), Hosmer and Lomeshow Test (χ^2=16.324; df=8; P>0.050), *Percentage of variance explained (33.8%)

Marital status in the study also demonstrates a statistically significant effect on preference for temporary residency. Contrary to what was anticipated, the never-married category (single) had the highest odds (12.580) of opting for a temporary stay at the destination. However, the

country of origin showed a statistically significant relationship with the intended length of stay, with respondents from Niger and Mali compared to the reference category more likely to prefer a temporary stay. In particular, it was observed that respondents from Niger were 9.614 times more likely to indicate that they will stay in the country temporarily whereas respondents from Mali were 8.359 times more likely to settle in Ghana temporarily. Likewise, while respondents from Nigeria were 4.657 times more likely to reside in Ghana temporarily, respondents from Benin were 3.857 times most likely to do the same. Overall, respondents from Togo (1.507) had the lowest odds of contemplating temporary residence in Ghana.

The findings presented in Tables 2 and 3 were similarly confirmed by the majority of the participants enrolled in the qualitative dimension of the study during the field interviews. During the interviews, most of them expressed their intention to stay at the destination temporarily and this decision for most of them was based on the ties and advice with their social networks, notably families, friends and significant others. They indicated that unless something unexpected took place to warrant a permanent stay in Ghana, they would be returning to their countries of origin. In underscoring this view, a 45-year immigrant leader from Niger and another 38-year-old immigrant leader from Mali who were interviewed at Nima and Abeka respectively in the study area had this to say regarding how the connections between them and their families and friends would not allow them to have a permanent residence at the destination:

"Before I travelled to Ghana, my family insisted I return after a certain period of my stay. All the friends I work with have the intentions to return home someday based on the advice of those who have been here for several years. Honestly, I have never contemplated living here (Ghana) forever. For me, unless something unforeseen happens to compel me to stay permanently, I do not envisage it happening. Even if I later decide to have a permanent residence, my family will kick against it. It is just a matter of time; if I can achieve why I came here, I will certainly return home to settle in my country".

In buttressing the above observations, another participant from Mali highlighted how the ties and concern he has for his family influenced his stay intention in Ghana:

"Well, you know home is home, and by all means, I will return home. My trip here was planned with my family before I came here and many of my friends who were here before me also discussed with me regarding my return after a certain period of stay in Ghana. I am the eldest of my parents and the bond between us is strong that I cannot ignore them and stay here. However, one thing I cannot predict is that I do not know when I will be returning to my country" [38-year-old immigrant from Mali].

In carrying out further qualitative interviews with the participants, another intriguing issue which emerged regarding the participants' intended length of stay was put forward by another participant who was married with children back home in Benin. He lamented over how his conjugal and/or marital responsibilities made him shuttle between Ghana and Benin and how his status as a married man would not permit him to contemplate a permanent residency in Ghana:

"For me, I normally go home and come because I have my wife and children in Benin. I cannot say for a fact that I will stay here permanently or not since I do not have the resources to bring my family here with me. So, I only work, get money and support them back home" [36-year-old immigrant leader from Benin].

Duration of stay at the destination and intentions to stay

This aspect of the study finally sought to ascertain whether the immigrants' duration of stay at the destination had any statistically significant influence on their intentions to continue to stay in Ghana or otherwise. Hence, a binary logistic regression was conducted to predict the extent to which length of stay predicts whether immigrants would stay at the destination or otherwise (Table 4). The test results showed that the model with the predictor variable length of stay in Ghana was statistically significant at the 1 percent level ($\chi^2 = 53.829$; df = 1; N = 779; $p = .000$) in predicting whether immigrants will prefer to stay in Ghana. The Nagelkerke R^2 value of .12 suggests that about 12 per cent of the variation in immigrants' decisions to stay in Ghana permanently or temporarily is accounted for by the duration of their stay in Ghana which emerged as statistically significant (Table 4).

The odds ratio of 0.747 which means that for every additional unit increase in the length of stay, the odds of deciding to stay decrease by approximately 25.3%. The regression coefficient for the length of stay in Ghana (B=−0.291) indicates that for each additional unit increase in the length of stay, the log-odds of deciding to stay decrease by 0.291. This suggests that a longer duration of stay is associated with a lower likelihood of deciding to stay.

Table 4

Binary Logistic Regression Predicting if Duration of Stay in Ghana Predicts an Immigrant's Decision to Stay

Variable	B	SE	Odds ratio/Exp(B)	*P*
Length of stay in Ghana	-.291	.042	.747	.000*
Constant	3.102	.235	22.250	.000*

Note: Cox and Snell R^2 =.067*;* Nagelkerke R^2 =.119; $\chi^2 = 53.829$; df = 1; p< .000*; N =779

These quantitative findings were, however, different from the evidence generated from the qualitative interviews. During the interviews, it emerged that participants with the longest duration of stay at the destination expressed the desire to continue to remain at the destination. They argued that they have resided at the destination for long and that they were used to the Ghanaian context. They added that returning home was not an alternative because it would require them to start life all over. Putting the issues in context, a 39-year-old participant from Burkina Faso and another 38-year-old participant from Togo who resided in Ghana for a considerable period jointly had this to say about their stay intentions in Ghana:

"Well, your home is always your home. But the reality is that I have lived my life here for long and I am used to the environment and the people here. To go back home at this stage of my life would mean that I am starting everything all over. As our elders always put it, every place is a home, and I have my peace of mind here in Ghana."

The above observations were similarly rehashed by a 41-year-old participant from Benin who dwelled at the destination for nearly ten years. In his own words, this was what was said about his intended plan of stay:

"Hmmm! Going back to Benin now will be difficult. See, I came to Ghana when I was just about thirty to thirty-one years. I am now above forty and you can imagine me going back home after having lived and worked here for all these years. It would be hard for me to re-adjust if I go back to Benin. Well, I am not God, but I am here in Ghana for good."

Discussion

This study used a cross-sectional research design and a concurrent mixed-methods approach to examine West African migrants' intentions to stay in Ghana, including how their social networks and socio-demographic characteristics shaped their intents to stay at the destination. The analysis from the study indicated that most of the respondents intended to have a temporary stay in Ghana, which somewhat validates the basic underpinnings of the new economics of labour migration theory. The theory argues that migration is a targeted temporary livelihood activity aimed at accumulating the needed resources to support families back home (Stark, 199). The finding similarly accentuates what Castles and Wise (2008), and Short et al. (2017) found in their studies that international migration in the developing world is generally less permanent. For example, Anarfi (2003), Adepoju (2005), and Olsen (2011) reported that land-dependent migrants in West Africa search for alternative incomes through trade during difficult times to the extent that some migrants adopt regular movement as their culture and livelihood. The above findings are also in sync with what Hunter and Skinner (2001) found among immigrant retail traders in South Africa where most of the migrants said they intended to stay at the destination temporarily. The decision of the majority of the respondents to return home could, however, be linked to what Koczan et al. (2021) noted in their study that migrants who eventually decide to return mainly do so because they are unable to achieve the required success anticipated, notably higher wages and quality life.

Results from a binary logistic regression model in this current study established significant relationships between the respondents' socio-demographic attributes and their stay intentions (see Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficients: model=223.328; df=14; $p<0.050$ & the Hosmer and Lemeshow Test ($\chi^2=16.324$; df=8; $p>0.050$). This concurs with the exposés made by the IMF (2016, 2020) where immigrants' characteristics such as gender and age were found to have had a significant influence on their migration decisions including their stay intentions. Overall, three independent variables notably gender, marital status and country of origin were found to be significantly associated with their destination stay decisions which concur with the observation made by the IMF (2016, 2020), Gu et al. (2020), Koczan et al. (2021) and Lin and Zhu (2022) that the socio-demographic characteristics of migrants have the proclivity to influence their destination stay decisions. Gender, for instance, emerged as a significant predictor of the immigrants' stay intentions in Ghana and immigrant men were more likely to opt for a temporary stay in Ghana relative to their women counterparts. Marital status also demonstrated a statistically significant effect on preference for temporary residency. Contrary to what was anticipated, those who were unmarried were found to have had the highest odds of opting for a temporary stay. Hence, those who were divorced had the highest odds of opting for a permanent residence which could be attributed to their divorced status which might not have placed any serious socio-cultural and conjugal obligations on them to warrant their return. The fact that more migrant men relative to their women counterparts opted for a temporary residency at the destination buttresses the observation made by Goldstein et al. (2000) where permanent migration of women seems to be greater than for men.

In this study, age was found to have no direct relation with their intended residential status. It was noticed that younger respondents were most likely to opt for a temporary settlement at the destination which controverts findings by Cerase (1974) and Ghosh (2000) that older migrants are more likely to return home after several years of working abroad compared to younger migrants. However, the fact that those who were elderly indicated their intention to reside

at the destination permanently could be explained by their ageing situation which might affect their socio-cultural and economic reintegration back home in case they decide to return (King, 2000). For instance, it is possible that going back home to start life all over again might be easier for respondents who are younger as compared to those who are older.

Similarly, country of origin showed a statistically significant relationship with intended length of stay (see Table 3), and those from Niger, Mali, Nigeria and Benin were more likely to prefer a temporary stay. This revelation was equally buttressed by the majority of the participants recruited for the qualitative interviews and the decision to reside at the destination temporarily was underlain by advice received from their networks, particularly families and friends. Intuitively, the study found respondents from Togo and Burkina Faso having the least odds of contemplating temporary residence in Ghana. This could be due to their propinquity to Ghana coupled with the historical and cultural affinity between Ghana and the two countries. For instance, the Ewe and the Mossi ethnic groups in Togo and Burkina Faso have some of their relations living in Ghana and may therefore see their stay at the destination as an extension of their homeland territories (Adepoju, 2004; Yendaw, 2019). In addition, the political stability in Ghana could be a factor contributing to the decision of some respondents intending to stay in Ghana permanently (Anarfi, 2003).

It further emerged that the immigrants' duration of stay at the destination had a significant effect on their intentions to stay at the destination. Contrary to what was anticipated, it was found that immigrants who had a longer duration of stay at the destination were most likely to prefer a temporary residency as compared to their counterparts who reported a shorter stay. This finding is somewhat contrary to the prevailing thinking in the literature that migrants with a longer duration of stay are most likely to be well-established and integrated into their host communities (Yendaw, 2018), and thus, most likely to prefer a permanent residency. However, the current revelation could be explained by the fact that perhaps those immigrants who stayed longer might have accumulated the required resources and prepared well enough to return home to settle for good. This finding was, however, incongruent with the qualitative results, where participants who had longer stay durations rather preferred a permanent residency.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the results and the discussion presented, therein, this study concludes that the immigrants' intentions to stay at the destination were influenced by several factors notably including social networks, mostly family ties; younger migrants; unmarried adult women; and those migrant-respondents who were without any formal education. All these were found to be most likely to consider a temporary residency in Ghana. This revelation vindicates the basic tenets of the new economics of labour migration theory. The current evidence, however, challenges the basic assumptions of the neoclassical theorists who considered the decision to migrate or return as an individual affair to maximize higher incomes at the destination. The study equally unveiled that despite the above factors, immigrants who stayed longer at the destination preferred a temporary residency relative to their counterparts who had shorter stay durations.

The above findings have key policy ramifications for the socio-economic advancement of Ghana, given that most of the immigrants indicated that they are in the country for a temporary residency. This implies that whatever benefits they are deriving from their migration and/or business activities would most likely be repatriated to their origin countries. In line with this

thinking, the study recommends that the government, through the requisite agencies such as Ghana Immigration Service (GIS), Ghana Investment Promotion Centre (GIPC), and the Accra Metropolitan Assembly develop an appropriate policy framework to ensure that the immigrants' stay in the country is mutually beneficial by enrobing them into the country's tax net. Additionally, given the rising security situation in the West African sub-region in recent times, the government should consider having a detailed register of all temporary immigrant residents for easy dialogue and monitoring of their activities.

It is equally proposed that the government could also consider supporting and integrating immigrants who are in the country for a permanent residency nationwide to ensure that Ghana benefits from their skills and activities. Also considering the key roles played by their social networks and socio-demographics in their stay intentions, the study proposes that any migration policy intervention of government that aims to manage migration effectively in the country ought not to preclude the important roles of immigrants' family ties, friendships, gender, areas of origin, marital status, and duration of stay in the entire migration management process. Finally, the study advocates for further research on this important topic nationwide to gain a thorough understanding of immigrants' stay intentions. This would provide valuable insights for government policies to effectively manage immigration issues in the country.

Declarations

Conflicts of interests

The author declares that the paper is original, neither has it been previously published nor under consideration for publication elsewhere. There are no conflicts of interest so far as the submission of this paper is concerned.

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The data used for this paper are readily availability upon reasonable request.

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From home to the border: A critical analysis of Zimbabwean migrant women's migration strategies

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Abstract. Zimbabwean migrant women encounter numerous challenges from their homes to the borders of Zimbabwe and South Africa, as well as upon arrival in Johannesburg, and during their stay there. In addition to the decision to move to South Africa, particularly Johannesburg, these migrant women from Zimbabwe plan their journeys from their homes to the border and carry them out with many considerations that they made while planning the journey at home, a process that is not extensively covered in the literature. Based on in-depth interviews with some Zimbabwean women migrants, the article reveals that these women plan their journeys by incorporating religious and cultural practices and using road transport to move from their homes to places near the borders. Upon reaching the borders, some cross the Limpopo river on foot, while others enter South Africa via Botswana. Relatively few women follow the normal, formal border route to enter South Africa. Many either bribe border authorities, while others take the risky route of traveling on foot and crossing the dangerous Limpopo river.

Key words: Migrant women, gender, Johannesburg, Zimbabwe, migration

Introduction

Studies indicate a growth in the numbers of Zimbabwean women migrating to South Africa (Sibanda 2011; Hlatshwayo 2018, 2019; Batisai and Manjowo 2020; Ncube and Bahta 2021; Mutambara and Naidu 2023; Sibanda 2022, Sibanda and Hlatshwayo 2024). The research links this to economic factors, the need for autonomy and a relatively stable political climate which makes South Africa an attractive destination for Zimbabwean migrants. Perceptions of economic and livelihood opportunities being primarily available in South Africa makes it an attractive destination for Zimbabwean migrants. However, a combination of an exclusionary migration framework, strict labour policies and xenophobia force many women into precarious sectors such as the restaurant sector. While opportunities are relatively easier to find in the restaurant sector, it is characterized by a violation of labour laws, abuse, and sexual harassment (Sibanda 2022).

The economic decline in Zimbabwe has two major consequences, it has led to a change in migration patterns and a reversal of gender roles, subsequently impacting the family structure. Young women are increasingly migrating to South Africa in search of better economic and livelihood opportunities for themselves and their families, in the process assuming the breadwinner role. Previously the role of breadwinner was held by men, and labour migration was dominated by young, single men. (Maphosa 2010; McDuff 2015, Hlatshwayo 2018: 2019; Sibanda 2022; Sibanda and Hlatshwayo 2024).

The passage of Zimbabwean migrants to South Africa is often filled with many challenges, anxieties, tensions, and strategies that characterize irregular movements. This makes the passage of migrants an issue that needs attention and a nuanced analysis from home to the

border. Notwithstanding these observations, apart from Sibanda (2022), existing studies do not systematically investigate how the journey from home to the border is made. The scholarship tends to focus on migrant women's experiences mid-way journey, often depicting them as victims of *omagumaguma* (criminal gangs who operate along the border). The problem with such a framing is that it only tells a partial experience of migration. Presenting a later experience of their journeys at the expense of their experiences at the start of their journeys presents a disjointed narrative. Further, such a framing ignores the interplay of vulnerability, resistance and agency that underpins the journeys of Zimbabwean women right from their homes to the border.

The article begins with an overview of the literature on migration between Zimbabwe and South Africa. The literature points to a gap in scholarship examining women's movements from their homes to the border. This derives from a common misconceptionthat migration that does not view the home as the first point of migration. The paper then presents the research design. In the discussion segment, the paper identifies themes, concerns, and strategies of Zimbabwean migrant women during transit.

Absence of the journey from home to the border

The literature on Zimbabwean migrants has extensively reviewed causes of migration from Zimbabwe to South Africa, which includes political and economic factors (Maphosa 2010; 2012; Mlambo 2010; Hungwe 2013; 2017; Hlatshwayo 2019; Ndlovu and Landau 2020; Matose, Maviza and Nunu 2022; Sibanda 2022). Migration as a process of moving with various related stages is understudied. The journey of a migrant women worker from Zimbabwe begins from homes in Zimbabwe, goes to the border, and continues in South Africa. Apart from Sibanda (2022) the literature lacks an analysis of the actual execution of the journey from the migrant's home to the border with South Africa. This creates an assumption that irregular migration is a linear process despite the intricate maze that exists within. Missing this critical step of an irregular migrant's journey overlooks crucial aspects of migrant women's forms of resistance. It misses the interplay of vulnerability, resistance, and agency of migrant women, depicting them as victims without self-agency. Further, except for (Hlatshwayo 2019; Matose, Maviza and Nunu 2022; Sibanda 2022) the literature is not gendered.

Mlambo's (2010) account presents an insightful evolution of migration between present day Zimbabwe and South Africa. According to Mlambo (2010), in the 1970s, young men left Zimbabwe for South Africa to either work as migrant labourers in South African mines or they left due to political reasons. The 1970s saw a peak of Zimbabwe's struggle for independence. Mlambo (2010) also highlights that it was fashionable for young men in the southern parts of Zimbabwe to migrate to South Africa as a rite of passage. This view, however, needs further questioning as it tends to ignore the politics of marginalization in Zimbabwe which forced young people in the southern parts of the country to migrate due to limited access to state resources. Mlambo (2010) also gives a statistical evolution of the migration, highlighting a progression in numbers and patterns, from a largely male and youthful traveller where the primary destination was largely South Africa, to more mixed travellers with destinations as far afield as the United Kingdom (UK). The body of work locates contemporary migration in its proper context. Further, it gives reliable figures on Zimbabwe's outmigration. However, the work is not gendered, moreover, it does not explore the actual execution of the journeys. This ignores the different dynamics embedded in the migration process and the gendered agency within.

The exact number of Zimbabwean migrant women in South Africa is unknown because most migration data is not separated by gender and undocumented migrant figures are not available. However, recent research studies indicate that a significant number of Zimbabwean women have been migrating to South Africa, spanning all age groups with no evidence of child migration. Between 1997 and 2010, 44% of Zimbabwean migrants were female and they were the primary breadwinners in their households. This suggests that the feminization of migration among Zimbabweans was more advanced compared to other countries in the Southern region (Mutambara et al. 2023).

Ndlovu and Landau (2020), explore how the Zimbabwe–South Africa border is configured between the states and its citizens. The literature traces the migration route between Zimbabwe and South Africa right back to the importation of labour during apartheid (1948–91). The literature cites the economic crisis in Zimbabwe and the disparities of wealth within and between the two countries as some of the driving factors. Further, the literature attributes movement between Zimbabwe's Matabeleland region, or the southern part of Zimbabwe, and South Africa to spatial proximity and ethnic affinity. Apart from a few exceptions (Maphosa 2010; Siziba 2013; Sibanda 2022) this area that has received limited attention in migration literature, despite the role it plays in shaping present day socio economic and socio-political relations between the two counties. The literature, however, lacks focus on the execution of the journey from the migrant's homes to the border. This misses the different dimensions of an irregular migrants' journey. It also creates a false impression that irregular migration is a linear, seamless process.

Likewise, Maphosa's (2010) study of Ward Seven of Mangwe District in the Matabeleland South Province of Zimbabwe, 'a high migrant-sending area in rural Zimbabwe', Maphosa (2010: 346) attributes the movements between Zimbabweans and South Africans to geographical proximity and shared cultural ties. Maphosa (2010) brings valuable insights into how migration impacts the culture and values of sending communities, an area that has received limited attention in migration studies. Migration studies tend to centre on the impact of migration on destination areas and not so much on the effects of migration in places of origin (Schapendonk 2007). Maphosa (2010) argues that the introduction of cultural symbols and practices brought into community by *injiva* or *indazula, (*returnees) often causes conflict with elders who decry the loss of local cultural values. The body of literature provides an understanding of the impact of migration on sending countries. This focus misses the actual processes of moving. This derives from the conventional understanding of migration being an unproblematic transition from a place of origin to a certain destination.

Failure to investigate migration experiences of Zimbabwean women from their homes to the border obscures the various complexities embedded in an irregular migrant's journey. The limited focus also conceals their avoidance, circumvention and evasion strategies during transit. Extensive literature has focused on the challenges faced by Zimbabwean migrants (Hungwe 2013; Hungwe 2017; Maphosa 2012; Hlatshwayo 2019), however, the literature does not follow migrants from the start of their journeys, nor does it highlight their agency during transit. Where the agency is highlighted (Hungwe 2013), the work is not gendered and neither does the literature follow the journey from their homes to the border. Hungwe (2013) confines the agency of migrants to the crossing point. This falls short in giving a holistic overview of transit experiences of irregular migrants from their homes to the border.

Hungwe (2017) focuses on the challenges faced by irregular Zimbabwean migrants travelling between Zimbabwe and South Africa. The study examined the role played by social networks play in migrants' response to social exclusion. However, the literature is silent on the actual journeys of migrants, in the process missing out on the self-agency enacted during transit. Neither is the literature gendered.

Maphosa (2012) discusses an important and yet less studied topic between the linkages of irregular migration and vulnerability to HIV/AIDS, despite studies by the International Labour Organisation (ILO 2002)) and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM undated) that show that migrants face disproportionate exposure to HIV/AIDS than their non-migrant counterparts. Further, Maphosa (2012) establishes a link between feminisation of migration and the situational vulnerabilities of irregular migrant women. According to Maphosa (2012: 123),

'Many young women fall into the traffickers' trap on the way to their destination… during the migration process, migrant women, especially irregular migrant women, risk physical and sexual abuse and suffer human rights abuses and violations.'

While the scholarship contributes towards an understanding of the gendered challenges facing migrant women, the literature fails to trace the gendered journeys of migrant women from their homes to the border.

Hlatshwayo's (2019) gendered account brings to the core the challenges faced by Zimbabwean migrant women enroute to South Africa. The literature contributes to the growing body on the precarious conditions of migrant women during transit. Hlatshwayo (2019) draws attention to the situational vulnerability of migrant women due to a combination of their irregular migration status and their gender as women. This sentiment is echoed by (Maphosa 2012; Sibanda 2022; Matose, Maviza and Nunu 2022). According to Matose, Maviza and Nunu (2022: 2),

… [Women's] vulnerability is situational in that they are irregular and personal because of their gender. In the case of irregular female migrants, the intersection of their irregular status with their gender makes them more susceptible to abuse and violation than men. This further worsens their vulnerability and exposure to risk during the migration journey and at detention.

And yet, apart from Sibanda (2022) the literature does not view Zimbabwean migrant women as social agents capable of shaping their conditions during transit, despite highlighting the disproportionate vulnerabilities of women to rape and natural occurrences such as menstruation. The literature is silent on migrant women's strategies to ward off rape and does not deal with menstruation among other challenges encountered on the way. Furthermore, apart from Sibanda (2022), the literature does not follow the journeys from the start of the trip through to the border. Due to its limited focus, the literature ignores the tactics employed by Zimbabwean women such as the performance of spiritual and religious practices to smoothen the journey and avoid detection.

While this paper affirms the argument on the situational vulnerability of irregular Zimbabwean migrant women, the article goes beyond (Maphosa 2012; Hlatshwayo 2019; Matose, Maviza and Nunu 2022) who largely portray Zimbabwean migrant as vulnerable. It situates Zimbabwean migrant women as genetic beings who exercise their agency, through a myriad of strategies to cope with, circumvent, escape, and evade the system from home until the South African border.

Research design

The article is based on the findings of a qualitative study carried out with 29 Zimbabwean migrant women living in Johannesburg. Participants ranged from 20 to 40 years old, and they had been in Johannesburg for a period ranging between less than two years to twelve years. Concerns might be raised about the sample size. However, in qualitative research, there are no rules guiding sample size, neither does quantification capture the true nature of a problem Maphosa (2012). Determining adequate sample size in qualitative research is ultimately a matter of judgment and experience in evaluating the quality of the information collected against the uses to which it will be put (Sandelowski 1995).

Data was collected through semi-structured interviews using a questionnaire. The questionnaire only acted as a guide and it was not in any way meant to limit the respondents. The in-depth interviews elicited information on experiences encountered while migrating to Johannesburg. The research sought to understand migrant women's experiences during transit with a view to understanding challenges and how they overcame them. Central to this was understanding factors informing migrant women's response. The use of in-depth interviews provided a platform to validate women's subjective experiences, elevate their voices and narrate their subjective interpretations of their journeys (Kihato 2007: 94).

The research deployed qualitative methods due to their grounding in participants' realities and lived experiences. Further, qualitative methods have a capacity to generate self-critical and unrestricted perceptions on a given subject matter (Gaskell 2000). Furthermore, qualitative research allows researchers to obtain in-depth insights into actions attitudes, beliefs, motives, and behaviours of the target populations to gain an overall better understanding of the underlying processes. Losifides (2011) argues that qualitative research aligns with social reality, making it the most suitable data collection method for a study on lived experiences.

The researchers' previous work with migrant communities facilitated access. The researchers drew on their previous experience working with Zimbabwean migrant women in precarious work in Johannesburg. Through the work, the researchers forged relationships with some of the women who later took part and acted as referrals in this research. The familiarity made the interaction easier due to the trust that now existed between the parties. Further, access was facilitated through the Migrant Workers Union of South Africa (MIWUSA), a trade union formed by migrant workers in South Africa. Additionally, the identity of one of the researchers played a big role in accessing the field. The researcher, a Zimbabwean migrant woman herself, is part of a network of Zimbabwean migrant women in Johannesburg. This allowed the researcher to establish rapport with the participants and to explore sensitive topics, an important consideration in view of the subject. Furthermore, this hybrid insider–outsider status facilitated the gathering of background information, which was useful in filling up some of the gaps emanating from memory lapses.

The research also deployed purposive and snowballing selection techniques for locating participants. Snowballing proved to be very effective as a referral method and in generating trust among 'hidden' populations. The term 'hidden' when used in the context of migrant populations is used to refer to vulnerable or hard-to-reach groups of people (Melrose 2022; Kalsbeek 2000; Maphosa 2012; Miriyoga 2019). Due to the clandestine nature of their activities, undocumented migrants may deliberately want to stay off the radar, as such, they may be reluctant to partake in academic research activities. Finding this hidden group of people was important for the direction

of this research as existing literature remains silent on the gendered journeys of Zimbabwean migrant women from their homes to the border.

All interviews were conducted in *isiNdebele*, the participants' mother tongue, and a common language with one of the researchers. Only one interview was conducted in English as preferred by the participant. Using the participants' home language minimised the loss of meaning associated with translation. A common language also accommodated expression of colloquial language for sensitive or culturally nuanced topics, which is usually magnified by language barriers. Furthermore, the common language established the researcher as one with the group – an insider, alleviating some of the fears, anxieties, suspicions, and class differences that often exist between researchers and research participants. However, despite this shared background with the research participants, the researcher was still cognizant of her positionality and how this shaped the research.

Given the sensitivity of the subject and the vulnerability of the participants, the research prioritised ethical considerations, including privacy, anonymity, and participant protection. Written informed consent was obtained from all participants and their privacy and anonymity were protected using pseudonyms. The research was also conducted in line with COVID 19 guidelines and protocols. Participants gave control over the location of interviews, time and language to ensure their comfort and safety. All interviews were transcribed and analyzed for emergent themes in line with qualitative research methodologies (Creswell, 2012).

From home to the border: An overview

To contextualize migration from home to the border, the first set of findings discusses Zimbabwean migrants' strategies performed while still at home, establishing the women's agency of the migration process from the beginning. The findings point to migration being a planned process, but also to migrant women being aware of the challenges likely to befall them along the way and taking proactive steps to mitigate these challenges. Migrant women perform both observable and non-observable strategies in anticipation of these challenges. Non-observable strategies include discreet forms of spirituality. Migration also means decisions over timing of travel and choices over routes. Considerations around natural occurrences such as menstruation, weather elements, and celestial bodies are taken into account when planning migration. Considerations over the best routes are also made. The best routes are not always linear; they may be long and winding. The paper discusses the complex web of routes and its role as a form of agency. More specifically, it uncovers the various types of routes as they play out in gendered irregular migration settings: the informal, informal within the formal, informal assisted crossing, and the informal unassisted individual crossing. Mid-journey presents its own set of challenges, such as threats of rape and robbery. As they inch closer to the border, threats of detection and challenges on how to navigate the Limpopo River become even more real necessitating a variety of strategies.

Spirituality

Zimbabwean migrant women and their families are aware of the challenges associated with travelling via irregular challenges. Threat of rape, robbery, attacks by wild animals, and drowning in the Limpopo River is ever present (Maphosa 2012; Hungwe 2017, Hlatshwayo 2019). Irregular migrants also face the threat of detection by border patrol officers. Leaving home often

means calling on sought intercession, guidance, and protection from the spiritual helm. This locates spirituality as a coping mechanism in a migrants' journey. Some would be migrants perform a ceremony called *ukuthethela (amadlozi)* – appeasing the spirits`, a practise in Ndebele traditional belief systems. The ceremony is performed to bring into convergence the spiritual and the physical realms (Ndlovu and Ndlovu 2012; Sibanda 2018, Moyo 2021 Sibanda 2022). It seeks intercession and guidance from the ancestors and cleanses bad luck. While the ceremony itself is usually performed pre-migration, there are certain rituals that one needs to observe upon leaving home such as bathing in *intelezi (*water with medicine), or the *ukuchela* sprinkling charm to ward off evil, or smearing of snuff (a grounded indigenous African plant that is smeared on the nostrils to communicate with one's ancestors). For migrants rooted in Christian beliefs spirituality was expressed through practices such as prayer and drinking of holy water.

Apart from Hungwe (2017), existing literature remains thin on spirituality as a form of resistance during travel. This is because literature tends to ignore transit experiences of Zimbabwean migrant women from home to the border (Maphosa 2010; 2012 Hlatshwayo 2019; Madambi 2020; Ndlovu and Landau 2020). Hlatshwayo (2019) investigates transit experiences of Zimbabwean migrant women from a gendered lens, however, this body of work ignores their forms of agency. Madambi (2020) focuses on the agency of Zimbabwean migrant women in Mthatha Town, however, the literature is silent on their journey from home to the border. Similarly, (Maphosa 2010; 2012; Ndlovu and Landau 2020) is silent on the journey from home to the border and neither is the work gendered. Hungwe (2017) makes an important finding about the enactment of rituals involved in crossing of the Limpopo River such as crossing stark naked to ward evil spirits, however, the literature is not gendered. Further, the literature employs a limited focus to irregular migration. The body of work positions agency and resistance only at the crossing point. This implies that migrants only exercise agency at points of crossing.

Thenjiwe Dlamini shares:

Before I left, I got holy water from my church. Some of the water was to bath in and some to drink. I had to splash myself with some of the water upon leaving home. I believe all 12 of us had sought some spiritual intervention or practised a rite of sorts. Some would consult their ancestors; some would use snuff; and some had *intele*zi [traditional bangles or string worn on the waist] on them. (Thenjiwe Dlamini, Interview 25 June 2021).

Contrary to Hungwe (2017), the research found that the practise of spirituality was a continuous process and not a performance limited to one part of the journey. The spiritual practices, due to their varying nature, were performed at various points of the journey. Some were performed leading up to travel, while the nature of others demanded that they were performed upon leaving home. Some practices, such as "drinking holy water" or using snuff, needed to be observed throughout the journey. It is apparent that in their exercise of precarious resistance, Zimbabwean migrant women practice non-observable human conduct, and spirituality is one such strategy, which was an ever-present element from home to the border.

Timing of travel – weather elements

Timing of travel is another key consideration in migration planning especially for migrants travelling through informal assisted crossing and informal unassisted travel. This form of travel mainly involves travelling through the bush and/or river crossing and as such their successful execution is mainly dependent on natural elements such as the weather. The dry season and the

presence of a full moon were the preferred time of travel. While migration patterns have evolved to include migrants travelling throughout the year, this finding is still important because it locates natural weather elements as a site in irregular cross border migration.

Despite a huge proliferation on irregular migration (Maphosa 2010; Bimha and Bimha (2018) Sibanda and Hlatshwayo 2024) the scholarship is silent on the impact of weather on migrant women's migration decisions and remains limited. Maphosa (2010) investigates a less studied phenomenon of how migration impacts receiving countries. Bimha and Bimha (2018) argue that migration between Zimbabwe and Johannesburg is at its highest in the festive season.

You prepare accordingly... you dress up warmly and make sure you wear comfortable tennis shoes for the long trek and take warm jackets as you do not know how the weather will be where you are going so you prepare for every eventuality. You do not even know how many nights you will spend in the bush. (Thandiwe Mthimkhulu Interview, 13 March 2021).

Another migrant woman shares:

The presence of a full moon [or not] does not play any role in influencing travel anymore. It all depends on the presence of *impisi* because of their inherent knowledge of the bush. Their strongest skill is knowledge of the terrain. (Sibongile Khumalo Interview 4 February 2012).

Timing of travel - Menstruation

Menstruation impacted the transit experiences of Zimbabwean migrant women in two ways - either as a burden or a strategy. The research found that timing of travel was deliberately set to either coincide with menstruation or travelling when one is not menstruating, depending on where one's strategy lay, locating women's bodies as a site of resistance.

Literature pointing to growing numbers of women migrants is growing (Dodson 2000; Mbiyozo 2018; Gerard and Pickering 2013), and yet scholarship on menstruation and migration remains limited. Even more limited is literature that portrays menstruation as a form of resistance during transit. Existing literature positions menstruation in negative constructions. Hlatshwayo (2019) and Kemigisha et al. (2020) associate menstruation with vulnerability and mental strain, positioning it as shameful. However, this research found that Zimbabwean migrant women often use menstruation as a tactic to deter rape. Travel is deliberately planned to coincide with menstruation. While none of the women in the study had used this strategy themselves, they spoke to its wide use; 'I did not use the strategy myself, but I know of women who deliberately travel during their period to deter rape' (Makhosazana Dube Interview 11 May 2021).

Thandiwe Ngcobo, on the other hand, had deliberately timed her travel for the days that she was not menstruating, however, her journey ended up taking longer than expected, as it often happens in irregular migration settings. During that time, she got her period. Instead of viewing this as adversity, Ngcobo and her fellow women travellers turned it into a form of solidarity and camaraderie:

Our journey took 20 days and by that time there were many factors that brought us together as women, we shared the little that we had even though we did not know for how long we were going to be stuck. Sanitary pads and tampons were given to those that did not have. (Thandiwe Ngcobo Interview 21 February 2021).

While the women in the study dealt with menstruation in ways that are empowering, the reality for most women in irregular migrant settings menstruation can be challenging 'I think it is harder for women who cross when they are menstruating because there is no time to change a

pad. Even before we get into the car, there is no time to stop and change a pad' (Nokuthula Sibanda, Interview 13 May 2020).

Early migration studies tended to downplay the impact of menstruation in irregular migration travels because they only focused on male migrants. The few that focused on women, the framing was negative and portrayed them as vulnerable victims. This paper applies a wider interpretation to menstruation. It not only positions menstruation as fundamental reproductive function for women, but it positions the female body as a site of resistance. The paper argues that the use of the female body in resisting rape is a subversive act which disrupts staunchly entrenched gender norms that associate menstruation with shame and vulnerability. This strategy also impedes gender norms that associate the female body with weakness and sexual pleasure. This view is shared by Tamale [2017] (cited in Sibanda 2022: 164) who argues that the [female] body is 'both a material and a political entity, with multiple and contested inscriptions that have been historically and socially produced by institutions such as law, culture, and religion'

***Lisale kuhle* - 'Goodbye'**

For many a migrant, leaving home is not simply a matter of walking out the door and waving loved one's 'goodbye'. The act of leaving home is characterized by performances of acts of resistance and agency, challenging stereotypes that migration is a straightforward, painless process. Some would be migrants choose to keep their travel plans to themselves for fear of jealous friends and neighbours jinxing their plans. Others fear having their plans thwarted by concerned family members who worry about their safety in transit. Families are aware of the dangers that lurk on the way to Johannesburg. However, there remains limited literature on those leaving unannounced as a strategy despite its prevalence among migrants. This is due to the literature's limited focus on how migrants make the journey from their homes to the border.

I left without telling my grandmother of my plans to leave. I thought that she will forbid me if I tell her that I am planning to go to Johannesburg, ... the road to Johannesburg is filled with many challenges… I planned everything and never told her. I quietly left. (Thandekile Ndlovu, Interview 14 April 2021).

Other migrant women however left without announcing their plans to conceal contentious actions. Thandiwe Mahlangu was forced into leaving unannounced after stealing and selling her mother's cell phone to raise money for her trip to Johannesburg 'I stole my mother's cell phone and sold it at the flea market…I pretended to be going for a sleep over at friend's house. That is how I left' (Thandiwe Mahlangu Interview 9 October 2021).

Leaving in secrecy is not a decision taken lightly as it is not always ideal for those left behind and the migrant alike. Travelling outside the knowledge of family and friends exposes women to greater risk during transit (Sibanda 2022). Second parties play a critical role in checking in on migrants and offering emotional support during travel. For Mahlangu and Ndlovu, leaving for long journeys without bidding farewell to their families was not easy as it is goes against African belief systems, as it believed to attract bad luck and misfortune. The role of religion in the migration is further detailed below.

Use of road transport and the official border channels

Some migrants use road transport, such as cars, minibuses, and *omalayitsha* (private transport operators transporting and facilitating the entry of mostly undocumented migrants and

goods, and money) to travel to the border gates. Some irregular migrant women from Zimbabwe cross the border at designated crossing points without the required documentation, pointing to their agency and the advancements in the *malayitsha* network. This strategy requires the involvement of state actors namely security and customs officials. This effectively situates the breadth of the *malayitsha* network to include state officials, an indictment of the policies of border practices.

These developments are however hidden by a lack of focus on how migrants travel from their homes to the border. While Hungwe's (2017) analysis highlights the various actors in the *malayitsha* network, the literature is not gendered, and neither does it highlight the role of state actors as agents facilitating irregular travel. Similarly, Maphosa (2012) highlights the role of the different actors in the *malayitsha* network, but the body of work does not focus on how migrants travel from home to the border, undermining the gendered agency within.

I was given a passport cover to pretend that I had an actual passport. I was told that I will meet a lot of police patrols on the way, and that I must just flash the passport cover to make them think it was an actual passport. I crossed all the gates at the border…I think I looked like I had all the necessary documents in the eyes of the police. I managed to get to the last gate unstopped. (Simangaliso Moyo, Interview 21 February 2021

For Moyo's strategy to work state officials in cahoots with *omalayitsha* facilitated Moyo's efforts to dupe and elude the system. State agents are known to accept bribes and other incentives from undocumented migrants in exchange for the right of passage (Moyo 2010; Tshabalala 2017; and Matose, Maviza and Nunu 2022).

Zimbabwe side - formal route

Formal crossing for passport holders is simple, smooth, and straightforward, although the process can be quite bureaucratic, lengthy, and securitised. The smooth journeys for the travellers on passports are confirmed by this testimony:

> My travelling, my transit was smooth. I did not experience hectic moments on the border post or anything. (Immaculate Moyo, Interview 16 September 2021)

The process starts with travellers individually presenting passports to immigration officers at the stamping hall where they are duly stamped. From there they complete the Zimbabwe Revenue Authority (ZIMRA) processes, which includes luggage checks, before proceeding to the exit where they show their stamped passports to the joint team of Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) officers and Zimbabwe immigration officers. They then either walk across the Limpopo River Bridge, a distance of less than a kilometre, or are driven across. That distance is technically known as 'no man's land' between Zimbabwe and South Africa.

At the southern end of the bridge is a team of South African immigration officials, consisting of members of the South African Police Service (SAPS) and Home Affairs officials. This team checks for the departure stamp endorsed by the Zimbabwean immigration department on the traveller's passport. Upon satisfying themselves of an authorised departure from Zimbabwe, the officers then permit the passport holder to proceed to the South African immigration stamping halls for the entry stamp, which duly authorises arrival into South Africa. Equipped with that entry stamp, the traveller then proceeds to the gate, which finally serves as an entry point into the Republic of South Africa. The gate is staffed by members of the SAPS and officials from the

Department of Home Affairs, although sometimes only members of SAPS oversee entry by just checking the stamped page on the passport.

By road transport and feet

Zimbabwe adopted the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) between 1991 and 1996, a Bretton Woods prescribed neo-liberal policy that included the dismantling of price and exchange-rate controls, privatization of public enterprises and trade liberalization, among other policies. The reform programme was detrimental to the Zimbabwean economy: among its effects was high inflation, job losses, and unemployment. The privatization of public enterprise led to, among other effects, insufficient infrastructural support resulting in bad management, corruption, poor maintenance, and eventually the collapse of parastatals, among then the National Railways of Zimbabwe (NRZ), the country's rail transport service provider. Trains were an affordable and safe mode of transport, largely used by male migrant workers. However, the decline of the rail network coincided with the increase in feminization of migration, leading to more women using *omalayitsha* as a means of transport (Mlambo 2010).

The crumbling infrastructure and failure of these key institutions to perform their duties not only undermined the economy, but also gains made in the empowerment of women and gender equality. The NRZ is a case in point. The train was relied upon as a safe and secure mode of transport for women engaged in cross-border trading, particularly between South Africa and Johannesburg, where they would take the overnight train.

The country's once well-maintained transport system had become seriously inadequate by the second decade of the new millennium, with the national railway system having, virtually, collapsed. One of the effects of this was a deterioration of the road network, as goods that used to be carried by train were now ferried by road (Sibanda 2022).

Stepwise migration

Zimbabwean migrant women do not always take direct routes, the travel from home to the border may involve meandering and winding routes and transiting through different countries. This concept is known as stepwise migration. The long routes are carefully crafted plans to evade the system. This finding is important because it carries important connotations to the concepts of divergence and convergence. It locates stepwise migration as a form of agency. This pathway however has received limited attention in migration literature. A focus on stepwise migration contributes to existing literature on women's strategies and irregular migration pathways.

The gendered scholarship on Zimbabwean migrant women is growing (Madambi 2020; Ncube and Bahta 2021; Mutambara and Naidu 2023), however, the literature still ignores the journey from home to the border and in doing so fails to appreciate meandering routes as a strategy underpinning irregular migration. This creates an assumption that migration is a straightforward process.

Nokuthula Sibanda transited through Botswana on her way to Johannesburg:

Travelling from Mbimba[1] meant I went through Botswana, although longer and it involves a lot of hitchhiking, it is less risky in terms of being detected by the border patrol agents… From home I walked until eMkhomeni [the local main road], then I hiked to Francistown. From there I

[1] Village in Plumtree, Zimbabwe

hitchhiked to Gaborone. I then took another taxi to Ramotswa, then I hitchhiked to Zeerust… six or seven taxis because there is one from Sinyawo to Francistown, then one from Francistown to Gaborone, one from Gaborone to Ramotswa, one Ramotswa to Mushiyaneng, one from Mushiyaneng to [Zeerust, one from Zeerust to Johannesburg]. (Nokuthula Sibanda, Interview 13 May 2020).

Sibanda engaged in stepwise migration. According to (Schapendonk (2007:115) 'stepwise migration is generally understood as migration to one country in order to reach another country'. This is in line with Collyer (2007) who argues that stepwise migration contains periods of temporary settlement and subsequent movements. An understanding of stepwise migration contributes to an understating of how migrants adapt to and use enroute places as a strategy to reach their destinations. To an outsider, Sibanda's path might be easily dismissed as lengthy and cumbersome, yet there are benefits embedded within. Transiting through Botswana presented her with better chances of evading authorities. Zimbabwean women's migration is primarily analyzed in terms of vulnerability and victimhood which overlooks their agency. Her experience shows that the journey from home to the border is not a linear process.

Unassisted without intermediaries

Although traditionally *dabulaphu* entailed crossing at undesignated points and walking most or all the way to the destination the use of the term has gradually widened to include all manner of irregular migration, including the informal within the formal, informal assisted crossings, and informal unassisted individual crossings without intermediaries. Further, the term *dabulaphu* has evolved with the evolution of irregular cross border travelling. Traditionally it is used synonymous with men, as only adult men migrated this way due to the risk involved (Maphosa (2009). Existing literature (Hlatshwayo 2019; Maphosa 2010; 2012; Madambi 2020) has tended to miss this development due to its limited focus on the journey from home to the border.

An undocumented migrant woman shares how she negotiated her way at the border:

When he was finally alone, I seized the chance. I had been observing him [the migration authority] throughout the day and I thought he looked softer and easily approachable. One stands a better chance negotiating one-on-one. Never approach them [migration authorities] as a group. I observed this during the half a day I spent milling around the border. I declared my situation upfront [undocumented status]. My ploy was to appeal to play to the officer's sympathy. (Thembinkosi Mathibela, Interview 28 June 2021)

While a typical informal within the formal strategy involves bribery and exchange of money, as noted by respondents in previous studies, a bit of friendly banter secured the same outcomes for Mathibela.

Crossing the river

Hlatshwayo (2019)'s body of work is useful in highlighting the challenges that Zimbabwean migrant women face on the way to Johannesburg. The literature contributes to knowledge on feminization of migration and feminization of work. However, the literature lacks an appreciation of the various migration pathways as they play out in *dabulaphu* settings.

Sibongile Khumalo, describes how informal assisted crossings play out.

You are rummaging through thick bushes and foliage. The risk of getting bitten by snakes or robbed by *omagumaguma* is very high. You walk through the bush but there is always

uncertainty of whether you will arrive at your destination or not … the *impisi* hyena – [the person who leads the group in the bush and in the actual crossing] checks out the area first. We found the river quite full. The *impisi* said everyone must undress down to their underwear[2]. We were scared to do that since we are women. The *impisi,* however, said in the river we are all the same, gender does not exist in that situation. We all undressed, and we were told that we should carry our clothes on our heads and hold hands and cross in a single file. (Sibongile Khumalo, Interview 4 February 2021).

Khumalo's experiences speak to 'typical' irregular crossing, and the role of the various actors involved. *Impisi* are agents of *omalayitsha* who are responsible for leading migrants through the bush and helping them at the point of crossing (Hungwe 2017, Tshabalala 2017; Sibanda 2022). *Omagumaguma* are criminal elements that operate along the border known to rape and rob unsuspecting travellers and *impisi* alike (Hungwe 2017; Sibanda 2022). Maphosa (2010) seems to conflate the two definitions of *omagumaguma* by stating that they mainly operate in two ways: (a) aiding potential migrants in crossing the border unofficially and later robbing the same individuals, or (b) waylaying the potential migrants in order to steal, rape, or kill them.

Conclusion

The journey taken by women migrant workers from Zimbabwe to the border gates of South Africa is not well documented. This paper has uncovered details about the journey, which involves thorough preparations, including performing religious and cultural rituals just before setting out. Due to the collapse of the railway lines in Zimbabwe and South Africa, these women rely on road transport to reach the border. A network of smugglers and men dominate the routes used by irregular migrants. The journey involves women crossing rivers, which is fraught with danger and violence. The relatively safer women are those who use the regular, formal routes, but they are a minority. Some women using road transport to reach the borders are able to enter South Africa by paying bribes. Future studies may have to focus on the specific dynamics between the Zimbabwean and the South African side of the borders.

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[2] While from an impisi perspective asking migrants to take off wet clothing when crossing the Limpopo river might stem from the fact that wet clothing increases density, for women, this is not always easy due to the need for modest.

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International migration and residential segregation: The case of Black African migrants in Johannesburg, South Africa

Amanuel Isak TEWOLDE

Abstract. Racial residential segregation is a noticeable feature of racially stratified countries such as South Africa, Brazil and the United States. Scholars of racial residential segregation have extensively studied the histories and current patterns of spatial segregation such as White areas, Black[3] areas or migrant[4] ethnic enclaves in urban spaces. In a racially stratified South African context, researchers have examined how colonial and Apartheid patterns of residential segregation impacted the post-Apartheid spatial demographic[5] architecture. Scholars however have paid little attention to how migrants, particularly Black African migrants, are affected by patterns and experiences of racial residential segregation in South Africa. I address this lacuna by examining, through sustained observational data, racially segregated residential patterns of Black African migrants in two residential suburbs of Johannesburg, namely Yeoville and Hillbrow. Drawing on observational data, I argue that South Africa's neo-liberal self-settlement refugee policy pushes low-income and vulnerable Black African migrants to concentrate in overcrowded inner-city ghettoes alongside Black South Africans. Based on African migrants' racially segregated lives, I propose an analytical category which I name *re-Apartheid existence* to capture the racially segregated lives of African migrants in 'post'-Apartheid South Africa which mirror Apartheid's racist spatial planning.

Keywords: Apartheid, Black African refugees, colonial, Hillbrow, international migration, Johannesburg, post-Apartheid, race, re-Apartheid existence, residential segregation, South Africa, South Africa, Yeoville

Introduction

This paper reports on Black African migrants' patterns of racial residential segregation in two inner city suburbs in Johannesburg, namely Yeoville and Hillbrow using every day observational data. Racial residential segregation is a salient and visible feature of past and contemporary South African society (Dubois and Muller 2022) and migrants are entangled in this phenomenon after they have arrived in South Africa. The two inner-city suburbs of Yeoville and

[3] The term 'Black' is capitalized throughout the paper because it is used as a noun to refer to a group of people. At first mention, the term is also put within inverted commas to refer to its socio-political construction as opposed to a biological fact. Furthermore, by referring to African migrants as 'Black', I am not reifying them as a racially objective group but to highlight their racialized status in a racially stratified South Africa context.

[4] The word 'migrant' is here used as a broader and all-encompassing category that includes various categories namely, refugees, asylum seekers, immigrants and economic migrants.

[5] Within this paper, the term 'socio-demographic' refers to the ethnic, racial and nationality or national-origin based characteristics of urban spaces.

Hillbrow were selected as research sites because of the high concentration of Black African migrants and Black South Africans in these areas and a negligible presence of other racial groups namely, Whites, Coloureds and Indians. Within this paper, the term *re-Apartheid existence* is used to capture Black African migrants' racially segregated settlement patterns in inner city neighborhoods largely isolated from other racial groups such as Whites, Coloured and Indians (Donaldson, Jürgens & Bahr 2003; Dubois and Muller 2022; Katumba, Coetzee, Stein and Fabris-Rotelli 2021; Majavu 2022). The negligible number of White, Indian and Coloured South Africans in the inner-city neighborhoods of Yeoville and Hillbrow suggests that one hardly sees non-Black individuals in the neighborhoods and that these neighborhoods are predominantly Black comprising African migrants and South Africans.

Based on everyday prolonged observations and note taking of patterns of African migrants' racial residential segregation in two inner-city neighborhoods of Yeoville and Hillbrow in Johannesburg, I argue that the segregation patterns of Black African migrants reflects South African government's neo-liberal refugee self-settlement policies which perpetuate Apartheid's racialized spatial planning patterns (Dubois and Muller 2022). The post-Apartheid government's capitalist self-integration refugee policies therefore drive poor Black African migrants to concentrate in low-income overcrowded inner-city ghettoes alongside Black South Africans (Dubois and Muller 2022). Black African migrants in inner-city Johannesburg reside racially isolated and segregated from affluent White South Africans who predominantly inhabit rich suburbs around the city. In other words, Yeoville and Hillbrow represent the *re-Apartheid* ('the reproduction of Apartheid') of many other urban residential areas in post-Apartheid South Africa that mirror Apartheid's racist residential policies where racial groups lived segregated from each other (Dubois and Muller 2022; Smith 2022). When low-income and poor Black African migrants arrive in South Africa, they settle in these Black-majority urban spaces segregated from other South African racial groups effectively experiencing the legacies of Apartheid's racialized spatial architecture.

South Africa is a racially structured and stratified society like other racially defined social systems like the US where race functions as an organizing factor of social structure and everyday existence (Dubois and Muller 2022; Majavu 2022; Schrieff, Tredoux, Dixon, & Finchilescu 2005). Like other racially stratified countries, racial residential segregation is a visible and salient characteristic of social reality in South Africa (Smith 2022). While scholars more recently have claimed that residential segregation of communities has somehow attenuated and there exist many integrated communities particularly in high-income suburbs (Majavu 2022; Smith 2022), racial residential segregation is still a dominant and entrenched characteristics of residential patterns in South Africa (Majavu 2022; Rooyen and Lemanski 2020; Smith 2022). Racial residential segregation is still a pervasive problem in post-Apartheid South Africa in that communities are still socially and residentially segregated from one another still experiencing colonial and Apartheid systems of racial separation (Christopher 1990; Donaldson and Kotze 2006; Dubow 1989; Finchilescu, Tredoux, & Mynhardt 2007; Majavu 2022; Maylam 1990; Schrieff, Tredoux, Dixon & Finchilescu 2005; Smith 2022).

In contemporary South Africa, it is still common to hear people refer to residential areas or neighborhoods as 'Coloured area', 'Black area', 'Indian area' and 'White area' (Majavu 2022; Nengomasha 2021; Smith 2022). In other words, racial residential integration is a resilient socio-spatial reality in South Africa (Katumba, Coetzee, Stein and Fabris-Rotelli 2021; King 2011;

Finchilescu, Tredoux, & Mynhardt 2007; Majavu 2022; Smith 2022). De-facto racial residential segregation in post-Apartheid South Africa can now be observed across the different provinces of the country (Majavu 2022). In the post-Apartheid context, race is not the only factor which explains residential racial segregation of communities but class is also intertwines/intersects with race to perpetuate residential segregation (Gradin, 2018; Hunter, 2010; Majavu 2022; Wray 2014). A majority of Black South Africans are low-income and still live segregated lives in relatively under-resourced areas and the same holds true for the other non-White racial minority groups namely Coloured and Indians (Dubois and Muller 2022; Majavu 2022; Nengomasha 2021; Rooyen and Lemanski 2020; Smith 2022). Relatively, White South African who are predominantly middle class and rich live in affluent suburbs (Majavu 2022; Nengomasha (2021).

Racial residential segregation has been extensively studied and theorized in post-Apartheid South Africa in that scholars have analyzed the structure, dynamics, patterns and shifts and transformations of racial residential segregation in contemporary South Africa (e.g.,Alexander & Tredoux, 2010; Christopher, 2001; Donaldson and Kotze 2006; Dubois and Muller 2022; Durrheim and Dixon 2010; Finchilescu, Tredoux, & Mynhardt, 2007; Gradin, 2018; Hunter, 2010; Katumba, Coetzee, Stein and Fabris-Rotelli 2021; King 2011; Landman 2006; Majavu 2022; Parry and Van Eeden 2015; Schensul & Heller, 2010; Schrieff, Tredoux, Dixon, & Finchilescu 2005; Wray 2014). However, scholars and researchers have paid little attention to how non-White migrants such as Black migrants experience racial residential segregation in post-Apartheid South Africa. This paper addresses this empirical and theoretical lacuna by examining patterns and lived experiences of Black African migrants in two residential neighborhoods of Johannesburg. The main research question that guides this paper is, *How are Black African migrants in Johannesburg inner-city neighborhoods residentially segregated and what does their lived experiences with racial residential segregation reveal about racial divisions in contemporary South Africa and the legacies of Apartheid policies of racial residential segregation?* Based on my findings, I develop an analytical tool which I term re-*Apartheid existence* to make sense of the racially segregated lives of Black African migrants in post-Apartheid South Africa which mirror colonial and Apartheid spatial planning.

This paper is structured as follows. First racial residential segregation theory is outlined followed by a discussion of racial residential segregation in South Africa. A review of immigration and racial residential segregation will be discussed then the research method (observational data) will be outlined followed by the presentation of findings on Black African migrants' everyday patterns and lived experiences with racial residential segregation in Yeoville and Hillbrow. The last sections will discuss and conclude the paper.

Racial residential segregation: A theoretical framework

As the main focus of this article is on Black African migrants' patterns and everyday lived experiences with racial residential segregation, I employ racial residential segregation theory. This theoretical framework or perspective provides the conceptual framing and interpretative perspective for the findings of this study. Racial residential segregation suggests that in racially organized and race-conscious social systems, urban residential neighborhoods tend to exhibit racially segmented settlement patterns which are largely based on race, such as White neighborhoods or Black neighborhoods (Boustan 2013; Johnston, Poulsen and Forrest 2007). Racial residential segregation perspective proposes that in racist societies, the phenomenon of

urban racial residential segregation is structurally shaped by *discrimination*, *disadvantage and voluntary self-segregation* (Johnston et al. 2007). In relation to *discrimination*, the state, its agencies or White society perpetrate and enforce residential discrimination against non-White people (Johnston at al. 2007). In *de-jure* institutional discrimination and due institutional or systemic race-based discrimination, non-White people are pushed to concentrate in under-resourced neighborhoods such as inner-city ghettos and shanty towns segregated from affluent White areas (Johnston at al. 2007).

Racial residential segregation can also occur due to relative socio-economic *disadvantage* of non-White people and their inability to afford living in affluent neighbourhoods or suburbs and hence their concentration in overcrowded urban areas (Boustan 2013). In most cases, socio-economic disadvantage of non-White people in racially stratified societies is shaped by systemic discrimination against non-White people (Boustan 2013). *Self-segregation* also gives rise to racial residential segregation where Black people or other non-White social groups opt to isolate themselves from White areas due to perceived prejudice or racism (Boustan 2013; Johnston at al. 2007). The theory of racial residential segregation suggests that the different factors (discrimination, disadvantage and self-segregation) that shape residential segregation in urban settings do not necessarily occur in isolation but they may also manifest in combination (Boustan 2013). In South Africa, during Apartheid, discrimination was endorsed and perpetrated by the state and White people to residentially segregate non-Whites (Nengomasha 2021). At present, *de-jure*[6] discrimination does not exist, but residential segregation may happen due to socio-economic disadvantage and self-segregation also referred to as *de facto*[7] segregation (Dubois and Muller 2022; Majavu 2022; Nengomasha 2021; Smith 2022). I will use the theory of racial residential segregation and its associated concepts to analyze and interpret the patterns and lived experiences of Black African migrants with racial residential segregation in urban Johannesburg.

Racial residential segregation in South Africa

Spatial racial residential segregation in South Africa started with the emergence of White European colonial settlers (Dubow 1989). White Europeans created the *location* system, a settlement outside cities which they designated for Black Africans, while affluent towns and cities were reserved for White people (Christopher 1987). In the early twentieth century, *native reserves* were created as residential spaces for Black Africans and Black people were denied access to or residence in White-only cities and towns (Christopher 1987; Dubow 1989; Seekings 2010). Numerous laws were created to segregate Black Africans from residential areas inhabited by White Europeans in South Africa ((Dubow 1989; Seekings 2010). In the words of Dubow,

[residential] 'segregation' a policy dating back to the beginning of the twentieth century which in many respects established the ideological and political framework out of which apartheid was constructed and refined (1989: 1).

Racial residential segregation became more institutionalized and systematized after the onset of Apartheid in 1948 (Christopher, 1990; Dubow, 1989; Maylam, 1990; Seekings, 2010).

[6] *De jure* racial discrimination occurs when official or legal discrimination is practiced by the state and its agencies.

[7] *De facto* racial discrimination is not legally sanctioned and takes place when members of society choose to self-segregate or due to socioeconomic disparities.

Through the Population Registration Act No. 30 of 1950, the Apartheid government initiated the Group Areas Act No. 41 of 1950 that forced Indians, Coloureds and Black Africans to live in separate areas isolated from White Europeans (Christopher, 1990; Dubow, 1989; Maylam, 1990). Black areas, Indian areas, Coloured areas and White areas were created and policed during the Apartheid era (Christopher, 1990). Even though legal (*de jure*) racial residential segregation of the different racial groups was officially outlawed in the 1990s, *de-facto* racial residential segregation still continues in post-Apartheid South Africa due to legacies of centuries of structural and enduring residential segregation (Christopher, 2001; Dubois and Muller 2022; Majavu 2022; Seekings, 2010; Smith 2022).

Many scholars, researchers, the media and politicians have noted that the legacies of centuries of racial residential segregation still endure in the post-Apartheid era and that many cities, informal settlements and towns still bear the imprints of colonial and Apartheid segregationist laws and practices (Dubois and Muller 2022; Majavu 2022; Nengomasha 2021; Smith 2022). For example, Dubois and Muller (2022) found that many residential areas in contemporary South Africa still reflect past residential segregation policies where a majority of Black Africans still live in impoverished areas. Dubois and Muller (2022) also highlight that in many places, Blacks and Whites live isolated from one another where White people concentrate in affluent and gated suburbs. Melgaço, Pinto and Coelho (2022) found that the demographic characteristics of most South African cities and towns mirror colonial and Apartheid policies of racial segregation that established and entrenched racial segregation of South Africa's racial groups. Monama, Mokoele and Mokgotho (2022) also write that even though *de jure* residential segregation is outlawed, current patterns of many residential areas in post-Apartheid South Africa remain racially segregated.

Smith's (2022) study also revealed that post-Apartheid South Africa's neo-liberal residential policies in urban areas perpetuate Apartheid's racist policies and laws of racial residential segregation where Black Africans continue to inhabit under-resourced, impoverished and underdeveloped residential areas. Monama, Mokoele and Mokgotho (2022) found that segregated residential arrangement of a majority of South African cities and towns have not transformed into racially integrated residential spaces. Monama et al. (2022) argue that the current architecture of South African residential areas exhibit the residues of centuries of spatial segregation policies that residentially divided populations into different settlement spaces. Majavu (2022) argues that some White South Africans still choose to residentially self-segregate in post-Apartheid South Africa, a racist predisposition implanted and perpetuated during colonial and Apartheid eras. Referring to Cape Town, Rooyen and Lemanski (2020) found that in the post-Apartheid era, much of Cape Town's demographic characteristics still resembles past patterns of residential segregation owing to class and racial factors. Rooyen and Lemanski (2020) also argue that even though post-Apartheid governments attempted to promote inclusive and integrated residential spaces, *de-facto* race- and class-based residential segregation still endures due to post-Apartheid's neo-liberal settlement policies.

Katumba, Coetzee, Stein and Fabris-Rotelli's (2021) study revealed that even though racial residential segregation in some parts of South Africa has decreased, residential segregation still features in most parts of South Africa. Katumba et al. (2021) also argue that in Gauteng province, Black South Africans continue to experience residential isolation from Whites which they attribute to the continuation of Apartheid's residential segregation policies and practices. In

another study, Nengomasha (2021) argues that many post-Apartheid cities such as Buffalo City, Cape Town, Ekurhuleni, Johannesburg, Mangaung, Nelson Mandela Bay, eThekwini and Tshwane still exhibit pre-1994 patterns of residential segregation even though racial integration is somehow evident in high-income and affluent suburbs. As discussed above, extant literature on racial residential segregation in South Africa largely suggests that even though some parts of South Africa have become residentially integrated, many residential areas in the country continue to exhibit colonial and Apartheid patterns and characteristics of race-based residential segregation (Smith 2022). In many parts of South Africa, Whites, Coloured, Indian and Black South Africans still live in racially segregated communities even though state-enforced *de-jure* segregation no longer exists (Dubois and Muller 2022).

Immigration and racial residential segregation

As many scholars of immigration and racial segregation argue, in racially stratified host societies, the phenomenon of immigration is tied to experiences and patterns of racial residential segregation (Hahn 2022; Hwang and McDaniel 2022). For example, in White-majority and racially stratified receiving societies, Black African migrants and other non-White migrants tend to concentrate within racial or ethnic enclaves segregated from White people such as in the US (Massey and Denton 1989; Portes and Zhou 1993; Waters 1999). Patterns of racial residential segregation of Blacks in White majority and racially organized host countries are mostly shaped by multiple factors such as White segregation, socio-economic disadvantage and self-segregation (Dill and Jirjahn 2014; Leslie, Frankenfeld and Hattery 2022). Non-White migrants usually experience racialized prejudice and discrimination and they choose to live in enclaves and non-White urban spaces segregated from White people (Dill and Jirjahn 2014; Leslie, Frankenfeld and Hattery 2022; Portes and Zhou 1993; Sleutjes, Valk and Ooijevvar 2018; Verdugo and Toma 2018; Waters 1999).

In relation to experiences of racial residential segregation of non-White migrants, Benassi, Bitonti, Francesca and Strozza's (2022) work on Sri Lankan migrants in Italy suggest that like other migrant groups in Italy, Siri Lankan migrants reside and socially interact within their own ethnic communities in urban centers. Such a study illustrates the ways in which non-White migrants living in White-majority host countries tend to create their own neighborhood niches due perceived racism and societal prejudice from White people. Benassi, Naccarato, Iglesias-Pascual and Strozza's (2022) study found that low-income and economically disadvantaged non-White migrants experience racial residential segregation in metropolitan centers of many White-majority countries namely Spain, the Netherlands, The United Kingdom, Ireland and Germany. Benass et.al (2022) suggest that factors such as economic disadvantage, unemployment and lack of adequate financial resources drive migrants in Europe to live in residentially segregated urban areas.

Another scholarly work by Chhetri, Chhetri, Singh, Khan and Gomes (2022) also found that recent migrants from China concentrate in spatially segregated urban areas in Melbourne, Australia socially segregated from White Australians. Other studies on the racially structured US context have also found that residential racial segregation in America is a dominant and entrenched phenomenon and non-White migrants largely reside in segregated areas (e.g., Ard and Smiley 2021; Cromley and Jie 2022; Dmowska and Stepinski 2022; Franz, Milner, Parker and Braddock 2022; Hahn 2022; Hwang and McDaniel 2022). Anderson and Simburger (2022) found

that racial/ethnic minorities such as Latino and Asian migrants in the US experience racial residential segregation in the US. Anderson and Simburger (2022) also noted that race-based residential concentrations of non-White migrants in metropolitan US is a salient feature of migrant settlement patterns in the country.

Similarly, Friedman, Wynn and Tsao (2022) found that non-White migrants in the US residing in metropolitan areas experienced racial residential segregation from White Americans due to the legacies of long-standing White racism and prejudice. Křížková and Šimon (2022) also write that African-born and Caribbean/Latin American–born migrants in the US concentrated in Black-majority metropolitan areas segregated from White Americans due to White racism, prejudice and entrenched racial divide in the country. Malmberg, Andersson, Nielsen & Haandrikman's (2018) work on racial/ethnic residential segregation patterns of non-White European migrants in Sweden found that many non-White migrants in the country concentrated in migrant enclaves segregated from White European people. Malmberg et al. (2018) argue that many Swedish urban areas are characterized by non-White migrants establishing ethno-racial enclaves.

The above studies suggest that immigration and patterns of racial residential segregation are closely intertwined formations in majority-White host societies due to entrenched racism, prejudice and discrimination (Anderson and Simburger 2022; Ard and Smiley 2021; Cromley and Jie 2022; Dmowska and Stepinski 2022; Křížková and Šimon (2022); Malmberg et al. 2018).

There exists little scholarly work, however, on the everyday patterns and experiences with residential segregation of African migrants in the South African context. The present study addresses this lacuna by examining the everyday racial residential segregation of Black African migrants in inner-city Johannesburg.

Neoliberal self-integration policies and racial residential segregation of migrants

Scholars and researchers examining immigration and residential segregation have noted correlations between host governments' neoliberal self-settlement models and patterns of racial residential segregation of migrants of colour (e.g., Dill and Jirjahn 2014; Freeman 2002; Kyle 1999; Massey and Denton 1989; Portes and Zhou 1993; Scopilliti and Iceland 2008; Sleutjes, Valk and Ooijevvar 2018; Waters 1999). South Africa and the US are of notable examples. Scholars suggest that non-White migrants living in racially stratified host countries that promote neo-liberal self-sufficiency models tend to concentrate in poor, underserviced and overcrowded inner-city suburbs or neighbourhoods spatially distanced from White-majority affluent suburbs (Dill and Jirjahn 2014; Freeman 2002; Scopilliti and Iceland 2008). Neo-liberal self-settlement policies of migrants refers to the ways in which migrants are responsible for their own settlement upon arrival in a host country and that state-subsidized housing is extremely limited or non-existent (Dill and Jirjahn 2014; Freeman 2002; Scopilliti and Iceland 2008; Sleutjes, Valk and Ooijevvar 2018).

South Africa adopts a neo-liberal self-integration policy of migrants and that migrants in the country are expected to fend for themselves and that state housing support for non-South African migrants is almost none existent or minimal (Crush, Tawodzera, McCordic and Ramachandran; Handmaker and Parsley) Due to such capitalist policies, migrants in South Africa are compelled to find accommodation on their own. In South Africa, therefore, neo-liberal models of self-sufficiency policies have resulted in impoverished Black African migrants to concentrate in

either overcrowded inner-city ghettos or Black-majority informal settlements and townships located outside the major South African cities (Dubois and Muller 2022; Majavu 2022; Smith 2022).

Method

As the objective of this article was to examine patterns and lived experiences of racial residential segregation of Black African migrants in two inner-city suburbs of Johannesburg, I employed naturalistic observational method and detailed note taking to document the phenomenon (Wang and Repetti, 2016). Non-participant naturalistic observational method and field notes are used to document everyday lived experiences and interactions of people in their natural settings (Angrosino 2007; Ciesielska, Boström and Öhlander 2018; Davidson, Worrall, and Hickson 2003; Demiray, Mischler and Martin 2019; Meadowcroft and Moxley 1980; Miller 1977; Morrison, Lee, Gruenewald and Mair 2016; Wang and Repetti, 2016).

Non-participant naturalistic observational data collection method is a well-established and widely used social scientific method and is employed to capture and document the social world as it is lived (Ciesielska, et al. 2018; Davidson, et al. 2003). Naturalistic observation method is, therefore, employed when researchers seek to record, examine and document the everyday realities of social actors and their social world (Meadowcroft and Moxley 1980; Miller 1977; Morrison, Lee, Gruenewald and Mair 2016; Wang and Repetti, 2016). Scholars suggest that non-participant naturalistic observation data gathering method is carried out with clear-cut and pre-defined objectives where researchers know beforehand what they would observes and focus on (Miller 1977; Wang and Repetti, 2016). This means that researchers should not enter the fieldwork frivolously and spontaneously without pre-defined aims and detailed objectives (Demiray, Mischler and Martin 2019; Meadowcroft and Moxley 1980; Miller 1977; Wang and Repetti, 2016). I conducted prolonged non-participant naturalistic observation in Yeoville and Hillbrow from 2018 until 2021 and collected a focused observational data and note taking on patterns and lived experiences of racial residential segregation of Black African migrants in the two urban neighborhoods of Johannesburg.

Black African migrants' experiences of racial residential segregation in Johannesburg

The case of Black African migrants in Yeoville

Yeoville is an inner-city residential neighborhood in Johannesburg located adjacent to other urban residential areas namely Berea, Bertrams, Hilbrow, Bellevue and Doornfontein. During Apartheid years, the neighborhood was predominantly inhabited by White South Africans due to racial segregation laws that allocated urban neighborhoods and suburbs to Whites (Nengomasha 2021). After the end of Apartheid and the advent of democracy, the demographic picture of Yeoville gradually turned from White-only suburb to a predominantly majority-Black neighbourhood as was also the case with many urban areas in South Africa (Nengomasha 2021).

Soon after the repeal of racial segregation laws, many White South Africans who enjoyed segregated lives in major South African cities started moving out of the neighborhood as Black South Africans began moving into urban areas (Dubois and Muller 2022). When Black African migrants started arriving in South Africa after the dawn of democracy, Yeoville became one of the main destinations for the migrants. The availability of amenities, proximity to the central business district, affordability of shared apartments and the presence of established migrant communities

in the neighborhood has particularly attracted many Black African migrants to establish themselves in the inner-city neighborhood. African migrants residing in the neighbourhood come from different African countries such as, *inter alia*, Nigeria, the Democratic republic of Congo (DRC), Cameroon, Zimbabwe, Ethiopia, Somalia, Mozambique, Lesotho, Eswatini, Eritrea, Malawi and Ghana.

Therefore, at present, the neighborhood of Yeoville is inhabited both by Black South Africans of various ethno-linguistic groupings[8] and Black African migrants from various African countries. I hardly observed people of other South African racial groups in the area such as Coloured South Africans, Indian South Africans or White South Africans. A negligible number of Asian migrants from China, Pakistan, India and Bangladesh, who operate shops in the neighborhood, also reside in Yeoville. Apartment buildings and public spaces in Yeoville are inhabited and frequented by Black South Africans and Black African migrants. Also local schools, churches, shops, betting sites, restaurants, bars, cafes, hair salons, barbershops, and markets are also frequented by Black Africans residing in the area. The various local churches in the area namely Churches Baptist Convention of South Africa, Seventh Day Adventist Day Church, Victories Gospel Ministries Worldwide, Gospel Assembly Church International, Saint Aidan Church, Chapel of Solution Church, Bethel Messianic Assembly are attended by predominantly Black African migrants and Black South Africans. The schools in the neighborhood namely Bellevue Primary and High School, Yeoville Boys School, Yeoville Community School, Yeoville Pre-school and day care centre and United Church Schools are also predominantly Black African migrants and Black South Africans.

Many African ethnic food restaurants belonging to Nigerians, Ghanaians, Ethiopians, Cameroonians, Malawians, Zimbabweans and Black South Africans line Raleigh Street, the main street of Yeoville, and other nearby streets. Hair salons and cosmetics shops belonging to mainly Nigerians and Ghanaians also line the streets of Yeoville. Street vendors, mostly African migrants, sell various wares on the streets. Food items, African spices, African clothes, vegetables, fruits and other items are also sold in Yeoville's main streets. Black African migrants and Black South Africans come together at night for drinks and African foods at Time Square, a busy building complex on Raleigh Street where foods and drinks are sold. The streets in Yeoville are always populated and overcrowded with Black people and that the presence of other South African racial groups is very minimal in the neighborhood. For example, one hardly sees other racial groups in the streets and public spaces of Yeoville. Black South Africans and Black African migrants share apartments in the neighborhood and they live as a cohesive Black-only community despite their national and citizenship differences.

The inner-city neighborhood of Yeoville can therefore be demographically described as a *Black-majority neighborhood* rather than a racially integrated urban residential space. During Apartheid, a White-only residential neighborhood, the socio-democratic characteristic of Yeoville has drastically transformed into a Black-only residential domain. Many White South Africans who previously inhabited Yeoville had abandoned the neighborhood almost completely and they have not returned to the area over the last few decades since the end of legal Apartheid. Low-income Black African migrants coming from various African countries residing in Yeoville are experiencing

[8] The various South African ethno-linguistic groupings residing in the area include, isiZulu, IsiXhosa, isiNdebele, Tshivenda, Sepedi, Setswana, Sesotho, Tsonga and SiSwati.

South Africa's centuries-old racial residential segregation with which South Africans of all racial groups are familiar. Yeoville, therefore, appears to be a microcosmic example and representation of other numerous urban neighborhoods in South Africa that exhibit racial mistrust, residential segregation, racial inequalities and persistent inter-group separation. Black African migrants in Yeoville exist residentially segregated and socially disconnected from other non-Black South African racial groups due to lack of intergroup conviviality and integration. South Africa is not only a racialized society but a racist society as well (Dubois and Muller 2022) and the racist societal dynamics is affecting negatively the lived experiences of Black African migrants in Yeoville.

Black African migrants in Hillbrow

Like Yeoville, Hillbrow is an inner-city residential neighborhood which is located close to the Johannesburg Central Business District, Braamfontein, Berea and Yeoville. Hillbrow was a White-only residential neighborhood during Apartheid era and it only started becoming a Black-majority neighborhood after the end of Apartheid rule (Nengomasha 2021). Many White residents left Hillbrow and other inner-city neighborhoods in Johannesburg and moved to other suburbs as Black South Africans begun moving into the area (Nengomasha 2021). Like the demographic characteristics of Yeoville, the inner-city neighbourhood of Hillbrow is now a predominantly Black residential neighborhood populated by both Black South Africans and Black African migrants originating from various African countries. The previously White- inhabited apartment buildings in Hillbrow are now occupied by Black South African citizens and Black African migrants. Black African migrants originating from countries such as Botswana, Mozambique, Nigeria, the Democratic republic of Congo (DRC), Cameroon, Lesotho, Zambia, Angola, Senegal, Eswatini, Zimbabwe, Ethiopia, Malawi and Ghana live in Hillbrow. There are also a few Pakistanis, Indians and Bangladeshis who operate businesses in the area.

One can hear African languages such as Zimbabwean Shona and Ndebele, Nigerian Igbo and Malawian Chichewa spoken in the streets of Hillbrow. Particularly Nigerian migrants are ubiquitous throughout Hillbrow. When I walked the streets of Hillbrow, it felt like I was in Nigeria or Zimbabwe. Black residents hardly interact with other racial groups in Hillbrow because they are not there. As is the case with residents in Yeoville, Black South Africans and Black African migrants share apartments in Hillbrow. Black African migrants and Black South Africans own various; they also work as employees in grocery shops, hair salons, cosmetics shops, hair shops, bars and night clubs. There are also some clothing and grocery stores owned by Asian migrants in the neighborhood and their employees are mostly Malawians, Zimbabweans and Black South Africans. African-owned ethnic restaurants, bars, grocery shops and other small businesses line the Hillbrow streets, namely Smith Street, Quartz Street, Pietersen Street, Claim Street, Wolmarans Street, Leyds Street, Bok Street, Koch Street, Kapteijn Street, Esselen Street, Kotze Street, Pretoria Street, Van Der Merwe Street, Caroline Street, Goldreich Street and Bruce Street. Almost all of the African shops in Hillbrow are situated on ground floors of residential buildings.

Many Black African migrants and Black South Africans also sell their items on the streets of Hillbrow. Some of the wares which are sold by streets venders include, vegetables, fruits, second hand electronics, clothes and shoes, candies, chewing gums, belts, earrings, socks, biscuits and cigarettes and women's hair. Mostly Zimbabweans, Malawians, Black South Africans and Mozambicans are the ones who sell such items in the streets of Hillbrow. There are also Black African tailors in Hillbrow who are mostly Malawians and Nigerians. Most of the security

guards working in the buildings in Hillbrow come from DRC, Nigeria, Mozambique and Zimbabwe. A majority of the hair salons and cosmetics shops in Hillbrow are owned by Nigerians and Ghanaians and the employees are mostly from the same countries. The many churches in Hillbrow such as, Cathedral of Christ the King Catholic Church, The Revelation Church of God, Greek Orthodox Church Cathedral of Saints, Yahweh Shamma Church, Brethren in Christ Church, Hillbrow Seventh Day Adventist Church, Johannesburg Central SDA Church, Centurion College, The Revelation Spiritual Home are frequented by Black African migrants and Black South Africans. Other organizations and institutions in Hillbrow such as Hillbrow Boxing Club, Saint Paul's High School and Hillbrow Community Health Centre predominantly provide their services to Black African migrants and Black South Africans who are residents in the neighborhood.

The night life in Hillbrow is vibrant with numerous bars and night clubs lining the various streets of Hillbrow with their loud music blaring. From my frequent observations, almost all the patrons of the bars, restaurants and nightclubs in Hillbrow are Black South Africans and Black African migrants. I hardly saw members of other racial groups entering these places. One can see African migrants from Zimbabwe and Nigeria drinking together and playing pool with Black South Africans at many of the bars and nightclubs in Hillbrow: They speak English to communicate with each other. During the day and during the night, the streets in Hillbrow are crowded with Black Africans of various national origins, nationalities, ethnicities, cultures and languages. There are hardly seen any White South Africans either residing or walking in the streets of Hillbrow. The current demographic composition of Hillbrow is now different from how it was during Apartheid times when it was a White-only residential inner-city neighborhood.

Black African migrants residing and operating businesses in Hillbrow have made the inner-city neighborhood their home. As Black African migrants in Hillbrow have become more established, they function as a magnet for other newly arriving fellow country men and women to settle and make Hillbrow their future home. Furthermore, as the more established and newly arriving Black African migrants make Hillbrow and other inner-city neighborhoods their homes, they also experience racial residential segregation and indirect White racism through racial segregation. White South Africans tend to avoid low-income inner-city neighborhoods in South Africa which they stereotypically associate with crime and decadence (Dubois and Muller 2022). Black African migrants, therefore, become victims of White racism and negative anti-Black stereotyping in South Africa. Hillbrow, as a majority-Black residential neighborhood, stands as a symbol of racial divisions and race-based segregation of communities where dynamics of immigration and racial residential segregation intersect.

Discussion

There is limited empirical work and theorizing on the everyday lived experiences with racial residential segregation of Black African migrants in the South African context and the focus of this observational research study was to address this scholarly gap. The main focus and objective of this article was to report on experiences of racial residential segregation of Black African migrants. Black African migrants residing in Yeoville and Hillbrow inner-city neighborhoods live a racially segregated and isolated urban spaces separated from White South Africans who inhabit gated and affluent suburbs (Dubois and Muller 2022; Majavu 2022; Smith 2022).

The majority of Black African migrants in South Africa are socio-economically poor and institutionally excluded with almost non-existent government support (Crush et. al. 2017) and

hence their tendency to self-settle in poor, inner-city ghettos in major South African cities such as Johannesburg (Crush et. al. 2017). Even though there are few Black African migrants who are affluent and hence can afford to reside in middle-class suburbs, a great majority of Black African migrants in South Africa tend to be of low-income socioeconomic standing (Crush et. al. 2017). Due to their disadvantaged economic status, many Black African migrants are relegated to reside in either majority-Black informal settlements outside cities or in overcrowded inner-city ghettos alongside Black South Africans (Crush et. al. 2017)

Seen through racial residential segregation perspective, the experiences of Black African migrants in Yeoville and Hillbrow inner-city neighborhoods can be understood in terms of *discrimination* and *socio-economic disadvantage* (Boustan 2013; Johnston, Poulsen and Forrest 2007). As the thesis of discrimination suggests, a majority of White South Africans avoid inner-city neighborhoods and other residential spaces inhabited by Black Africans (Dubois and Muller 2022; Majavu 2022). As scholars note, many White scholars still exhibit Apartheid attitudes as they prefer to concentrate in gated and affluent residential areas away from majority-Black impoverished neighbourhoods and townships (Dubois and Muller 2022).

In the post-Apartheid context, the ways in which White South Africans avoid Black areas in inner cities and townships is a continuation of colonial and Apartheid attitude towards non-White people in South Africa (Donaldson and Kotze 2006; Dubois and Muller 2022; Finchilescu, Tredoux, & Mynhardt 2007; Majavu 2022; Katumba, Coetzee, Stein and Fabris-Rotelli 2021; King; Tredoux, & Mynhardt 2007; Majavu 2022; Schrieff, Tredoux, Dixon & Finchilescu 2005; Smith 2022) Seekings 2010; Katumba, Coetzee, Stein and Fabris-Rotelli 2021). The racist stereotyping of inner cities and Black-majority townships in South Africa as spaces where crime is rampant, devoid of law and order and as impoverished has made many Whites to avoid such areas and reside in majority-White neighborhoods (Dubois and Muller 2022). White racism in post-Apartheid South Africa functions through avoiding Black areas and this speaks to the masked, latent and unspoken character of White racism in the country.

Interpreted through the theoretical concept of *socio-economic advantage*, the experiences of Black African migrants in Yeoville and Hillbrow also appears to be due to their disadvantaged and vulnerable socioeconomic background that relegates them to live in overcrowded inner-city ghettos separated from affluent suburbs (Dubois and Muller 2022). It should be noted that Black African migrants in Yeoville and Hillbrow live in overcrowded and poorly maintained rental accommodations sharing apartments with other fellow Africans due to their inability to rent or own decent accommodation. Economic disadvantage coupled with White racism and prejudice therefore structure the racially segregated experiences of Black African migrants in post-Apartheid South Africa, a country where class and race, in tandem, dictate residential patterns of social groups in the country (Smith 2022).

Scholars and researchers of racial residential segregation suggest that Black migrants of low socioeconomic status and disadvantage in many racially stratified countries are forced to reside in poor, under-resourced and overcrowded racially inner-city neighborhoods segregated from White Europeans (Dill and Jirjahn 2014; Massey and Denton 1989; Portes and Zhou 1993; Sleutjes, Valk and Ooijevvar 2018; Verdugo and Toma 2018; Waters 1999). As noted above, neo-liberal or capitalist self-settlement refugee policies and models of the South African government also explains the racially segregated and overcrowded settlement patterns of Black African migrants in the inner-city Johannesburg of Yeoville and Hillbrow (Monama 2022, Smith 2022).

South Africa is not a welfare state and adopts a self-sufficiency refugee policy in which migrants in the country do not obtain state support such as housing which forces them to fend for themselves and live in overcrowded and racially segregated living conditions (Crush et. al. 2017; Handmaker and Parsley; Majavu 2022). The everyday lived experiences with racial residential segregation of Black African migrants in inner-cities of South Africa is also reflective of broader patterns of racial residential segregation in other racially stratified national contexts (Dubois and Muller 2022; Katumba et al. 2021; Nengomasha 2021; Seekings, 2010; Smith 2022).

For example, scholars of racial residential segregation suggest that Black African migrants in the US experience racial residential segregation due to societal prejudice, White discrimination and their unfavorable socio-economic background (Ard and Smiley 2021; Cromley and Jie 2022; Dmowska and Stepinski 2022; Franz, Milner, Parker and Braddock 2022; Hahn 2022; Hwang and McDaniel 2022; Massey and Denton 1989; Portes and Zhou 1993). Similar to the experiences with racial residential segregation of Black African migrants in South Africa, in many White-majority host countries, many non-White migrant communities also reside in ethnic enclaves or racially segregated urban spaces that are predominantly inhabited by Black and Brown groups (e.g., Cromley and Jie 2022; Dmowska and Stepinski 2022). The analytical category I developed, namely *re-Apartheid existence* can best capture the racial residential segregation patterns and lived experiences of Black African migrants in Johannesburg's inner-city neighborhoods which mirror Apartheid's segregation policies (Melgaço et al. 2022). The prefix *re* within the term *re-Apartheid* refers to the phenomenon of reproduction or perpetuity of Apartheid-shaped residential settlement patterns of Black African migrants in inner-city neighborhoods of Johannesburg (Smith 2022). As I have noted above, the racial residential segregation patterns of African migrants in Johannesburg reflects and reproduces historical residential settlement architecture where Blacks and Whites lived socio-geographically separated lives (Majavu 2022; Smith 2022). The perpetuation and continuity of Apartheid's racialized residential segregation is also evident in other parts of the country where communities still live residentially separated existence (Smith 2022). Therefore, the residential isolation of Black African migrants in the two inner-city neighborhoods of Yeoville and Hillbrow is a mirror-image of pervasive racial residential segregation of Black communities across the South African spatio-demographic space (Majavu 2022; Smith 2022).

The study has limitations in that it is based on observational data of two inner-city neighbourhoods and it is difficult to claim that the *de-facto* racial residential segregation of Black African migrants in Johannesburg is also evident across the entire South African residential landscape. More research should be done on residential segregation patterns of non-White migrants across multiple urban spaces and townships in South Africa so that we can have confidence in arguing that racial residential segregation of non-White migrants in South Africa is indeed a national problem.

Conclusion

This paper examined, through every day naturalistic observational data and note taking, patterns of racial residential segregation of Back African migrants in Yeoville and Hillbrow, Johannesburg. Black African migrants in these inner-cities live racially segregated lives alongside low-income and working class Black South Africans. The present study addressed an under-researched and under-theorized phenomenon on the interface between immigration and racial

residential segregation in the South African national context. Even though scholars cite societal exclusion, prejudice and discrimination as major sources of racial residential segregation of Black migrants in North America and Europe, the racially segregated condition of Black African migrants in Johannesburg is also due to neoliberal-oriented self-settlement refugee policies in addition to rampant racial discrimination. The pattern of racial residential segregation of Black African migrants in Johannesburg also reflect centuries of structured, institutional and entrenched realities of spatial segregation of racially defined communities imposed by racist White European settlers. In this paper, I developed an analytical concept which I termed *re-Apartheid existence* to capture the reproduction, endurance, continuities and persistence of colonial and Apartheid-era policies of racial residential segregation of non-White racialized groups in South Africa. Future studies may explore experiences of racial residential segregation of other ethnically and racially defined non-Black migrant groups in South Africa such as Asian and Arab migrants. More research is also needed on racially segregated lives of Black African migrants in other urban settings in South Africa beyond Johannesburg so that national patterns of immigration and racial residential segregation can be clearly established.

Conflict of interest statement

The author declares no potential conflict of interest.

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FOCUS

Mental health and Migrant Acculturation- a journey of global change

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Abstract. Migration is continuously shaping the world on local, national and international levels. This phenomenon impacts the lives of individuals all around the globe, and bears deep psychological, social and economic implications. The relationship between mental health and acculturation is extremely complex. The current theoretical paper examines the relationship between acculturation and mental health in a migration-related context. Furthermore, we explore the impact of illness and poor mental health on migrants, and the way in which age, gender, stress, trauma or unemployment shape mental health outcomes. We highlight the importance of this review for practitioners, educators and researchers, to better focus on current challenges migrants face, on their past experiences and how these influence people in a cross-cultural context.

Keywords: migration, acculturation, mental health, behavioural science, review.

Introduction

The diaspora is a key element to Western democracies, and massive migration influxes in recent years (Maehler et al., 2019) have determined changes to the population structures of countries (Frideres, & Biles, 2012). Globally, international migrants are estimated to amount to almost 272 million people, that is 3.5% of people who reside outside their country of birth, and over two thirds of them are of working age (IOM, 2020). We employ the term *migrant* to refer to individuals who live in a foreign country, such as refugees, asylum seekers, immigrants and sojourners (Berry, 2006).

Cultural constructs "are potent drivers of behaviour" (Hong et al., 2000, p. 709). Cross-cultural psychology helps establish a relationship between individual behavioural development and a specific cultural context, and is both feasible and necessary for accurate research (Wang, 2016). When people move to a different environment and invest their time and effort into adapting to the host society by learning the language and securing a job, changes occur, depending on personal, social and cognitive variables.

Our aim for this paper is to explore the mental health implications of migration by analysing the current research literature, and to make suggestions for future empirical research, practitioners and policy makers. This review looks at the mental health outcomes that appear in migrant populations and the factors that trigger mental health conditions.

1. Theoretical Conceptualization of Acculturation

Acculturation is defined as "the dual process of cultural and psychological change that takes place as a result of contact between two or more cultural groups and their individual members" (Berry, 2015, p. 520). The same author argues that acculturation is "a process that

parallels many features of the process of socialization" (2015, p. 520). Acculturation is linked to variables such as aspects of the heritage culture, to characteristics of migrants themselves, to their status, level of education before migration, the languages they speak, to the particularities of the receiving culture (Crockett & Zamboanga, 2009). A determinant of immigrant adaptation to the host culture is the degree of similarity the host culture has with the heritage one (Rudmin, 2003).

Social contact triggers processes such as learning new skills adapted to the new culture, inter-personal relations, coping with unfamiliar circumstances, managing stressful events and going through affective, behavioural and cognitive changes (Ward et al., 2001). "Cultural changes (which are at the core of the notion of acculturation) range from relatively superficial changes in what is eaten or worn, to deeper ones involving language shifts, religious conversions, and fundamental alterations to value systems" (Berry, 1997, p. 17). The changes that take place can unfold in any multicultural context, especially if we think of globalization (Arnett, 2002). Berry (2003, 2005) developed probably the most cited model of acculturation of all times, a bidimensional framework which follows two plans: one is *maintenance of heritage culture*, and the second one is *development of new cultural relations* in the host/receiving culture. The framework shows the influence of employment-related issues on personal psychological well-being and satisfaction, which will influence the adaptation and integration process in the new environment.

Intercultural contact will invariably lead to stress, as the process take place over time, and involves numerous variables such as the migrant's personality, or environmental elements. These elements have been described in Arends-Tóth and van de Vijver's Framework of Acculturation, which looks at acculturation conditions and orientations that result in outcomes such as sociocultural competences and psychological well-being (Arends-Tóth & van de Vijver, 2006; Celenk & van de Vijver, 2011).

In summary, previous empirical psychological studies show that acculturation is a bidimensional variable of complex nature, a dynamic process of change (Lincoln et al., 2017) that can impact the behaviours of migrants and their mental health. With this review article, we intend to further explore and describe how these processes unfold in practice and how they have been captured by experimental and research designs.

2. Acculturation *and Mental Health*

The current literature offers diverse findings on the relationship between mental health and migrant acculturation. Personal characteristics of individuals, contextual factors, family support, acculturation styles and even reasons for migration can impact mental health outcomes (Lincoln et al., 2017). One author identified life satisfaction as being the outcome of the mediated relationship between adaptation and acculturation orientations (Stanciu, 2017), while another article cited acculturation as a predictor of help-seeking behaviour among migrants (Kim, 2007). A recent systematic review that looked at the four acculturation strategies from Berry's model found that marginalization has the most detrimental effects on migrants' mental health, compared to integration, which delivers the most positive impact (Choy et al., 2021).The availability of material and financial resources, a high educational level, development of resilience to stressors or opportunities to develop have been identified as *protective factors* in the existing literature (WHO, 2018). Although "one of the great challenges of migration is managing migrants' health needs" (Nørredam, 2015, p. 1), many countries developed procedures and means of supporting health needs. Services such as Médecins Sans Frontières' training programs in Germany or their

integrated medical support service for people who have been tortured in Greece or the Transcultural tele-psychiatry bilingual support offered in Denmark have all proven invaluable for the local migrant communities (WHO, 2018). Such efforts could compensate when international legislation, such as article 23 of the Refugee Convention or article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, are not always upheld (Abbas et al., 2018).

2.1. Mental Health in Psychological Literature

Previous research shows that acculturation "involves a complex set of processes that appear to have differential impact on mental health outcomes" (Koneru et al., 2007, p. 76). Illnesses and poor mental health in workers have a negative social and economic impact on both individuals and the society (Devkota et al., 2020). But access to mental health services can be regarded as an equality issue, especially for migrants, due to the difficulties and restrictions they face when in need of professional help. There are many reasons for which people are discouraged from seeking support, such as "cultural explanation of mental illness, shame and stigma, psychosomatic symptom presentation, help-seeking preference, effect of discrimination, lack of recognition by general practitioners, a lack of accessibility to linguistically and culturally appropriate mental health services" (Fang, 2010, p.152).

Consistent research has shown that positive emotions help people improve their mental health by an increase in well-being (Fredrickson, 2001) and can undo lingering negative feelings (the *undoing hypothesis,* Fredrickson & Levenson, 1998). Findings from positive psychology have demonstrated how people facing adversity can cope better through positive beliefs and positive affect, by building up their personal resource called *resilience* (Aspinwall, 2001). As a result, all of these positive changes determine an increase in emotional well-being (Fredrickson, 2001).

2.2. Empirical findings in Mental Health research

Early research on the importance of access to the labour market revealed the effect these concepts have on mental health, "alienated immigrants whose failure to obtain steady employment at a level commensurate with their qualifications combined to social isolation and lack of acculturation generate deep-seated dissatisfaction" (Richmond, 1974, p. 47). Unemployment and depressive affect have been shown to impact each other, in the sense that a person who suffers from depression will find it more difficult to stay employed, and also job loss can be triggered by depressive symptomatology (Beiser et al., 1993). More recent studies show the impact of perceived discrimination (Brüß**,** 2008) or ethnic discrimination in day to day lives of migrants (Thijssen, 2019).

Demographic data carry a high level of significance in data analysis. Muñoz (2017) confirmed that the acculturation process will be easier for younger people compared to older individuals, but the risk is higher for the early age migrants to suffer later in their lives from trauma-related problems, stress and other mental health issues. Other variables that can impact young migrants' mental health are traumatic events pre-migration or socio-economic deprivation as a result of the resettlement process (Oppedal et al., 2020). Stanciu (2017) remarked that positive well-being can be significantly impacted by "migration during emerging adulthood" (p. 173). The researchers revealed that, when young children migrate (whether forcibly displaced or not), they can adapt better, as they will go through the educational system, acquire the new language, values and practices easily, compared to adolescents or adults (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). Other studies

showed that children of migrants are "at risk of underachieving in school" (Phalet & Baysu, 2020, p. 1). Adult migrants will retain memories, values, traditions from back home, and might be reticent or just encounter difficulties to fully integrating (Schwartz et al., 2006).

In terms of gender, Beiser and Edwards (1994) noted that women are more prone to develop emotional issues compared to men. More recent studies on gender differences found that migration and acculturation, alongside psychiatric disorders, can generate adaptative differences and stress (Müller & Koch, 2017). First generation migrants are at greater risk of developing negative mental health outcomes, compared to natives (Close et al., 2016). Language proficiency is cited as one of the major barriers for refugees or economic immigrants, issue that can be addressed by local and national authorities by information campaigns and materials translated into the languages of migrant residents (Özvarış, 2020).

Another issue is that migrants are "more likely than the majority population to have unmet needs for public mental health services" (Markova et al., 2020). The same study showed that, if utilized, help-seeking sources are usually connected to the immigrants' community, such as religious leaders, family members, friends, etc., and the more acculturated a person is, the more they will seek support from formal sources, such as medical professionals. In general, immigrants have low utilization rates of specialist mental healthcare (Abebe et al., 2017) and they can be more at risk than natives or have higher morbidity rates (Nørredam, 2015).

More recent studies have shown that migrant workers usually report higher risks of "developing adverse mental health conditions than non-migrant workers" (Devkota et al., 2020, p. 2). For example, depression had higher levels in first generation migrants (5% to 44%) than in natives (8 to 12%) and anxiety levels ranged from 4 to 40% compared to around 5% in the general population (Close et al., 2016). A systematic review revealed that acculturation is correlated with increased substance use and abuse (Koneru et al., 2007). In addition, immigrants can develop mental health issues due to adverse living conditions, unsuitable working settings, unhealthy lifestyles or even issues with their families who live in their native countries. From a financial point of view, losses amount for both businesses and workers, if the latter need to take sick leave, suffer from absenteeism or low productivity (Di Castro et al., 2018). Refugees are a *risk group* that exhibits a high incidence of trauma-related mental health problems, with psychological symptoms that can be associated with difficulties in the integration process (Schick et al., 2016). Trauma has been associated with "worse symptoms of depression, as expected, and older age was found to attenuate the relationship between trauma and depression symptoms" (Lincoln et al., 2017, p. 7). Even so, research demonstrated that being a refugee is not an additional risk factor that determines suicide, compared to native populations (Hollander et al., 2020).

Discussions

Knowing these factors is not enough, as researchers, employers, policy-makers and even migrants need to be able to identify and address them (Devkota et al., 2020), to prevent and address physical or mental illness. Prevention of negative mental health outcomes, that refers to delaying, lessening and stopping symptoms, includes measures such as a focus on group interventions in the community, long-term prevention programs, family-strengthening initiatives (Weine, 2011), promoting social integration, facilitating engagement with services and overcoming social and linguistic barriers in accessing health support (World Health Organization, 2018). Very

few studies look at the issue from the perspective of health professionals (Staniforth & Such, 2019), which could support a wider variability of findings and potentially more targeted solutions.

The results of empirical studies show, in most cases, the migrants' subjective perceptions on the care they receive, but few studies address the perspective health professionals hold. A recent study revealed the inequalities and the wider social issues that affect migrants' health, which often is not viewed as a priority (Staniforth & Such, 2019). A systematic review conducted in Pakistan identified the main barriers that generate an underutilization of mental health services, such as financial/time/distance constraints, stigma related to asking for help, low knowledge on the topic, potential side-effects or a dissatisfaction from previous medical procedures, a reliance on healers and lack of social support (Choudhry et al., 2021).

Clinical psychology gives researchers the tools to prioritize mental health, such as early identification, treatment and preventative measures. It is important to understand if the basic rights of migrants are respected, and how much of this reality is captured by empirical research, so that conclusions can be drawn regarding migrant integration, policy evolution and health management.

Conclusions

Our goal for this article is to propose an integrated view of the implications of acculturation on mental health in the case of immigrants. It is important for practitioners to understand what needs migrants have, for researchers why mental and health issues arise so they can further study and how we can help migrants to achieve higher levels on integration. Better health in migrant populations will result in more productive, satisfied and adapted workers, who are able to function better in foreign countries, and put less pressure on the medical systems. As well, through improved intergroup relations, individuals will be able to feel more supported, less alone or less vulnerable during their stay in the receiving cultures.

If we think of public mental health, it is essential that more research is conducted on young migrants' acculturation, adaptation-related risks, risk and protective factors. Young children, especially unaccompanied minor refugees, are at greater risk, and without appropriate support, they cannot become functional and healthy members of the society.

In order to suitably support immigrants' mental health needs, it is imperative to design services considering ethnic differences, the degree of language proficiency and adaptation of the individuals we try to help, and to raise awareness as to make these services available within the community. Usually, the hardest to reach, such as marginalized groups of migrants, are the ones who need the most support, but don't know if, how or where to access it to their benefit. Longitudinal studies can better reflect the impact of outreach services, and they are recommended to cross-sectional designs. Follow-up studies can also reveal the efficacy of prevention measures, or the impact acculturation styles and acculturative stressors impact migrants' lives in the host countries. Finally, we encourage research that embodies diverse cultural experiences, accurate measurements of variables and the diversification of both research methods and practical applications of theories by specialists.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Cristina Matiuţa and Raluca Viman-Miller (Eds.), *The War in Ukraine and its Impact on Global Politics and Security*, Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2023, 269 pages, ISBN 978-606-37-1958-5

Alina - Carmen BRIHAN

The War in Ukraine and its Impact on Global Politics and Security is a valuable book that was accomplished under the joint coordination of Cristina Matiuţa and Raluca Viman-Miller, associate professors at the University of Oradea and University of North Georgia, respectively. The book masterly reunites the works of eleven academics from Romanian and American universities, mainly from the home universities of the two editors, but also from other three Romanian universities - Babeș-Bolyai University, University of Bucharest and West University Timișoara.

The nine chapters of the book approach, as the editors stated in the *Introduction*, „different perspectives of the impact that the war in Ukraine has on global politics and security issues" (p. 7). Therefore, the chapters deal with topics rearding: the changes in the European security environment as a result of the war in Ukraine; the impact of the war in Ukraine and Russia's nuclear threats on the proliferation of nuclear weapons; the effective prosecution of the war crimes against Russia, by Ukraine; the European model of national minorities' protection in the case of Ukraine; the impact of the war on other regions of the world - as East Asia (with reference to the relation between China and Taiwan) and Sub-Saharan Africa (with regard to this region's reactions towards Russian military aggression against Ukraine); its impact on neighboring countries such as Romania – with reference to the role of Romanian state and non-state actors in protecting the Ukrainian refugees; or the issue of Russian disinformation campaign and the means to combat it.

The analysis of the chapters has illustrated the consistent use of theoretical approaches and their application to significant case studies; of arguments formulation based on evidence and on the comprehensive analysis of the past and present evolutions of an issue, as well as the formulation of viable scenarious; or of different research methods – as the application of semi-structured interviews, all of these being complemented by the solid expertize or by steady research interests of the authors with regard to the topics of the chapters prepared for the present book.

In the fhe first chapter, *The War in Ukraine and the Changes to European Security*, Craig Greathouse examines the changes in the European security environment since the start of the war in Ukraine, having the convinction that „no matter the eventual outcome", this war „will change the foundations of regional security within the European continent going forward" (p. 13).

In this regard, the author appeals to the systemic elements (the relative material power, the openness of the system, and the clarity of the system for state action) of the neoclassical realism theory to explain the current European security situation and to predict viable outcomes (stalemate, cease fire, victory) going forward. After thoroughly analyzing, from a theoretical

perspective (pp. 14-18), the neoclassical realism theory and its three systemic elements (Waltz, 1979; Rose, 1998; Ripsman et al., 2016, etc.), Craig Greathouse applies these systemic elements to the security environment of Europe prior to the start of the Ukrainian war, in 2022 (pp. 18-24), and then up to May 2023 (pp. 24-31). So, along the mentioned period, the security environment of Europe has evolved, according to the author, as follows: regarding the relative material power (in Russia, it can be noticed a shift regarding the military and economic sides, but it still retains its nuclear capacity and holds and economic advantage in the export of energy; Ukraine has also suffered significant damage to its conventional military power, but in the same time it benefited from the support of different states outside of the war – the EU member states, USA, etc. – as regards the military equipment transfers, humanitarian assistance, or economic grants); referring the issue of permissiveness in the international system (there has been a shift from a more permissive system to a more restrictive strategic environment, as states have clearly taken sides in the conflict whether they are active participants or not; the strengthening solidarity of the NATO and EU membership with Ukraine has caused a deterioration of Russia's position in the balance of power element); and concerning the clarity of the system for state action (Russia established a clear line of what it will not accept from the US and European states, while „NATO and the EU have drawn much more bright lines about what they are willing to do to confront and limit Russian actions") (p. 30). Therefore, the author states that the outbreak of the Ukrainian war „has clarified the systemic level analysis" that neoclassical realist model provides, and each „of the three variables has seen an evolution" from the period prior to the war, to spring 2023: rebalancing of the relative material capabilities for most of the states in Europe; the permissiveness of the European region has contracted, and the lines within Europe have been hardened and a more aggressive balance of power engagement by states was underway; the clarity in the region regarding opportunities and limitations has increased (p. 31).

Following this analysis, Craig Greathouse focuses on three predictions (pp. 31-35), based on the neoclassical realist model: stalemate - considered as a highly plausible outcome in the mid and long term, means that neither Ukraine, nor Russia, will be able to achieve their current objectives, and in the same time it means a continued fighting between them, even if maybe at a reduced level; cease fire - means that neither side is able to win decisively; and victory for one of the sides – the less probable scenario in the mid-term. According to the neoclassical realist model and to its systemic elements, the perspectives for the author's predictions look as follows: the stalemate would bring a degradation of the relative material capabilities of both Ukraine and Russia, a balance of power more defined and less flexible, a permissiveness of the system decreased in terms of strategic options and an increased clarity of the system; while the cease fire – would ease the material demands on both Ukraine, and Russia, and allow them to rebuild military capacity and focus on economic growth, the clarity of a ceasefire would be significant for the system, and both sides would move to balance against incursions into their spheres of influence.

In conclusion, despite its limitations (that regard also its predictive capacity), the neoclassical realist model succeeds in offering very important insights on the causes, the evolution and the impact of the war in Ukraine on the European continent.

The second chapter, *Nuclear Weapons and Russia's War with Ukraine*, deals with the impact of the war in Ukraine and Russia's nuclear threats on the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

After presenting the Russia's modernization process of its strategic and non-strategic nuclear forces started in the early 2000s, that is supposed to reach its completion at the end of 2020s (pp. 42-43), Seyed Hamidreza Serri focuses on Russia's nuclear deterrence policy and, in detail, on the three interpretations of Russia's nuclear doctrine (the escalate to de-escalate strategy, the traditional deterrence approach, and the escalation management strategy). The first interpretation - the escalate to de-escalate strategy, shared across the political spectrum in the U.S., „relies on the utilization of explicit or implicit threats involving nuclear weapons, including limited use of such weapons, as a means to coerce adversaries into accepting terms favorable to Russia" (p. 44). According to the second interpretation - the traditional deterrence approach, the escalate to de-escalate strategy is considered „wrong and dangerous", so „Russia's current nuclear strategy largely aligns with its previous nuclear policies" (p. 45). In the same time, the proponents of this approach appeal to the joint statement of the five nuclear-weapon states, from 2022, on preventing the nuclear war. The third interpretation - the escalation management strategy, points out that „even if nuclear weapons play an important role in Russia's deterrence policy, Russia's overreliance on nuclear weapons has significantly decreased during the last decades" (p. 46). Therefore, Russia's use of nuclear weapons in Ukraine is analyzed in relation with the place where the Ukraine conflict falls in the security spectrum: Peacetime, Military Threat, Local War, Regional War, Large-Scale War, and Nuclear War (pp. 46-47).

To the question whether Russia would use nuclear weapons against Ukraine, and if yes, how this will happen, the author appeals to the three interpretations mentioned above. Therefore, according to the escalate to de-escalate strategy, „Russia will be inclined to use nuclear weapons against Ukraine to de-escalate the situation and avert defeat" (p. 47). According to the second interpretation - the traditional deterrence approach, „unless the prospect of a nuclear exchange between Russia and the U.S. and NATO rises, Russia is unlikely to use nuclear weapons against Ukraine" (p. 48), while according to the third interpretation - the escalation management strategy, „Russia will use nuclear weapons if the Ukraine war moves from a local war to a regional or a large-scale war or if the territorial integrity of Russia is threatened" (p. 48).

Stating that „regardless of whether Russia uses nuclear weapons in Ukraine, the mere fact that Russia has repeatedly invoked the threat of nuclear weapons in a conventional war against a nonnuclear-weapon state will contribute to a new drive among non-nuclearweapon states to reconsider their non-nuclear status", Seyed Hamidreza Serri analyzes the implications of the disregard of the 1994 Budapest Memorandum by Russia, in the context of the war in Ukraine, for the proliferation of nuclear weapons, as well as the nuclear doctrines of Russia and of other nuclear-weapon states – U.S., United Kingdom, France, China, India, Pakistan and North Korea (pp. 50-55).

In conclusion, the author states that, in the coming decades, the nuclear-weapon states' reliance on nuclear weapons will increase and the international system will likely transition to a multipolar world. Also, in case that Russia will use nuclear weapons against Ukraine, „the world will likely witness a new wave of nuclear proliferation. The more nuclear-weapon states use force and threats against non-nuclear-weapon countries, the more justifiable nuclear weapons will become for non-nuclear-weapon states" (pp. 57-58).

In the third chapter, *Effective Prosecutions of War Crimes in Domestic Courts: Prospects for Transitional Justice in Ukraine*, Jonathan S. Mine aims to answer the question whether Ukraine will succeed in effectively prosecuting the war crimes against Russia. Therefore, in his endeavour,

the author applies a set of six domestic factors to the case of Ukraine: the continuing power of the perpetrators, the institutional and governmental support for prosecution, the legitimacy and independence of the instances responsible for prosecution and trial, the role of agency of victims and human rights organizations, the social attitudes towards accountability, and the passage of time, to whom he adds two international factors: the international cooperation in the development and use of legal tools, and the systemic and structural gaps of the international legal system (p. 69).

The application of these domestic and international factors to the Ukraine case, has led to the following conclusions (pp. 69-84): in Ukraine, it can be noticed an effort to remove the politicians and oligarchs who might be seen as perpetrators, and the country manifests an adherence to the constitution and rule of law (first domestic factor); both at internal and international levels, the Ukrainian politicians and leaders of the legal system express support for domestic prosecution of war crimes against Russia (second domestic factor); in Ukraine it can be noticed a positive trend regarding the legitimacy and independence of the bodies responsible for prosecution and trial (third domestic factor); the victims' groups and international human rights organizations are bringing attention to crimes being committed in Ukraine (fourth domestic factor); the public opinion polls show that social attitudes towards Ukrainian nationalism and accountability for crimes against its citizens is on the rise (fifth domestic factor); the sixth factor is not a current issue for Ukraine, but the author states that „the sensitivity of these issues and the difficulties in gathering evidence, witnesses, and broaching issues of accountability with the population at large are common reasons for a significant passage of time before trials are conducted" (p. 79); Ukraine benefits of international political support, assistance in gathering evidence, and coordination in prosecution with international courts, from IGOs, NGOs and states with expertise in these matters, to prosecute war crimes against Russia (first international factor); the systemic and structural gaps of the international legal system are a successful tool used by the Russian Federation to avoid accountability (second international factor).

After this in-depth analyzis of the eight domestic and international factors, applied to the case of Ukraine, Jonathan S. Mine declares that "Ukraine possesses a favorable chance of fair and successful prosecution of Russian war crimes" (p. 69).

The fourth chapter, *Cross-Strait Tensions in the Shadow of Global Conflict: Mainland China, Taiwan, and Lessons from the Ukraine Invasion*, is opened with Laurel Wei's inquiry whether the Russian invasion of Ukraine will cause a similar action from China against Taiwan, in the coming years.

With a national reunification plan (of integrating Taiwan into the People's Republic of China's territory) - aimed to be realized by 2049, by China, and with an increasing inclination towards autonomy in recent years, by Taiwan, the perspectives of their relations are analyzed through a combined theoretical approach of Realism, Neoliberalism, and Constructivism.

After an overview on China's positioning in the Russian – Ukrainian war, by Russia's side, and on this conflict's implications for the China – Taiwan relations, the author is approaching the differing attitudes towards the ongoing war, held by China and Taiwan. China's international partnerships, its alignment with Russia, its readiness to facilitate peace negotiations while concurrently providing de facto economic and diplomatic support to Russia, its refrain from drawing parallels between Ukraine and Taiwan, its opposition to unilateral Western sanctions against Russia, its desire to inhibit NATO's continued expansion, its geostrategic rivalry with the U.S., or the Chinese citizens' perspectives on the conflict echoing China's official position, are

some of the aspects that benefit of an in-depth analysis by the author (pp. 97-102). On the other side, opposite to China's attitude and actions, Taiwan has maintained a more explicit position towards the war, from its government to civil society, consistently standing firmly with Ukraine, it has provided humanitarian aid to Ukraine, it has been manifesting profound concern about a potential Chinese invasion of the island, but also determination to defend its autonomy, freedom, and democracy (pp. 102-105).

A special attention is given to China's national reunification main objective, unequivocal since 1949. According to this doctrine, there is only one China, the People's Republic of China (P.R.C.), with Taiwan as an integral art of its sovereign territory, so China has made of the recognition of this principle the precondition of all its diplomatic relations (p. 106). The author focused, in detail, on the evolution and the current state of the cross-strait relations, presently China employing a comprehensive strategy prioritizing cooperation and dialogue, and ensuring preparedness for potential military conflict if deemed necessary (p. 109), while Taiwan is making significant steps towards democratic consolidation and expresses a lack of desire to join P.R.C. The impact of China's 2023 military exercises around Taiwan, Taiwan's relations with U.S. – its most crucial international partner and collaborator, the assymmetric economic interdependence between China and Taiwan, or the nature of their diplomatic relations (pp. 112-116) are also topics that have been thoroughly analyzed with regard to the development of the cross-strait relations.

Three main scenarios - military conflict, political coercion and peaceful integration – are used to illustrate the possible future of China-Taiwan bilateral relations. The first scenario – the military conflict, could take the form of a comprehensive military invasion of Taiwan, by China, intended to compel the island's reunification with mainland China, invasion that – by drawing in the U.S. and its allies (as Japan and Australia), is considered to generate a significant regional conflict with potentially catastrophic outcomes (p. 117); or of limited military actions – that, over the last decades, China has routinely engaged in (missile tests, extended military drills), in order to intimidate Taiwan (p. 119). The second scenario – the political coercion, China might opt to persist with its present strategy, gradually eroding Taiwan's sovereignty through military, economic, diplomatic, and political pressure (p. 121); to China, pursuing the strategy of political coercion featuring isolation through a blockade, diplomacy, and disinformation would undermine the chances of an immediate escalation to a full-scale invasion (p. 123). Regarding the third scenario – the peaceful integration, although highly unlikely, remains the ideal outcome for China, as it would avoid using force and escalating regional tension, and would make it the option with the lowest risks and costs (p. 124). In the end, the author states that „these scenarios are not mutually exclusive", and the future of China - Taiwan relations could embody elements of each (p. 126).

In conclusion, Laurel Wei points out aspects as: it is in China's best interest to discourage comparisons between Taiwan and Ukraine, as this would imply acknowledging the island's sovereign status, and to continue to treat the Taiwan issue as Chinese domestic politics (p. 127); that Russia's war in Ukraine offers to China offers a more realistic preview of the costs China could likely incur if it were to resort to war against Taiwan; or that, in order to avoid war, China should act cautiously and tactically, by utilizing a hybrid approach involving limited military actions, political coercion, and persuasion (negotiation) (pp. 128-129).

In the fifth chapter, *My Enemy's Enemy is (Likely to Become) My Friend: Perceptions of the Russian War in Ukraine in Sub-Saharan Africa*, Marius-Mircea Mitrache and Sergiu Mișcoiu

examine the reactions in Sub-Saharan Africa towards Russian military aggression against Ukraine.

To the reserved attitude of the Sub-Saharan countries towards the war contributed both the increase of Russia's presence and involvement in African internal affairs, and a growing anti-West (and especially anti-French) sentiment in the region (p. 137). But as the official reaction of the Sub-Saharan countries to the Russian - Ukrainian war was displayed publicly during the five major votes of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) on this issue (during March 2022 and February 2023), the authors scrutinize the voting pattern of the African countries on the five votes and affirm that the UNGA votes showed „that Russia was neither isolated, nor unanimously condemned, as the West had claimed" (pp. 138-139). In this regard, the evolution of Russia's involvement in Africa, since the Cold War up to nowadays, is carefully analized through: the focus on Russia's support for the liberation movements of the African nations (during the '50s); Russia's efforts „to educate a Soviet-friendly intelligentsia and foster a Soviet-Third World alliance" at Patrice Lumumba University (starting from the '60s); its change of approach towards the region by favoring a more realist policy, based on economic and geopolitical interests, that implied also support for politically and military pro-Soviet governments (during the '70s); the exploatation and fueling of the instability of the African continent, from the mid-'70s; a disengagement from African continent, and even a lack of interest towards it, after the coming to power of Gorbachev; the dissolution of the U.S.S.R. and the presidency of Boris Yeltsin that marked the vanishment of Russia's presence and influence in Africa (pp. 143-146). Russia's return on the African continent in the first decade of the 2000s, was justified by Putin's desire to project there „military power and diplomatic influence, through various, political, economic, security, bilateral, and informational instruments of its foreign policy" (p. 147).

The originality of the paper is increased by the empirical research through semi-direct interviews carried out by the authors with 23 officials from all the major regions of Sub-Saharan Africa. Built around three main arguments (a nuanced reading of the war in Ukraine, rejecting the narrative of the North, and the enemies of the enemies becoming friends?), the answers provided by the African officials (pp. 155-159) show that „many of these officials assert or endorse talking points from the Russian narrative of the unfolding events" (p. 161).

The sixth chapter, *The European model of national minorities' protection in the case of Ukraine - Romania as a kin-state*, begins with Radu Carp's affirmation that „The issue of national minorities was, since 1991, one of the most difficult that Ukraine was confronted with" (p. 157).

The protection of national minorities, in Ukraine, is regulated by the Constitution, by different laws and Ukraine is part of the Council of Europe instruments in this area. The beginning of war in Ukraine and the independence of the Donetsk and Lugansk republics showed the consequences of the lack of solutions for identity related problems for a long period (p. 169); in the same time, it is affirmed that Ukraine still considers that the national minorities are influenced more by their kin-states than by Ukraine (p. 170). Therefore, Ukraine's objective after the war will be the formation of a new civic identity, less based on the affirmation of national identities. But, the author states that the reality contradicts this purpose, as there is a gap between the „optimistic statements of President Zelensky on the fate of national minorities after the war and the concrete steps in the direction of harmonizing the legislation of Ukraine with the European model on the protection of national minorities" (p.170). The kin-states and those where kin minorities live are encouraged to conclude bilateral treaties for the protection of national minorities (p. 179). As a

consequence, one of the biggest challenges of Ukraine right now is to find the fairest report to all its citizens, in order to prove that it fulfils the same democratic standards as any EU Member State (p. 179).

The seventh chapter, *Human security in times of war: The role of the state and non-state actors in protecting the Ukrainian refugees in Romania*, deals with the role of state and non-state actors in protecting the war refugees, with a focus on the case of Ukrainian refugees from Romania.

For the beginning, Cristina Matiuța and Raluca Viman-Miller approach the subject of human security in the context of war, from a theoretical perspective, with respect to: the actors that provide or destroy human security – at different levels of analysis; the need of collaboration between security providers at all levels; the constitutive elements for achieving human security; the differences between concepts as national security, global security, and human security. Concepts like 'asylum seekers', 'refugees' and 'migrants' are carefully defined, while the term 'refugee' is going to be used in the authors' research, as the Ukrainian population displaced abroad by the Russian invasion is supported by the international community with an emergency legal framework meant to give them the best available support (pp. 185-188).

In order to attain the objective of analyzing the development of cooperation between the state and non-state actors in Romania, with respect to the Ukrainian refugees, two main directions have been put under analysis: Romanian state authority response to the Ukrainian crisis, and the role of non-state actors in the Ukrainian refugee's crisis. Regarding the first direction, at the very beginning, a decision-making task force under the coordination of the prime minister was established within the Romanian government from the first day of the conflict, necessary normative acts have been adopted by the Romanian government, then a second phase of medium-to long-term response has focused on the protection and inclusion of refugees who planned to remain in Romania (pp. 190-194). As regards the second direction, the non-state actors play a pivotal role in implementing governmental policies at ground level, a fact proved also in the case of Ukrainian refugees in Romania, when all the actors – individuals, NGOs, state structures, IGOs, international community formed a chain of support. Therefore, despite the fact that the Romanian civil society was able to accelerate its processes to address the influx of people, the Romanian government, although a bit slower than the civil society, proved much faster than expected in reacting to the emergency (pp. 194-195).

Combining content analysis and qualitative analysis (semi-structured interview), the research developed by the two authors represents an original endeavour that was carried on with the representatives from seven diverse NGOs from Romania. The topics tackled during the nine questions of the interview cover issues as: the organization's role in supporting refuges from Ukraine; the types and extent of support provided; the extent of experience the organization has collaborating with state actors and non-state actors (for example, citizens, volunteers and other NGOs); sources of financing and the difficulty to access such funding faced by the organization; and the organization's perception of what should be improved to make things work better (p. 190).

The answers to the semi-structured interviews highlighted good collaboration and a partnership between the two types of actors; the Romanian state and non-state actors' collaboration managed to provide the human security needed in this crisis despite low expectations from both sides; and the state authorities supported the NGOs to fulfill their role in assisting and protecting refugees, managing the crisis beyond expectations. Looking to the future,

the authors conclude that a collaboration of state and non-state actors is needed to further sensitize and mobilize public opinion and to combat populist discourses resulting from the continuation of war (pp. 206-207).

In the eighth chapter, *Disinformation, Narratives and Discourses about the War*, Nathan Price focuses, firstly, on the evolution of the Russian disinformation campaign about the war - for example, the promotion of a false equivalency between the conflict and World War II, the appeal to the Russkiy mir concept, the "denazification" of Ukraine is mentioned to be one of the primary goals of the conflict, etc. (pp. 212-214). But the dissemination of Kremlin's propaganda wouldn't be possible without the assistance of the Russian media; in these conditions, the Russian independent media becomes marginalized not only by the government – through a series of laws, but also by the Russian people (pp. 215-223). On the opposite side, as regards the Ukrainian narrative about the war, it is focused on presenting accounts of the bravery of Ukraine's military or of ordinary Ukrainian citizens, etc. (pp. 223-225). A particular attention is given also to the populist far-right in Europe, that has continued to enjoy electoral success in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, while the mainstream political parties seized on populist parties' ongoing affinity for Russia (pp. 234-235). In conclusion, Nathan Price states that despite a massive campaign of disinformation targeting support for Ukraine, public opinion remained generally stable and in strong support of continued economic assistance to Ukraine and continuing sanctions against Russia, a situation that brings into discussion democracy's resilience (p. 236).

In the nineth chapter, *The disinformation in the case of the Ukraine war*, Dan Apăteanu acknowledges that the war in Ukraine has been a source of widespread disinformation, with numerous false narratives and propaganda being spread through traditional and social media (p. 241), so his paper's aim is to analyze how disinformation has been used to create confusion, spread fear, and manipulate public opinion, and how it has contributed to the escalation of the conflict. In the same time, increased media literacy and critical thinking are necessary in order to counter the effects of disinformation and promote a more accurate understanding of the situation in Ukraine (p. 241).

The definition of disinformation, its classification, the role of technology and social media in spreading disinformation, all contribute to a better understanding of the concept and its impact. The disinformation campaigns related to the Ukraine War is analyzed taking into consideration the actions or reactions of each of the two countries: while Russia was using various tactics like deepfakes, manipulated images, forged documents, and targeted propaganda to spread false narratives, sow doubt, and weaken support for Ukraine (pp. 247-251), Ukraine took measures to counter disinformation and maintain credibility, particularly in the digital realm. In the same time, in collaboration with Ukraine, the European Commission has implemented various initiatives to combat disinformation and to foster a safer digital environment.

In conclusion, Dan Apăteanu states that combating disinformation requires international cooperation, information sharing, and the involvement of various stakeholders, including governments, civil society organizations, media outlets, and technology companies (p. 263).

After the succint presentation of the nine chapters of the book, we may say that *The War in Ukraine and its Impact on Global Politics and Security* has achieved its goal. The *impact* of the war in Ukraine has been, indeed, projected along the book in an original and consistent way, through the different topics and domains tackled, but also through the different analyzed states and international organizations, from different georaphical areas. In times of uncertaity regarding

the future development of the war in Ukraine, the prominent contributors to this book have applied the theoretical knowledge to specific case studies so that, through different scenarious, to deliver some „probable" or „improbable" situations for the medium and long term.

Therefore, the actuality and relevance of the topic – the war in Ukraine, and the authors' endeavour to approach its different facets, challenges and perspectives, has made the book an invaluable instrument for academics, researchers or students from different specializations – such as Political Science, International Relations, etc, but also for the specific research area of identity and migration issues.

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