University of Oradea

Journal of Identity and Migration Studies

University of Oradea Publishing House
Volume 20, number 1, May 2026

JOURNAL OF IDENTITY AND MIGRATION STUDIES

The *Journal of Identity and Migration Studies* (JIMS) is an online open-access review published semi-annually under the auspices of the Department of Political Science and Communication Sciences, University of Oradea, Romania.

JIMS - JOURNAL OF IDENTITY AND MIGRATION STUDIES
Department of Political Science and Communication Science
University of Oradea
Address:
University Street, No. 1
Oradea, 410087
Romania
Tel./Fax: +40 259 408 167
E-mail: journal.identity.migration@gmail.com
jims@uoradea.ro;
Website: www.jims.uoradea.ro

ISSN 1843 – 5610

CONTENTS

RESEARCH ARTICLES

Should I Help Or Should I Go? Is Volunteering Linked With The Migration Intention Of South-East European Youth?

Sergiu A. URSA

Abstract. Young people in South-Eastern Europe have a lot of particularities, two of them being that they volunteer less (FES 2019) and migrate a lot (Williams et al. 2017). While volunteering increases civic participation (B. Davies 2019), leading to a person's increased will to change and be mobile; it also creates a sense of belonging (Kragt 2022), which then diminishes the desire to leave the community. Yet, no research has addressed the relationship between volunteering and migration intention, despite the fact that, recently, there has been an increase of interest in research addressing the question of migrants doing volunteering (Alfieri et al. 2019; Baillie Smith et al. 2019; Sime and Behrens 2023).

Using a 2018 youth database collected by Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung in ten countries from South-Eastern Europe, we address this lack of research between individual volunteering rates and the migration intention of young people in the region.

Individual volunteering does seem to have an effect on migration intention, but that effect becomes non-significant when other metrics are taken into account. When checking for different volunteering rates, there are significant differences between youth who volunteers sporadically and those who do so periodically. As such, my research suggests that there exists a moderator effect of volunteering on migration intentions, affecting a young person's view of their country's democratic identity and their own wellbeing within it.

Keywords: youth, volunteering, migration, south-eastern Europe, democracy

Introduction

Everyone has been young at some point, and we feel a sort of nostalgia towards that period, so much so that in recent years, research and policy interest in young people has increased significantly. However, in many parts of the world still, young people remain under strenuous conditions. This paper has a particular interest in South-Eastern Europe (SEE) youth, who grow up through significantly increased expectations, as now they must thrive in an ever-accelerating world, where it is assumed that only the most mobile, either cognitively, economically, or physically, can survive (Reiter and Steiner 2016). Mobility itself is not devoid of risks, as several young people need to migrate in precarious conditions (Ferrara et al. 2016; Marcu 2014; Adamović and Potočnik 2022), with uncertaintainties about their future success, even if they go through with their migration process (Doumas and Avery 2024). In his research on Eastern European students going to Denmark, (Ginnerskov-Dahlberg 2021) shows that even after their insertion in the

educational and working fields, some young people still do not view this as a worthwhile experience.

To be mobile in your youth means to be flexible within all of your forward movement choices: education, career, location, relationships etc. This very complicated process can happen either as part of their developmental process, or for various socioeconomic reasons, such as pursuing academia, finding a job, finding their own place, developing themselves, or in search for meaning (Belmonte and McMahon 2019), although recently, also because of environmental reasons (Drago 2017). Some scholars also argue that migration could be used as a mechanism of prolonging youth or your own developmental process, through education or new experiences (Doumas and Avery 2024). Other scholars argue that the inherent definition of what it means to be a mobile individual is wrong, and that the current tools that we use are too tied to transnational exchanges, so much so that we are missing the point of an individuals' relationships, networks, and previous mobilities which could explain their desire to eventually migrate transnationally (Mazzucato 2024).

Volunteering seems to have the opposite effects to migration, even though it works through the same mechanism of network-building (Gil-Lacruz et al. 2015), by increasing your subjective well-being and desire to be active within your community (Nursey-Bray et al. 2022). It also helps answer the same question for a young person in their process of becoming adult – what is my purpose? (Baillie Smith et al. 2019). Regardless of what it means for a young person to be a volunteer: (1) to develop yourself, to satisfy your intrinsic desires and your career chances, (2) to devote yourself for a cause, or your own ideas of righteousness, or to (3) appreciate the process of helping, and making friends, or (4) gaining short/long-term benefits, most of the time, volunteering does not happen alone (Heley et al. 2022). This suggests that the mechanism of meaning-making or community-building for volunteers happens in groups (Haski-Leventhal and Cnaan 2009), which implicitly ties volunteering work to community-moderated effects.

This article makes two very important contributions to the current literature: (a) it checks what is the impact that volunteering[1] has on the intention to migrate, by analysing the relationship between volunteering time, and the number of volunteering organizations one devotes their time to; and (b) it checks which factors are the main drivers for migration for two categories of volunteers[2]: (1) strategic volunteers (those who volunteer scarcely and do it for a specific purpose, such as better employment or education opportunities, and with several organizations) and (2) community volunteers (those who dedicate a lot of time for volunteering, regardless of their reasons, usually within a few organisations).

Youth Migration In Europe

Even though Europe hosts merely 7% of the total youth population, the share of youth migrants across the continent of Europe is four times higher, at 27%. Of these, the share of total youth migrants increases in the category of 15 to 29 years old, and starts decreasing afterwards, with 60% of them coming from high-income countries, and 90% from either high or medium-income countries (Belmonte and McMahon 2019). Additionally, 10% of those who wish to migrate, have already made their plans to migrate (Migali and Scipioni 2018). This mobility of the very able

[1] Understood in a non-specific way (local vs. remote, physical vs. online, project or organization-based etc.).
[2] These categories are furthere explained in the next chapters.

is such a common phenomenon in Europe, that scholars have coined the term Eurostars – highly educated individuals who are mobile and agile within Europe, which move to fill important positions in Eurocities' centers of economic, political, or cultural development (Favell 2008). However, we should also note that the previous term is not devoid of elitism, as specific groups benefit disproportionately from extensive mobility capabilities within Europe (Hof 2019).

We consider that, regardless of their migration route, young people are affected by micro, meso, and macro-level factors (Czaika and Reinprecht 2022; Williams et al. 2017). Micro-level factors refer to socio-economic, demographic, and psychosocial elements; meso-level factors have family, networks, and societal components and macro-level factors refer to legal, cultural, and developmental factors.

The SEE migration research boomed after the EU's 2004 and 2007 expansions, which allowed for more transnational movements, as well as after the 2008 financial crisis, which created fertile ground for intra-EU mobilities, especially from East to West (King 2017, 4; Organiściak-Krzykowska 2017). This periphery-centre type of migration was disproportionately done by younger people (Williams et al. 2017), affecting the economic and demographic evolution of both home and host countries. Out of all of them, Poland and Romania have had the biggest total migration among Eastern countries (Van Mol 2016, 1308), followed by Bulgaria (Organiściak-Krzykowska 2017, 168); while Croatia and Hungary are the highest providers of the Central countries (Lulle et al. 2019, 1726–29; Organiściak-Krzykowska 2017, 171); and Albania and Kosovo are the biggest from the Balkans (Stojanovski et al. 2023, 275–76). In a nutshell, as another scholar has put it, you can either migrate for a better life, or forever expect that a market economy deity will come rescue you (Roberts 2016, 51).

On the other side, indefinite migration might not have the best benefits for oneself. Disappointed by a mismatch between the reality and expectations inside the new society, young people are often constrained to either assume different identities, or to actually lie to their peers about the status of their "successful" migration (Doumas and Avery 2024). If they then try to extend their duration in the host country, hoping for better social integration, it appears that both their levels of confidence, and skill acquisition decrease over time (Lulle et al. 2019). This means that the best strategy a young person has is to migrate several times, adhering to the 6 months – 3 years timeframe when they develop the most.

Research shows that migration routes are also sometimes fragile, being affected by anything from a change in perspective, to changing personal or group conditions, to public policies (O'Reilly et al. 2015; Stojanovski et al. 2023). The biggest threat is, as some researchers argue, the breakdown of some of the networks used for the original migration, either between the individual who migrated and its network, or within the network itself (Herz and Altissimo 2021). This would suggest that, although there are many benefits to migration, there are also some threaths and downsides, so staying could be as equally beneficial to young people. Some data shows that those who remain in their country could have a chance for an increase positive affect and well-being, especially when migration is a common path inside the country, and when there are remittances involved; yet there has been no reduction in the onset of stress and depression caused by missing those who leave (Ivlevs 2015). As such, their relations with those who leave cannot be the sole explainer of their more positive overall state.

All things considered, if you choose to stay, you need a "survival" strategy; and I propose that one such viable strategy is volunteering, which was shown to better help a young individual

integrate into the community (Nursey-Bray et al. 2022), increase their network/ human capital (Gil-Lacruz et al. 2015, 2), and improve their well-being (Plagnol and Huppert 2010, 161–62). Volunteering can also be seen as a process of identity or sense-making (Baillie Smith et al. 2019, 1366–67; Kragt 2022, 60), which helps the young person find their unique place, and make them stay. However, no researcher had the opportunity to check what effect volunteering has had on the intention to migrate of young people in SEE, as we can expect that volunteering, through the previously-mentioned mechanisms, could either impede or support mobilities.

Youth Volunteering In Europe

Here, volunteering has its own quirks: socio-cultural, related to democratic values (Wilson 2012, 192) and moral-ethical, related to the spread of Christian values (Cesaltina et al. 2010, 4–6). These quirks get morphed the more east you go, where the communist regimes made it so that the majority of the population was forced into voluntary activities, which made them despise the idea of "free labour" (Silló 2016, 103). For this reason, following the author's recommendations, I will analyse young people, as they are most likely to volunteer against their parents communist view of volunteering, regardless of the type of organization (Silló 2016, 99). Most of the times, youth are also the only ones prone to accepting a new narrative that puts forth the advantages and rewards of volunteering (Silló 2016, 108), as they are equally able to do so while migrating (Lulle et al. 2019, 1730).

Already, from the beginning of the century, volunteers in Europe, particularly young volunteers, who were more flexible and gathered digital skills more easily, have begun to transition their views on what volunteering meant. "Old(er)" types of volunteering did not get lost in the process, but its intertwining with a fast-paced world gave birth to a new, reflexive type of volunteering that has emerged as an alternative to the membership-based, high-intensity, impact-driven means of helping (Hustinx and Lammertyn 2003). This hypothesis was later tested in some countries (Sengupta et al. 2023; Eimhjellen et al. 2018; Smith et al. 2010) and held ground. Based on this factor, it is probable to expect that these two categories of volunteers would behave differently also when it comes to their desire to migrate.

For example, the newer group of volunteering-type, which I would also call strategic volunteering, were shown to carefully handpick the types of volunteering that are trendy, or widely contribute to "development" (Georgeou and Haas 2019; Yea 2018), could use this strategy of survival, into ensuring that they qualify for a better workplace later (Jones 2011). As youth themselves becomes more instrumentalized in public and private policies worldwide, they could instrumentalize volunteering, particularly abroad volunteering, as a means for social success and the climbing in social ranks. This type of volunteering was also shown to improve the chance of reaching educational objectives (Pantea 2013). On the other side, critics have noted that Bourdieu's concept of habitus cannot as easily be broken through the opportunities one might get through volunteering, as both subjects, and their recruiters, are more prone to stick to familiar activities when it comes to joining volunteering (Dean 2016). However, even when we would apply a similar procedure of abroad volunteering, such as voluntourism to some marginalized youth volunteers, the outcome is similar for different social groups (Judge 2015).

The older types of volunteer strategy, namely community volunteering are those who seek to have a meaningful helping experience, and to connect with their peers (Nursey-Bray et al. 2022). They constantly work longer hours, derive more joy from assisting others, and are value-

driven (Sengupta et al. 2023; Smith et al. 2010). There are more likely to volunteer because of intrinsic or self-determined motivational factors (Güntert et al. 2022, 16), and normative incentives (Kragt 2022, 58), and to also do it in times of crises (Florian et al. 2019; Puzyreva et al. 2022; Sengupta et al. 2023) This type of volunteers have also been observed to compensate in case their fellow volunteers are more passive (Graf 2014) driven by a mechanism where they constantly re-negotiate their sense of meaningfulness (Florian et al. 2019).

For these reasons, I find it extremely interesting to search for the relationship that exists between volunteering and migration intentions, considering that both interact with very important socio-developmental metrics, such as economic status (Plagnol and Huppert 2010; Williams et al. 2017), well-being (McGarry et al. 2021; Plagnol and Huppert 2010), and political participation (Berlinschi and Harutyunyan 2018; Gil-Lacruz et al. 2015). I choose to analyse how this relationship exists with youth, as they are more likely to have an untainted view over volunteering (Silló 2016), and in South-Eastern Europe, as it is a hotspot of differences, and a point of interaction between East-West and North-South values and societal views.

Hypotheses

Based on the literature at hand, we expect two different possible relationships between migration intention and time dedicated to volunteering: a linear, negative relationship, and a non-linear, bell-shaped relationship. The first one assumes that volunteers are a homogenous group, and that the effects that they produce are directly proportional with the hours invested when volunteering. On the other side, the second one hints that there are two big, hetergenous categories of volunteers, which co-exist, and on which the amount of volunteering that they do has different effects.

From the literature talking about the `youth transitions` turn in migration studies (King 2017, 7–8), we can expect that higher rates of volunteering are negatively correlated with higher rates of migration intentions. This happens because we see both volunteering and migration as a way for the young person to create meaning in their lives, so we can expect that those who have not succeeded in doing so through volunteering will resort to migration. We see a similar relationship when we compare our variables in Tables 4 and 5 of the supplementary materials, where most of the variables that correlate positively with volunteering, correlate negatively with migration intention.

H_1: Young people that have higher rates of volunteering have a reduced intention to migrate.

The theory that the perception of volunteering is split into two meta-cateogories has been advanced by a widely cited paper (Hustinx and Lammertyn 2003), which split volunteering styles in a non-normative way, into (1) reflexive, and (2) collective styles. The first category encapsulating the reflexive styles[3], which here I will call strategic volunteers, choose specific volunteering roles and durations, meaning they also volunteer less, because they have a pre-defined goal in their mind, which is usually tied to having a better life, or getting a better job or education. This is seen in recent research looking at motivations to do volunteering for CV-building (Bocsi et al. 2020, 87; B. Davies 2019, 228; McGloin and Georgeou 2016, 11–12; Smith et al. 2010). At the same time,

[3] How the dataset will be split between strategic and community volunteers will be detailed in the following section.

the strategic volunteer will also choose roles that maximise their chances of a successful migration attempt, because volunteering facilitates getting an education or a job in a foreign, more developed country. The approach is supported by the neoliberal theory of migration, in which people (also volunteers) seek to maximise their efforts and to ensure the best migration route for labour efficiency (King 2017, 2–3). This means that every additional volunteering hour is chosen so that it increases migratory success.

H_2a: Strategic volunteers have a positive relation between their volunteering rates and intentions to migrate.

The second category which talks about collective styles of volunteering, will be called here community volunteers, which are people who volunteer because of a mix of joy they feel when helping, and a bonding link that they establish with the people that they help. This type of volunteers are those who recurrently score positively when it comes to social involvement, and helping your community (Lai and Wenhong 2016; Pearce 2017). This hypothesis is cemented by the social approaches towards volunteering, which supports its community-building effects (Nursey-Bray et al. 2022, 255; Wyn et al. 2019, 19).

H_2b: Community volunteers have a negative relation between their volunteering rates and intentions to migrate.

Data And Methods

I use the dataset of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung 2018 youth study which was done simultaneously on 10 countries in SEE: Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, and Slovenia with 10000 respondents aged 14-29 (FES 2019). The descriptive statistics are detailed for all models in each regression references.

The dependent variable will be the intention to migrate, which was shown to correlate with actual migration action (Van Mol 2016, 1305). Our variable will be a scale where 1= no intention, and 5= a very strong intention to migrate. Our independent variable will be the volunteer status (scale of 0 - 1 to volunteering in the past 12 months), volunteering time (scale of 1= never volunteering to 5= volunteering almost daily), and volunteering organisations, which is the sum of all the organisations that the respondent has volunteered for in the previous year.

Some of the control variables did not exist in the original dataset and had to be added. The summary of the variables in the equation, alongside their sources, is detailed in Table 6 of the supplementary materials. Most of the variables were included into a linear regression, either as a standing variable, or as part of a scale; the original democracy scale, which included an average of Freedom House, Democracy Index (EIU), Liberal Democracy Index (V-Dem), State of Democracy Index (GSoD) scores, had to be transformed into a Democracy-Development Index due to high internal correlations. The new scale, alongside all of the other scales, are detailed in Table 7. In order to ensure there is no multicollinearity, the variable measuring HDI Differences had to be removed, as it had a VIF >10. Due to the large number of variables, a Durbin-Watson test was done on each regression to ensure that no multicollinearity is present, and the results are mentioned for each regression.

Results

Table 1 - Liner regression testing the relationship between volunteering and migration on the entire available sample

Linear Regression using FES 2018 Youth Study Database	Model 1.1 **H1** N= 8850 Adjusted R^2= 0,039	Model 1.2 **H1** N= 7562 Adjusted R^2= 0,617	Model 1.3[4] **H1** N= 5979 Adjusted R^2= 0,649
Constant	**2.226(0.171)*** **	**1.392 (0.177)*** **	**2.450 (0.230)*** **
Volunteering time (1-5)	.008 (.016)	**−.015 (.012)**[5]	−.011 (.013)
Number of volunteering organizations you are in	.013 (.046)	.000 (.032)	.006 (.035)
Previous volunteering (1-2)	**.093 (.073)*** **	.014 (.051)	.007 (.056)
Employment scale (1-6)	**.090 (.006)*** **	**-**	**-**
Highest completed education (1-7)	**-**	**−.035 (.012)*** **	**−.023 (.013)***
Income (1-5)	**−.074 (.017)*** **	**−.036 (.012)*** **	**−.033 (.013)*** **
Respondent's sex (1-2; 1 = Female)	**.048 (.031)*** **	**.017 (.022)***	**.019 (.024)***
Respondent's age	**−.084 (.005)*** **	**-**	**-**
Urban scale (1-4)	**.029 (.011)** **	**.020 (.008)** **	**-**
Importance of God in your life (1-10)	**.021 (.005)***	**.063 (.004)*** **	**.020 (.005)***
Migration network (1-2)		**.168 (.026)*** **	**.137 (.028)*** **
Previous migration (1-2)		**.038 (.036)*** **	**.025 (.039)** **
Previous travel for education (1-8)		**-**	**.015 (.016)***
Well-being (subjective, 1-25 scale)		**−.054 (.003)*** **	**−.056 (.004)*** **
Generalized trust (1-40 scale)		**−.052 (.002)*** **	**−.039 (.002)*** **
Scale from single-married (1-6)		**−.030 (.006)*** **	**−.025 (.007)** **
Religious attendance (1-5)		**−.046 (.007)*** **	**−.040 (.008)*** **
Knowledge of host country (1-35 scale)		**.672 (.001)*** **	**.683 (.001)*** **

[4] Durbin-Watson = 1,751
[5] p = 0,051

Linear Regression using FES 2018 Youth Study Database	Model 1.1 **H1** N= 8850 Adjusted R^2= 0,039	Model 1.2 **H1** N= 7562 Adjusted R^2= 0,617	Model 1.3[4] **H1** N= 5979 Adjusted R^2= 0,649
Development-Democracy Scale (1-5)			**−.097 (.019)*** **
Competition is harmful, it brings out the worst in people (1-5)			**−.014 (.008)**[6]
Satisfaction with own country's democracy (1-5)			**−.035 (.012)*** **
View of EU Economy (1-5)			**.019 (.012)***

Table 2 - Linear regression testing the relationship between volunteering and migration on the high volunteering rates sub-sample

Linear Regression using FES 2018 Youth Study Database	Model 2.4 **H2b** N= 1450 Adjusted R^2= 0,055	Model 2.5 **H2b** N= 1143 Adjusted R^2= 0,585	Model 2.6[7] **H2b** N= 942 Adjusted R^2= 0,625
Constant	**2.901*** **	**2.138*** **	**2.929*** **
Volunteering time (1-5)	−.029 (.052)	−.013 (.040)	−.007 (.043)
Number of volunteering organizations you are in	.018 (.055)	.010 (.041)	.016 (.046)
Previous volunteering (1-2)	**.140 (.111)*** **	.042 (.083)	.027 (.090)
Employment scale (1-6)	**.084 (.014)** **	**.056 (.011)***	-
Income (1-5)	**−.058 (.040)***	-	-
Respondent's age	**−.146 (.013)*** **	-	-
Urban scale (1-4)	-	**.040 (.021)***	-
Importance of God in your life (1-10)		**.076 (.011)** **	-
Migration network (1-2)		**.111 (.067)*** **	**.091 (.071)*** **
Well-being (subjective, 1-25 scale)		**−.047 (.009)***	**−.039 (.009)**[8]
Generalized trust (1-40 scale)		**−.072 (.004)*** **	**−.063 (.005)** **
Scale from single-married (1-6)		**−.057 (.017)***	**−.052 (.018)***
Religious attendance (1-5)		**−.055 (.017)***	**−.045 (.018)**[9]

[6] p = 0,065
[7] Durbin-Watson = 1,751
[8] p = 0,092
[9] p = 0,053

Linear Regression using FES 2018 Youth Study Database	Model 2.4 **H2b** N= 1450 Adjusted R^2= 0,055	Model 2.5 **H2b** N= 1143 Adjusted R^2= 0,585	Model 2.6[7] **H2b** N= 942 Adjusted R^2= 0,625
Knowledge of host country (1-35 scale)		**.679 (.003)*** **	**.701 (.003)*** **
How often you go out with friends (1-5)		**−.035 (.031)**[10]	**−.036 (.033)**[11]
Living with your parents (0-2)			**−.041 (.042)**[12]
Development-Democracy Scale (1-5)			**−.127 (.047)*** **
Satisfaction with own country's democracy (1-5)			**−.060 (.030)****
View of EU Economy (1-5)			**.042 (.031)**[13]

Table 1 - Linear regression testing the relationship between volunteering and migration on the low volunteering rates sub-sample

Linear Regression using FES 2018 Youth Study Database	Model 2.1 **H2a** N= 7379 Adjusted R^2= 0,039	Model 2.2 **H2a** N= 6372 Adjusted R^2= 0,624	Model 2.3[14] **H2a** N= 4976 Adjusted R^2= 0,654
Constant	**1.963*** **	**1.290*** **	**2.370*** **
Volunteering time (1-5)	**.056 (.044)*** **	-.008(0.031)	.001 (.033)
Number of volunteering organizations you are in	.007 (.081)	.001 (.057)	.006 (.059)
Previous volunteering (1-2)	**.067 (.111)****	.007 (0.077)	-.001 (0.082)
Employment scale (1-6)	**.092 (.006)*** **	**-**	**-**
Highest completed education (1-7)	**-**	**−.036 (.013)****	**−.024 (.014)***
Income (1-5)	**−.078 (.018)*** **	**−.039 (.013)*** **	**−.035 (.014)*** **
Respondent's sex (1-2; 1 = Female)	**.057 (.034)*** **	**.016 (.024)***	**.018 (.026)***
Respondent's age	**−.071 (.005)*** **	**-**	**-**
Urban scale (1-4)	**.030 (.012)****	**.015 (.009)**[15]	**.015 (.009)**[16]
Importance of God in your life (1-10)	**.023 (.006)**[17]	**.061 (.004)*** **	**.023 (.005)***

[10] p = 0,077
[11] p = 0,088
[12] p = 0,08
[13] p = 0,059
[14] Durbin-Watson = 1,8
[15] p = 0,058
[16] p = 0,094
[17] p = 0,052

Linear Regression using FES 2018 Youth Study Database	Model 2.1 **H2a** N= 7379 Adjusted R^2= 0,039	Model 2.2 **H2a** N= 6372 Adjusted R^2= 0,624	Model 2.3[14] **H2a** N= 4976 Adjusted R^2= 0,654
Migration network (1-2)		**.178 (.028)*** **	**.146 (.031)*** **
Previous migration (1-2)		**.043 (.039)*** **	**.033 (.042)*** **
Previous travel for education (1-8)		**-**	**.016 (.017)[18]**
Well-being (subjective, 1-25 scale)		**−.055 (.004)*** **	**−.059 (.004)*** **
Generalized trust (1-40 scale)		**−.047 (.002)*** **	**−.034 (.002)*** **
Scale from single-married (1-6)		**−.025 (.007)***	**−.020 (.008)[19]**
Religious attendance (1-5)		**−.046 (.008)*** **	**−.040 (.008)*** **
Knowledge of host country (1-35 scale)		**.670 (.001)*** **	**.678 (.001)*** **
Development-Democracy Scale (1-5)			**−.088 (.021)*** **
Competition is harmful, it brings out the worst in people (1-5)			**−.018 (.009)***
Satisfaction with own country's democracy (1-5)			**−.029 (.013)****
Value alignment with home country (1-40 scale)			**−.018 (.002)[20]**

Model 1, comprising of parts 1.1 through 1.3, has shown a positive relation between having previously volunteered and the intention to migrate, whose effect spreads to other variables in the more complex models; and a negative relationship between time dedicated to volunteering and the intention to migrate (at .051 significance level), which also loses its effect once national and value-based questions are taken into account. The latter would suggest that *H1 is true*. The effect of previous volunteering seems to be lost with the inclusion of meso-level variables, most likely within the support from a migration network, as volunteering often build social capital (Nursey-Bray et al. 2022), and the effect on volunteering intensity disappears, suggesting that young people are more likely to leave because of their values and beliefs about their current contexts (Pates 2023; Naterer and Lavrič 2022), rather than because of how often they volunteer.

While other studies did not get a difference between genders when it comes to migration (Czaika and Reinprecht 2022; Williams et al. 2017), I did, which is on par with other research on SEE (Berlinschi and Harutyunyan 2018; Naterer and Lavrič 2022). Income and urbanization have similar effects as others across literature (Czaika and Reinprecht 2022; Grönlund et al. 2011;

[18] p = 0,063
[19] p = 0,064
[20] p = 0,099

Organiściak-Krzykowska 2017; Stojanovski et al. 2023). Surprinsingly, I got opposite results when it comes to the harm produced by competition (Berlinschi and Harutyunyan 2018, 842) and educational levels (Van Mol 2016, 1312).

Although Berlinschi and Harutyunyan do not provide an accurate description of why their dataset showed a positive correlative with negative views on competition, due to its low statistical siginificance, other authors paint a more comprehensive picture. For example, Wilder found out that Baltic young people's view on competition has been worsening since the 1990s (Wilder 2013, 63), so perhaps the trend kept increasing, and Mieriņa showed that there is a clear negative correlation between view on competition and views on the EU (Mieriņa 2018, 46), which positively correlates with migration intention. Some author have proposed that young people who already got their benefits for their education through previous migration will be less likely to migrate (Tufiș and Sandu 2023, 843), however, that is not our case since previous travel for educational reasons show a positive correlation with migration intention. The only other available explanation is that lower migration happens through a job-seeking formula in which the lower-skilled, lower-educated are more likely to migrate due to low employability in their home country (Kolev and Saget 2005; Williams et al. 2017).

The biggest positive effects on migration are the knowledge you have about the target country, which makes sense, as the biggest intentions to migrate are amongst the young people who have made a plan already, and that plan requires information; and having a migrant network you can rely on, because most successful migrations need some type of external support to happen. The biggest negative effects come from the perceptions that you have on the democracy and development of your own country, which works through a mechanism where the young person does not feel like they can connect with their home community; and their own well-being, which they tie to how good they feel in one place. Interestingly, there was no statistically-significant effect between value disalignment[21] with home country and the intention to migrate for the general sample.

Model 2 checks the same effects, but on a subsample of young people who only volunteer on a monthly basis (2.1 through 2.3), and for those who volunteer more often (2.4 through 2.6). Although an independent samples t-test was performed, which showed a .11 higher migration intention in the first group when compared to those who volunteer more, the effects do not seem to be mediated by volunteering, but instead by similar factors that affect the youth volunteering population more broadly.

Interestingly, the effects of having previously migrated, alongside previous mobilities suggest that long-term[22] trips, which gave them courage and information (although the effect of knowledge is smaller) might explain the difference, as this sub-sample shows a correlation with both previous migration and travel for education when compared to the larger sample. Alternativelty, it could be that that once a month volunteering experience is an Erasmus or European Solidarity Corps, which could also explain the variance (Dabasi-Halász et al. 2019), since the youth volunteer country of choice for travelling might matter (A. Davies 2022, 36) for future migrations. Even though the relationship between individual volunteering and migration did

[21] The values that I am referring to were measured against these factors: The rule of law; Human rights; Economic welfare of citizens; Employment; Equality; Security; Individual Freedom.

[22] And I stress on *long-term* because the question related to previous migration refers to periods longer than 6 months.

not result in a direct correlation except for the initial model, looking at the holistic picture seems to *support H2a* – young people who do little volunteering are also carefully picking where and how often they are travelling and migrating, which seems to have a long-term effect on their migration intentions. This creates the ideal picture of the migrant-youth: the urban male with some volunteering in his CV, an average-income, currently-in-education, who has migrated before for education and other reasons, who despises his own country, but knows a lot about other countries where he would like to be and who says he loves God, but would not step foot in a church for any reason whatsoever.

For young people who volunteer a lot (weekly or daily), volunteering itself does not have an effect on their desire to migrate, but rather indirectly through some other factors. What I found unexpectedly is that, in model 2.4, previous volunteering was also shown to support migration intention, a result that completely contradicts the hypothesis we had about high-investment volunteers. *While H2b is not supported*, the logical thought behind it remains robust, because the intention to migrate seems to be affected by variables that have an effect on their sense of belonging and connexion within a community, such as their subjective views on the democracy, generalized trust, going out with friends, and living with parents. Additional variables related to family (parents being alive, parents having influence on you etc.) were tested to see if they could explain migration and travelling, but they were not statistically significant. What could invalidate this idea is the fact that we did not find a correlation between the value alignment of the person with its home country[23].

Overall, we can notice three more interesting findings:

(1) as volunteering rates increase, the effect their view on democracy has on their decision to migrate increases, suggesting that volunteers, because they are more civically engaged (B. Davies 2019, 227), also get more discouraged by disruptions to their countries or regions' democratic status (Nursey-Bray et al. 2022). It could also be that volunteers, while they mostly interact with what not works in their area, tend to have more negative views on the current state of their country, which, in term, increases their desire to migrate (Berlinschi and Harutyunyan 2018, 841–43; Fischer-Souan 2019, 12);

(2) as volunteering rates increase, the effect of having a migrant network decreases, suggesting that volunteers might place a higher importance to their own acquired skills, rather than on external support. It could also be that the effect is smaller because higher rates of volunteering increase belonging (Baillie Smith et al. 2019, 1368; Habib and Ward 2019; Wyn et al. 2019, 19), which means that the effect of the migration pull from a person's migrant network gets smaller.

(3) religiosity (the importance of God for oneself) is linked with an increase in migration intention, while religious attendance, are correlated with a decrease in the desire to migrate. I believe that contemporary religiosity, being a very intimate and individual practice, could support values similar to those who encourage migration, while religious attendance has been linked with an increase of social/ human capital (Guiso et al. 2006; McCleary and Barro 2006) at the place of origin, which might influence the decision to stay (Myers 2000, 762).

As a summary, when comparing the two typologies, strategic volunteers are more likely to migrate because:

[23] See Table 7 for an explanation of this scale.

- they know a lot about the host country and have someone who supports them,
- they are single, less educated urban men with a low income, who have previously migrated and studies in another country, who
- are not feeling good in a country that is not so well-developed; and who just
- yearn for competition and cannot align with the values of the country that they currently live in.

- they are not affected by the relationship they have with friends or family when making the choice to migrate.

Community volunteers, on the other hand, are more likely to migrate:

- because of the knowledge and network that they have with regards to their target country, but also
- because they do not trust their community and are not so satisfied with the state of the democracy in their countries, and
- if they are still living with their parents.

- they are not affected by individual educational levels, gender, the locality they live in, their level of income, or if they had migrated or traveled before.

Conclusion and Discussion

Overall, there is a statistically-signficant relation between individual volunteering metrics and the intention to migrate for young south-eastern Europeans, which becomes null after accounting for several meso- and macro-level variables, particulary those who more generally explain migration.

Our biggest hypothesis, that which classifies previous volunteering as having a negative effect on a young person's intention to migrate, could not be proven in its entirety. This can be explained by the potential moderator effect that volunteering has on building up someone's network and on helping them gather knowledge of their target country, which were our biggest positive predictors. The decreasing effects that the migration network has over the intention to migrate, could signify that volunteers prefer to treat migration as an individual journey, rather than a communal one. This is further reinforced by the fact that having a good relationship with your friends decreases your desire to migrate. It could also be that, for many, volunteering is used a key to unlock a better/ more western educational journey, which could also explain why the negative effect of education disappears in the group of recurrent volunteers. This would signify that the informal requirements from universities that their students are better placed if they have volunteered before has succeeded in actually increasing volunteering rates, although with potential limited benefits on the individual overall.

Besides having support from someone from their target country, the knowledge about the country was the other positive predictor of migration for young volunteers, with a roughly similar size of effect, regardless of the amount they volunteered. For the general population, previous migration was also quite a strong predictor, alongside previous travel for the monthly volunteering group, which I explained following the theory that young people tend to do many, smaller migrations for educational reasons until they fulfill their desires to migrate. This could mean that short-term projects, such as Erasmus+, ESC, and other exchange programmes are a success, in a sense that they decrease the overall intention to migrate permanently, thus helping decrease brain drain.

This moderator effect can also be explored in the different effects of democracy and development based on the intensity of volunteering one does, which could signify that the mechansisms that volunteering has on migration intention are mediated through the person's view on the local and national state of affairs, particularly because a community volunteer is usually driven by a civic duty to keep on volunteering. On the other side, the other biggest detractors from migration were, at the general level, the income and the person's subjective well-being. While the income one is pretty obvious, as you need resources for a successful migration, the well-being effect is not clear-cut. As more studies clarify the effects volunteering has on well-being[24], we will be better equipped at understanding how this relationship affects a young person's desire to migrate. Generalized trust was another negative predictor, which is on par with current theories that explain that trusting your local community decreases your intention to migrate; with the effect being slightly higher for recurrent volunteers, because they are building trust while in-action alongside their peers.

To further test the hypotheses that came out of this limited study, more research is needed. The researcher did try to look for differences between the EU and non-EU samples, but did not find anything of relevance. Additionally, a qualitative research is necessary, alongside another study that could test the longitudinal effect that volunteering and volunteering rates have (had) on the intention to migrate on young people from south-eastern Europe, which could be of particular importance, especially for Balkan countries' policymakers.

References

Adamović, Mirjana, and Dunja Potočnik. 2022. 'Zabrinjava Me Budućnost i Razmišljam o Odlasku: Usporedba Migracijskih Aspiracija Mladih Iz Hrvatske i Jugoistočne Europe'. *Sociologija i Prostor*, ahead of print, November 17. https://doi.org/10.5673/sip.60.2.9

Alfieri, Sara, Daniela Marzana, and Sara Martinez Damia. 2019. 'Why Do First and Second-Generation Young Migrants Volunteer? The Migrant Volunteerism Motivation Model (MVMM)'. Sect. 2. *Journal of Social and Political Psychology*, 7th edn.

Baillie Smith, Matt, Nisha Thomas, and Shaun Hazeldine. 2019. 'Rethinking Volunteering and Cosmopolitanism: Beyond Individual Mobilities and Personal Transformations.' Sect. 5. *Geopolitics*, 26th edn.

Belmonte, Martina, and Simon McMahon. 2019. *Searching for Clarity: Defining and Mapping Youth Migration*. Searching for clarity: Defining and Mapping youth migration. Migration Research Series. Institute on Migration. http://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/MRS_59.pdf.

Berlinschi, Ruxanda, and Ani Harutyunyan. 2018. 'Do Migrants Think Differently? Evidence from Eastern European and Post-Soviet States'. *International Migration Review* 53 (3): 831–68.

Bocsi, Veronika, Hajnalka Fényes, and Valéria Markos. 2020. 'Civic Engagement of Higher Education Students in a Central and Eastern European Region'. Sect. 4. *The New Educational Review*, 62nd edn.

[24] (Nakamura et al. 2025; Whillans et al. 2016; Mokhzan et al. 2023).

Boneva, Bonka, and Hanson Frieze. 2002. 'Toward a Concept of a Migrant Personality'. Sect. 3. *Journal of Social Issues*, 57th edn.

Bygnes, Susanne. 2017. 'Are They Leaving Because of the Crisis? The Sociological Significance of Anomie as a Motivation for Migration'. Sect. 2. *Sociology*, 51st edn.

Cesaltina, Pires, Lionel Prouteau, and Boguslawa Maria Barszczak Sardinha. 2010. 'Rates of Participation in Volunteering and Characteristics of Volunteers: European Comparisons'. Conference. Istanbul.

Czaika, Mathias, and Constantin Reinprecht. 2022. 'Migration Drivers: Why Do People Migrate?' In *Introduction to Migration Studies*, by Peter Scholten. Springer.

Dabasi-Halász, Zsuzsanna, Julianna Kiss, Ioana Manafi, et al. 2019. 'International Youth Mobility in Eastern and Western Europe – the Case of the Erasmus+ Programme'. Sect. 1. *Migration Letters*, 16th edn.

Davies, Amanda. 2022. 'Geography, Place, and International Development Volunteering'. In *The Routledge Handbook of Volunteering in Events, Sport and Tourism*, 1st edn, by Kirsten Holmes, Leonie Lockstone-Binney, Karen A. Smith, and Richard Shipway. Routledge.

Davies, Bernard. 2019. 'Youth Volunteering—The New Panacea'. In *Austerity, Youth Policy and the Deconstruction of the Youth Service in England*, by Bernard Davies. Palgrave Macmillan.

Dean, Jon. 2016. 'Recruiting Young Volunteers in an Area of Selective Education: A Qualitative Case Study'. *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 37 (4): 643–61. https://doi.org/10.1080/01425692.2014.973016.

Doumas, Kyriaki, and Helen Avery. 2024. 'Lives "on Hold" in Europe: An Explorative Review of Literature on Youth Aspirations and Futures in Situations of Migration and Mobility'. *European Journal of Futures Research* 12 (1): 1. https://doi.org/10.1186/s40309-023-00225-x.

Drago, Župarić-Iljić. 2017. 'Environmental Change and Involuntary Migration: Environmental Vulnerability and Displacement Caused by the 2014 Flooding in South-Eastern Europe'. In *Ecology and Justice : Contributions from the Margins*, edited by Mladen Domazet. https://urn.nsk.hr/urn:nbn:hr:131:031676.

Eimhjellen, Ivar, Kari Steen-Johnsen, Bjarte Folkestad, and Guro Ødegård. 2018. 'Changing Patterns of Volunteering and Participation'. In *Scandinavian Civil Society and Social Transformations*, edited by Bernard Enjolras and Kristin Strømsnes. Nonprofit and Civil Society Studies. Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-77264-6_2.

Favell, Adrian. 2008. *Eurostars and Eurocities: Free Movement and Mobility in an Integrating Europe*. 1st edn. Wiley. https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470712818.

Ferrara, Pietro, Giovanni Corsello, Annamaria Sbordone, et al. 2016. 'The "Invisible Children": Uncertain Future of Unaccompanied Minor Migrants in Europe'. *The Journal of Pediatrics* 169 (February): 332-333.e1. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpeds.2015.10.060.

FES. 2019. 'Youth Studies SEE 2018/2019'. https://www.fes.de/en/youth-studies/.

Fischer-Souan, Maricia. 2019. 'Between "Labour Migration" and "New European Mobilities": Motivations for Migration of Southern and Eastern Europeans in the EU'. Sect. 4. *Social Inclusion*, 7th edn.

Florian, Mona, Jana Costas, and Dan Kärreman. 2019. 'Struggling with Meaningfulness When Context Shifts: Volunteer Work in a German Refugee Shelter'. *Journal of Management Studies* 56 (3): 589–616. https://doi.org/10.1111/joms.12410.

Freedom House. 2024. 'Freedom in the World'. https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/2025-02/All_data_FIW_2013-2024.xlsx.

Georgeou, Nichole, and Benjamin Haas. 2019. 'Power, Exchange and Solidarity: Case Studies in Youth Volunteering for Development'. *VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations* 30 (6): 1406–19. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-019-00103-w.

Gil-Lacruz, Ana Isabel, Carmen Marcuello, and Isabel Saz-Gil. 2015. 'Youth Volunteering in Countries in the European Union: Approximation to Differences'. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* 45 (5): 1–21.

Ginnerskov-Dahlberg, Mette. 2021. *Student Migration from Eastern to Western Europe*. 1st edn. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003056287.

Global Data Lab. 2023. 'Subnational HDI (v8.1)'. https://globaldatalab.org/shdi/download/shdi/XKO/.

Graf, Sonja. 2014. 'Motivational and Organizational Factors for Stimulating Membership and Donor Engagement in Non-Profit Organizations'. Doctoral thesis, Fribourg. https://folia.unifr.ch/unifr/documents/304111.

Grönlund, Henrietta, Kirsten Holmes, Chulhee Kang, et al. 2011. 'Cultural Values and Volunteering: A Cross-Cultural Comparison of Students' Motivation to Volunteer in 13 Countries'. *Journal of Academic Ethics* 9 (2): 87–106. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10805-011-9131-6.

Guiso, Luigi, Paola Sapienza, and Luigi Zingales. 2006. 'Does Culture Affect Economic Outcomes?' *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 20 (2): 23–48. https://doi.org/10.1257/jep.20.2.23.

Güntert, Stefan T., Theo Wehner, and Harald A. Mieg. 2022. *Organizational, Motivational, and Cultural Contexts of Volunteering: The European View*. SpringerBriefs in Psychology. Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-92817-9.

Habib, Sadia, and Michael Ward. 2019. 'Conclusion: Youth and Belonging: Agency, Place and Negotiation'. In *Youth, Place and Theories of Belonging*, 1st edn, by Sadia Habib and Michael Ward. Routledge.

Haski-Leventhal, Debbie, and Ram A. Cnaan. 2009. 'Group Processes and Volunteering: Using Groups to Enhance Volunteerism'. *Administration in Social Work* 33 (1): 61–80. https://doi.org/10.1080/03643100802508635.

HDR UNDP. 2025. 'Human Development Index and Components'. https://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/2025_HDR/HDR25_Statistical_Annex_HDI_Table.xlsx.

Heley, Jesse, Sophie Yarker, and Laura Jones. 2022. 'Volunteering in the Bath? The Rise of Microvolunteering and Implications for Policy'. *Policy Studies* 43 (1): 76–89. https://doi.org/10.1080/01442872.2019.1645324.

Herz, Andreas, and Alice Altissimo. 2021. 'Understanding the Structures of Transnational Youth Im/Mobility: A Qualitative Network Analysis'. *Global Networks* 21 (3): 500–512. https://doi.org/10.1111/glob.12315.

Hof, Helena. 2019. 'The Eurostars Go Global: Young Europeans' Migration to Asia for Distinction and Alternative Life Paths'. *Mobilities* 14 (6): 923–39. https://doi.org/10.1080/17450101.2019.1643164.

Hustinx, Lesley, and Frans Lammertyn. 2003. 'Collective and Reflexive Styles of Volunteering: A Sociological Modernization Perspective'. *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations* 14 (2): 167–87. https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1023948027200.

Ivlevs, Artjoms. 2015. 'Happy Moves? Assessing the Link between Life Satisfaction and Emigration Intentions'. *Kyklos* 68 (3): 335–56. https://doi.org/10.1111/kykl.12086.

Jones, Andrew. 2011. 'Theorising International Youth Volunteering: Training for Global (Corporate) Work?' *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 36 (4): 530–44. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-5661.2011.00433.x.

Judge, Ruth Cheung. 2015. 'Emotion, Volunteer-Tourism and Marginalised Youth'. In *Children's Emotions in Policy and Practice*, edited by Matej Blazek and Peter Kraftl. Palgrave Macmillan UK. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137415608_10.

Kamerāde, Daiga, Jo Crotty, and Sergej Ljubownikow. 2016. 'Civil Liberties and Volunteering in Six Former Soviet Union Countries'. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* 45 (6): 1150–68. https://doi.org/10.1177/0899764016649689.

King, Russell. 2017. 'Theorising New European Youth Mobilities'. Sect. 1. *Population, Space and Place*, 24th edn.

Kolev, Alexandre, and Catherine Saget. 2005. 'Understanding Youth Labour Market Disadvantage: Evidence from South-East Europe'. *International Labour Review* 144 (2): 161–87. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1564-913X.2005.tb00564.x.

Kragt, Darja. 2022. 'Psychology of Volunteering'. In *The Routledge Handbook of Volunteering in Events, Sport and Tourism*, 1st edn, by Kirsten Holmes, Leonie Lockstone-Binney, Karen A. Smith, and Richard Shipway. Routledge.

Krasniqi, Vjollca. 2018. *State of Volunteering in Kosovo: Challenges and Perspectives*. No. 14. Democracy for Development (D4D).

Lai, Chih-Hui, and Chen Wenhong. 2016. 'Welcome to the Club: From Multimodal Voluntary Participation to Community Involvement'. *International Journal of Communication*, August 15. 10th edn.

Lulle, Aija, Hania Janta, and Henrik Emilsson. 2019. 'Introduction to the Special Issue: European Youth Migration: Human Capital Outcomes, Skills and Competences'. Sect. 8. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 47th edn.

Marcu, Silvia. 2014. 'Geography of Belonging: Nostalgic Attachment, Transnational Home and Global Mobility among Romanian Immigrants in Spain.' Sect. 3. *Journal of Cultural Geography*, 31st edn.

Mazzucato, Valentina. 2024. 'Diversifying Analytical Categories for Studying Youth with and without Migration Background: An Example of Mobility-Based Categories'. *Comparative Migration Studies* 12 (1): 27. https://doi.org/10.1186/s40878-024-00385-0.

McCleary, Rachel M., and Robert J. Barro. 2006. 'Religion and Economy'. *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 20 (2): 49–72. https://doi.org/10.1257/jep.20.2.49.

McGarry, Orla, Zaiga Krislane, Guido Sechi, Piaras MacÉinrí, Maris Berzins, and Elina Apsite-Berina. 2021. 'Human Capital and Life Satisfaction among Circular Migrants: An Analysis of Extended Mobility in Europe'. Sect. 8. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 47th edn.

McGloin, Colleen, and Nichole Georgeou. 2016. '"Looks Good on Your CV": The Sociology of Voluntourism Recruitment in Higher Education'. *Journal of Sociology* 52 (2): 403–17. https://doi.org/10.1177/1440783314562416.

Mieriņa, Inta. 2018. 'Beyond "Left" and "Right"? The Role of Culture and Context in Young People's Understanding of Ideology'. In *Understanding Youth Participation Across Europe*,

edited by Hilary Pilkington, Gary Pollock, and Renata Franc. Palgrave Macmillan UK. https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-59007-7_3.

Migali, Silvia, and M. Scipioni. 2018. *A Global Analysis of Intentions to Migrate*. Technical Report. https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/technical_report_on_gallup_v7_finalpubsy.pdf.

Mokhzan, Nur Syuhada, Rosnah Sutan, and Ruhizan M. Yasin. 2023. 'Motives For Volunteering Among Youth In Promoting Healthy Well-Being'. *International Journal of Advanced Research in Education and Society*, ahead of print, October 31. https://doi.org/10.55057/ijares.2023.5.3.49.

Myers, Scott M. 2000. 'The Impact of Religious Involvement on Migration'. *Social Forces* 79 (2): 755. https://doi.org/10.2307/2675516.

Nakamura, Julia S., Renae Wilkinson, Marisa A. Nelson, Etsuji Suzuki, and Tyler J. VanderWeele. 2025. 'Volunteering in Young Adulthood: Complex Associations With Later Health and Well-Being Outcomes'. *American Journal of Health Promotion* 39 (1): 39–51. https://doi.org/10.1177/08901171241273424.

Naterer, Andrej, and Miran Lavrič. 2022. 'Leaving out of Necessity or out of Ambition? The Impact of Socioeconomic Development on Factors of Youth Emigration from Countries of South Eastern Europe'. Sect. 3. *International Journal of Comparative Sociology*, 64th edn.

Nursey-Bray, Melissa, Mirco di Giacomo Masud-All-Kamal, and Simon Millcock. 2022. 'Building Community Resilience through Youth Volunteering: Towards a New Model'. *Regional Studies, Regional Science 9*, 1st edn.

O'Reilly, Jacqueline, Werner Eichhorst, Andras Gabos, and Kari Hadjivassiliou. 2015. 'Five Characteristics of Youth Unemployment in Europe: Flexibility, Education, Migration, Family Legacies, and EU Policy'. Sect. 1. *SAGE Open*, 5th edn.

Organiściak-Krzykowska, Anna. 2017. 'The Determinants and the Size of International Migration in Central and Eastern Europe after 2004'. Sect. 4. *Comparative Economic Research*, 20th edn.

Pantea, Maria-Carmen. 2013. 'The Changing Nature of Volunteering and the Cross-Border Mobility: Where Does Learning Come From?' *Studies in Continuing Education* 35 (1): 49–64. https://doi.org/10.1080/0158037X.2012.677427.

Pates, Rebecca. 2023. 'Peripheral Futurities. Emigration Plans and Sense of Belonging among East Central European Youth'. In *EU Citizenship Beyond Urban Centres [Lorenz, Astrid; Anders, Lisa H.]*, by Astrid Lorenz and Lisa H. Anders. Springer.

Pearce, Sean. 2017. *The Relationship Between Place and Youth Volunteerism: Building Bonds and Breaking Barriers*. https://doi.org/10.20381/RUOR-21126.

Plagnol, Anke C., and Felicia A. Huppert. 2010. 'Happy to Help? Exploring the Factors Associated with Variations in Rates of Volunteering Across Europe'. *Social Indicators Research* 97 (2): 157–76. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-009-9494-x.

Puzyreva, Kseniia, Zerline Henning, Renate Schelwald, et al. 2022. 'Professionalization of Community Engagement in Flood Risk Management: Insights from Four European Countries'. *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction* 71 (March): 102811. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijdrr.2022.102811.

Reiter, Herwig, and Christine Steiner. 2016. 'Fast Forward to Capitalism? Accelerated Youth in Post-Socialism'. In *Eastern European Youth Cultures in a Global Context*, edited by

Matthias Schwartz and Heike Winkel. Palgrave Macmillan UK. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137385130_4.

Roberts, Ken. 2016. 'Youth Cultures and the Formation of a New Political Generation in Eastern Europe'. In *Eastern European Youth Cultures in a Global Context*, edited by Matthias Schwartz and Heike Winkel. Palgrave Macmillan UK. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137385130_3.

Sengupta, Debashish, Aniisu K. Verghese, and Maciej Rys. 2023. 'Motivations of Volunteering during Crises—Perspectives of Polish Youths during the Ukrainian Refugee Crisis'. *Administrative Sciences* 13 (2): 53. https://doi.org/10.3390/admsci13020053.

Silló, Ágota. 2016. 'The Development of Volunteering in PostCommunist Societies. A Review'. Sect. 1. *Social Analysis*, 6th edn. https://dea.lib.unideb.hu/server/api/core/bitstreams/a3068cfd-71b5-4178-8bf7-ec739ec72d96/content.

Sime, Daniela, and Silvia Behrens. 2023. 'Marginalized (Non)Citizens: Migrant Youth Political Engagement, Volunteering and Performative Citizenship in the Context of Brexit'. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 46 (7): 1502–26. https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2022.2142061.

Smith, Karen, Kirsten Holmes, Debbie Haski-Leventhal, Ram A. Cnaan, Femida Handy, and Jeffrey L. Brudney. 2010. 'Motivations and Benefits of Student Volunteering: Comparing Regular, Occasional, and Non-Volunteers in Five Countries'. *Canadian Journal of Nonprofit and Social Economy Research* 1 (1). https://doi.org/10.22230/cjnser.2010v1n1a2.

Stojanovski, Strashko, Ana Paneva, and Kristijan Panev. 2023. 'Youth, Migration and Higher Education'. *Balkan Social Science Review*, 22nd edn.

Tufiș, Paula, and Dumitru Sandu. 2023. 'Motivation in the Dynamics of European Youth Migration'. Sect. 5. *European Societies*, 25th edn.

Van Mol, Christof. 2016. 'Migration Aspirations of European Youth in Times of Crisis'. Sect. 10. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 19th edn.

Voicu, Bogdan, and Mălina Voicu. 2009. *Volunteers and Volunteering in Central and Eastern Europe*. https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Bogdan-Voicu/publication/242022883_Volunteers_and_volunteering_in_Central_and_Eastern_Europe/links/00b4953a86d5ee2f61000000/Volunteers-and-volunteering-in-Central-and-Eastern-Europe.pdf?_tp=eyJjb250ZXh0Ijp7ImZpcnN0UGFnZSI6InB1YmxpY2F0aW9uIiwicGFnZSI6InB1YmxpY2F0aW9uIn19.

Whillans, Ashley V., Scott C. Seider, Lihan Chen, et al. 2016. 'Does Volunteering Improve Well-Being?' *Comprehensive Results in Social Psychology* 1 (1–3): 35–50. https://doi.org/10.1080/23743603.2016.1273647.

Wilder, Lisa. 2013. 'Generational Differences in Attitude toward Income Redistribution in the Baltic States: A Cohort Analysis'. Sect. 2. *Research in Economics and Business: Central and Eastern Europe*, 5th edn. http://www.rebcee.eu/index.php/REB/article/download/49/45.

Williams, Allan M., Calvin Jephcote, Hania Janta, and Gang Li. 2017. 'The Migration Intentions of Young Adults in Europe: A Comparative, Multilevel Analysis'. Sect. 1. *Population, Space and Place*, 24th edn.

Wilson, John. 2012. 'Volunteerism Research: A Review Essay'. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* 41 (2): 176–212. https://doi.org/10.1177/0899764011434558.

Wyn, Johanna, Hernan Cuervo, and Julia Cook. 2019. 'Expanding Theoretical Bounda ries from Youth Transitions to Belonging and New Materiality'. In Youth, Place and Theories of Belonging, 1st edn, by Sadia Habib and Michael Ward. Routledge.

Yea, Sallie. 2018. 'Helping from Home: Singaporean Youth Volunteers with Migrant-rights and Human-trafficking NGO s in Singapore'. The Geographical Journal 184 (2): 169–78. https://doi.org/10.1111/geoj.12221.

Supplementary Materials

Table 4- Elements that correlate with youth migration (author synthesis from a large body of literature)

	Macro	Meso	Micro
Political	The state of democracy (-) EU membership duration (-) HDI differences (+) Policies affecting migration Health policies (+)		Voting participation (-) Trust in other religions and nationalities (-)
Economic	Country GDP (-) Country AIC (-) Regional GDP (-) GDP/capita (-) View of the EU Economy (-)	(un)Employment rates[25] (-) Cost of living (+) View of competition (-)	Employed (-) Income (-)
Socio-demographic	Country size (-) Distance from the origin to the hosting country (-)	Family Status (-) Children[26] Youth being marginalised (subjective) (+)	Age (-) Gender[27] Educational background
Personal	Value alignment with the origin country (-)	Part of a migrant network (+)	Personality traits[28]

[25] Some authors have shown that in countries with high employment, motivations simply change to non-economic reasons (Bygnes 2017, 2; Naterer and Lavrič 2022, 309; Tufiș and Sandu 2023, 847–49)

[26] Having children was shown to have both positive and negative effects on youth migration (Williams et al. 2017)

[27] Although it is overall higher in males, some age groups (16-25) show disproportionately higher intentions for females (Williams et al. 2017)

[28] For more detailed explanation and results, see (Berlinschi and Harutyunyan 2018; Boneva and Frieze 2002)

		Past migration experience (+) Past travel experience (+) Knowledge about the hosting country (+) Generalised trust (-)	Sexual orientation (+) Subjective well-being (-)

Table 5 -Elements that correlate with youth volunteering (author synthesis from a large body of literature)

	Macro	**Meso**	**Micro**
Economic	Country GDP (+) Regional GDP (+) GDP/capita (+) Public expenditure for unemployment & others (+)	(un)Employment rates (+) Household size (+)	Employed (+) Income (+) Work importance (-)
Socio-demographic	Country % of people volunteering (+) Civil liberties (+)	Family Status (+) Children (-) Living with parents (-) Social capital (+) Cultural capital (+)	Age (+) Gender (F) Education level (+)
Personal	Value alignment with the origin country (+)	Past volunteering experience (+) Generalized trust (+)	Personality traits[29] Religious[30] Religious attendance (+) Subjective well-being (+)

[29] For more detailed explanation and results, see (Plagnol and Huppert 2010, 165)
[30] While (Plagnol and Huppert 2010) get a positive relation with religiosity, (Kamerāde et al. 2016) find a negative relation in Eastern European countries

Table 2 - Control variables in the regression (Bold= affecting Migration, Italic= affecting volunteering)[31]

	Macro	Meso	Micro
Political[32]	***The state of democracy***[33] **EU membership duration**[34] **HDI differences**[35]		**Voting participation**[36]
Economic	***Country GDP***[37] **Country AIC**[38] ***Regional GDP***[39] ***GDP/capita***[40]	**(un)Employment rates**[42] **View of competition**[43] *Household size*[44]	***Employed***[45] ***Income***[46]

[31] Variables that are excluded from control due to lack of available data for all considered countries: (a) Health policies, (b) Public expenditure for unemployment, or due to information not being available in the dataset: (c) Work importance, (d) Distance from the origin to the hosting country, (e) Personality traits, (f) Cost of living

[32] The following variables were transformed due to high internal correlation: Civil Liberty Index, Country size, State of Democracy Scale, EU interaction duration, Country Size, HDI Differences. Instead, except for the latter, they were combined into a new scale, called Democracy-Development Index

[33] Measured by two variables: Subjective view on democracy: *How are you satisfied with the state of democracy in (COUNTRY) in general?* and a scale comprising the average of 4 liberal democracy indicators, detailed in Table 7

[34] Created by giving the following prompt to ChatGPT `*If I gave you 10 countries: Albania, Bosnia Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, and Slovenia, could you provide me statistics from official sources or research, of how many years does each of them have inside the European Union, starting from the moment they became EU candidates?*`

[35] Created by substracting HDI of desired country *(Where would you prefer to move to? First/ Second/ Third country you favour the most)* from the HDI of origin country. Source: (HDR UNDP 2025) + (Global Data Lab 2023) for Kosovo

[36] Measured by response to *Did you vote in the last elections for the national parliament?*

[37] World Bank Indicator: NY.GDP.MKTP.CD

[38] Substituted by World Bank Indicator: NE.CON.PRVT.CD

[39] Substituted by questionnaire variable *Settlement Size*

[40] World Bank Indicator: NY.GDP.PCAP.CD

[42] World Bank Data: SL.EMP.TOTL.SP.ZS

[43] Measured by response to *Competition is harmful, it brings out the worst in people*

[44] Measured by response to *How many rooms are there in the apartment/house of your parents?*

[45] Measured by response to *What is your current employment status?* recoded from unemployed to full-time employment

[46] Measured by response to *Which of the following descriptions most adequately describes financial situation in your household?*

	View of the EU Economy[41]		
Socio-demographic	**Country size**[47] *Country volunteering rates*[48] *Country youth volunteering rates*[49] *Civil liberties*[50]	**Family Status**[51] ***Children***[52] *Living with parents*[53] *Social capital*[54] *Youth being marginalised (subjective)*[55]	***Age*** ***Gender*** *Education level*[56] **Educational background**

[41] Measured by response to: *How good or bad are, in your view, is the status of following listed values in your country and in the EU as a whole: Economic welfare of citizens: EU?*

[47] Created by giving the following prompt to ChatGPT: *If I gave you 10 countries: Albania, Bosnia Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, and Slovania, and asked you to give them a score from 1 - 10, where 1 is the smallest country in the world (by surface) and 10 is the largest (by surface), which grade would you give each?*

[48] (Krasniqi 2018; Voicu and Voicu 2009)

[49] Calculated through the dataset data

[50] (Freedom House 2024)

[51] Measured by response to *What is your current status?* measured from *single* to *married*

[52] Measured by response to *Current number of children?*

[53] Measured as a scale, detailed in Table 7

[54] Since the dataset did not allow for the creation of a scale similar to the one in (Plagnol and Huppert 2010), I have used only the response to the question *How often do you engage in Going out with friends?*

[55] Measured by response to *How many rights, in your opinion, have: Young people?* measured from *not enough* to *too many*

[56] Measured by response to *What is your highest education level completed so far?*

Personal	***Value alignment with the origin country***[57]	**Part of a migrant network**[58] **Past migration experience**[59] **Past travel experience**[60] *Past volunteering experience*[61] **Knowledge about the hosting country**[62] ***Generalised trust***[63]	**Sexual orientation**[64] *Religious*[65] *Religious attendance*[66] **Trust in other religions and nationalities**[67] ***Subjective well-being***[68]

Table 7 - List of scales that are in the regression

Scale name	Cronbach's Alpha	Explanation
Generalized_trust	0,810	A list of 8 variables comprising trust in various actors. Full list: 1. To what degree do you trust Extended family members (relatives)?;

[57] Measured as a scale, detailed in Table 7
[58] Measured by response to *Do you have an invitation or support from someone you personally know living in the most desirable host-country?*
[59] Measured by response to *Have you ever been away from your native country more than six months?*
[60] Because we had several questions that did not allow for the creation of a scale, I have introduced each of them separately: *Have you ever stayed abroad for learning or training purposes or are you currently abroad:* (Higher Education/ Secondary Education/ Vocational Education or Training/ Other)
[61] Measured by response to *Have you engaged in voluntary activity over the last 12 months, i.e. have you done any unpaid work voluntarily?*
[62] Measured as a scale, detailed in Table 7
[63] Measured as a scale, detailed in Table 7
[64] Substituted by a response to the question *Have you ever experienced discrimination because of Your sexual orientation?*
[65] Measured by response to *How important is God in your life?*
[66] Measured by response to *Apart from weddings and funerals, about how often do you attend religious services these days?*
[67] Measured by response to *To what degree do you trust People of other religions/ nationalities*
[68] Measured as a scale, detailed in Table 7

		2. […]: Friends; 3. […]: Neighbours; 4. […]: Classmates, coursemates, or work colleagues; 5. […]: Political leaders; 6. […]: People of other religions; 7. […]: People with different political convictions; 8. […]: People of other nationalities;
~~Democracy_index~~	~~0,928~~	~~A list of 4 score variables comprising country-level data for the status of liberal democracy: Freedom House, Democracy Index (EIU), Liberal Democracy Index (V-Dem), State of Democracy Index (GSoD).~~
Democracy-Development Index	0,888	A list of 8 variables encompassing variables related to democracy or development: 1. Freedom House Civil Liberty Score, 2. Democracy Index (EIU), 3. Liberal Democracy Index (V-Dem), 4. State of Democracy Index (GSoD), 5. Country Size (1-10 scale computed by ChatGPT), 6. EU Interaction (count of years since official EU candidate status was given) 7. GDP/capita[69], 8. Settlement size (1-8 scale, replacement for Regional GDP)
Value_alignment	0,916	A list of 8 variables aiming at measuring the opinion for the status of the social and political context of the respondent's country (1= very bad; 5= very good). Full List: 1. How good or bad, in your view, is the status of the following listed values in your country: Democracy?; 2. […]: The rule of law; 3. […]: Human rights; 4. […]: Economic welfare of citizens; 5. […]: Employment; 6. […]: Equality; 7. […]: Security; 8. […]: Individual Freedom;

[69] The scale did not correlate with GDP

Knowledge_country	0,945	A list of 7 variables comprising knowledge about the country of desired migration (1 = not at all; 5 = to a high extent). 1. To what extent are you familiar with the available possibilities for immigrants/foreigners in the MOST desired host country in terms of Permission to stay/remain?; 2. […]: Employment; 3. […]: Education; 4. […]: Housing; 5. […]: Healthcare; 6. […]: Welfare benefits; 7. […]: Cultural norms and values;
Living_parents	0,857	A scale of 2 variables that measures whether the person lives alone (0), with either parent (1), or both (2).
Subjective_ wellbeing	0,761	A scale of 5 variables that measure satisfaction with various life factors (1= Very dissatisfied, 5= Very satisfied). 1. To what extent are you satisfied with your family life?; 2. […]: your circle of friends; 3. […]: your education; 4. […]: your job, if relevant; 5. […]: your life in general;

The Integration Of Migrants In The European Area

Laurentiu PETRILA
Ana ORJUHOVSCHI

Abstract. This research explores the process of integrating migrants into the European area, analysing the policies and mechanisms of the European Union aimed at promoting the inclusion of third-country nationals. The study examines the Action Plan for Integration and Inclusion, 2016 Action Plan and Pact on Migration and Asylum, which seek to facilitate access to education, employment and social services. The research examines the role of the European Migration Network (EMN), including the contribution of national contact points and the Steering Committee in coordinating and exchanging good practices between Member States. The impact of the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) is also analysed across the 2014–2020 and 2021–2027 periods, as an essential financial instrument for managing migration and supporting integration. The research highlights the importance of inter-institutional cooperation and of civil society in transforming the challenges of migration into opportunities for social cohesion and sustainable development.

Keywords: integration, migration, European security, inclusion, cohesion

Introduction

Migration, as a global phenomenon, profoundly influences European security, shaping the social, economic and political dynamics of the European Union (EU). The integration of third-country nationals is a strategic pillar for consolidating cohesion and preventing risks associated with exclusion, which can generate social instability and security vulnerabilities. In this context, the EU has developed strategic frameworks such as the Action Plan for Integration and Inclusion, 2016 Action Plan and Pact on Migration and Asylum, which promote social inclusion and access to education, employment and services, reducing inequalities and intercultural tensions. The European Migration Network (EMN), through its national contact points and Steering Committee, facilitates the exchange of good practices and the coordination of policies, while the Asylum Fund, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) provides essential financial support for managing migratory flows and supporting integration. This research analyses the contribution of these mechanisms to the integration of migrants from the perspective of European security, highlighting their role in preventing systemic risks and promoting stability.

The objective of the research is to assess how EU policies and instruments support the integration of third-country nationals, strengthening European security by reducing the vulnerabilities associated with migration. The central question is: how do the EU's strategic and financial frameworks contribute to the integration of migrants in the context of European security? To answer this, the research adopts a qualitative approach based on the analysis of official EU documents, including the 2016 Action Plan, the Pact on Migration and Asylum and the AMIF reports (2014–2020 and 2021–2027). EMN reports and the contributions of the national contact

points and Steering Committee were examined, accessed from the official databases of the European Commission and the EMN, without involving primary research. The analysis focused on identifying the links between integration, social cohesion and security, evaluating the impact of AMIF funding on the management of migratory risks. Through this approach, the research contributes to the specialist literature on European security, underlining the need for integrated migration management in order to turn challenges into opportunities for sustainable development and long-term stability.

The Integration Of Migrants In The European Area

The successful integration of migrants is essential for the well-being, prosperity and future cohesion of European societies. Although responsibility for integration lies primarily with the Member States, the EU supports national and local authorities by helping them coordinate their policies, share knowledge and providing them with financial resources.

This support operates within a Union long characterised as an "archipelago of diversities", ethnic, linguistic, religious, socio-economic and cultural, in which pluralism is read as a stimulus for transformation, creativity and progress rather than as an obstacle to cohesion. Since the Maastricht Treaty (1993), and as reaffirmed in the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, the EU has assumed an explicit role in promoting cultural cooperation between Member States while respecting national and regional diversities.[1]

Action Plan for Integration and Inclusion

As emphasised in the *new Pact on Migration and Asylum*[2], a successful integration and inclusion policy is an essential part of a well-managed and effective migration and asylum policy. It is also essential for social cohesion and for a dynamic economy that works for everyone. The Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021–2027 proposes concrete actions to support Member States and other relevant stakeholders in overcoming integration challenges for migrants and EU citizens with a migrant background. Although national governments are primarily responsible for the implementation of social policies, the EU plays a key role in supporting Member States through funding, capacity-building and the creation of new partnerships.

Building on the achievements of the 2016 Action Plan on the integration of third-country nationals, the Action Plan addresses integration barriers in the main policy areas: housing, education, employment and healthcare. In particular, the actions target:

- Inclusive education and training from early childhood to higher education, with a focus on faster recognition of qualifications and on language learning, with support from EU funds.
- Increased employment opportunities and skills recognition in order to make full use of the contribution of migrant communities, especially women, and to ensure that they are supported to reach their full potential. The Commission works with social and economic partners and with employers to promote labour-market integration, support entrepreneurship and facilitate the recognition and assessment of skills by employers.

[1] Matiuța Cristina (2016), *Integration through culture: The role of cultural participation in fostering european identity*,în Stoica Alina, Horga Ioan Ribeiro Maria Manuela Tavares (eds), *Culture and Paradiplomatic Identity: Instruments in Sustaining EU Politics*, Editura Cambridge Scholars Publishing, pp. 69-70.

[2] European Council, *Pact on Migration and Asylum*, https://www.consilium.europa.eu/ro/policies/eu-migration-policy/eu-migration-asylum-reform-pact/ (Accessed on 18.06.2024)

- Equal access to healthcare services for people born outside the EU and opportunities for Member States to exchange good practices.
- Access to adequate and affordable housing financed through the European

Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund Plus, the Asylum and Migration Fund and Invest EU, as well as exchange of experience at national, local and regional level on identifying housing solutions, combating discrimination in the housing market and combating segregation[3].

The Action Plan will be implemented through the mobilisation of EU funds and the creation of partnerships with all those involved: migrants, host communities, social and economic partners, civil society and the private sector. It will seek to modernise access to services through the use of digital tools. Finally, it will improve the evidence base for further policy development and to ensure proper monitoring of results. The Action Plan builds on the achievements of the 2016 Action Plan on the integration of third-country nationals.

The 2016 Action Plan On The Integration Of Third-Country Nationals

The 2016 Action Plan on the integration of third-country nationals provides a comprehensive framework to support Member States' efforts in developing and strengthening their integration policies and sets out the concrete measures the Commission will implement to this end[4].

Although it targets all third-country nationals in the EU, it contains actions to address the specific challenges faced by refugees.

The 2016 Action Plan included actions in all policy areas that are essential for integration:

- Pre-departure and pre-arrival measures, including actions to prepare migrants and local communities for the integration process
- Education, including actions to promote language training, the participation of migrant children in early childhood education and care, teacher training and civic education
- Employment and vocational training, including actions to promote early labour-market integration and migrant entrepreneurship
- Access to basic services, such as housing and healthcare
- Active participation and social inclusion, including actions to support exchanges with the receiving society, migrants' participation in cultural life and the fight against discrimination.

It also set out tools for strengthening coordination between the various actors working on integration at national, regional and local level, for example through the European Integration Network, which promotes mutual learning between Member States, and a more strategic approach to EU funding for integration.

[3] Council of the EU, *EU policy on migration and asylum*, https://www.consilium.europa.eu/ro/policies/eu-migration-policy/ (Accessed on 18.06.2024)

[4] 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 the integration of third-country nationals, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/RO/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52016DC0377 (Accessed on 18.06.2024)

Pact On Migration And Asylum

Migration is a complex matter that requires a common European response. Account must be taken both of the safety of people seeking international protection or a better life, and of the concerns of countries that fear migration pressures will exceed their capacities. The common European response proposed by the European Commission is the Pact on Migration and Asylum, an EU framework for long-term migration management. The Pact, which was voted on by the European Parliament in April 2024, is designed to support Member States facing significant migratory pressures and which protect our external borders. At the same time, it provides certainty and clarity to people arriving in the EU[5]. It also seeks to give Europeans the assurance that migration is managed in an effective and humane manner, in full compliance with our values and with international law.

With a holistic approach, the Pact represents a new vision for migration management, intended to strengthen trust through more efficient procedures and to find a new balance between shared responsibility and solidarity[6].

- Introducing new border control procedures, improving IT systems and amending the rules on asylum applications
- Reforming the Schengen Borders Code and introducing a new strategy on the future of the Schengen area
- Improving transfer procedures for vulnerable groups and persons rescued at sea
- Attracting talent and supporting integration into local communities
- Supporting other countries hosting refugees and combating migrant smuggling
- Ensuring a common and rapid response to migration-related crises[7].

The European Migration Network

The Commission finances, through specialised funds, projects dedicated to asylum, migration and integration, established over a 7-year period[8]. The European Migration Network (EMN) is an EU network of migration and asylum experts working together to provide objective, comparable and policy-relevant information and knowledge on emerging issues related to asylum and migration in Europe.

[5] European Commission, *Pact on Migration and Asylum*, https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/promoting-our-european-way-life/migration-and-asylum/pact-migration-and-asylum_ro (Accessed on 18.06.2024)

[6] *Idem*, *Flexibility and resilience,* https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/promoting-our-european-way-life/migration-and-asylum/pact-migration-and-asylum/flexibility-and-resilience_ro (Accessed on 18.06.2024)

[7] *Ibidem*

[8] EP, *European Parliament legislative resolution of 10 April 2008 on the proposal for a Council decision establishing a European Migration Network*, https://eurlex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2009:247E:0052:0060:RO:PDF (Accessed on 18.06.2024)

The EMN was established in 2008 (Council Decision 2008/381/EC[9]) and amended by Regulation (EU) No 516/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council in April 2014[10]. The EU Commission's Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs coordinates the EMN.

EMN National Contact Points

The EMN is made up of National Contact Points (NCPs) from EMN Member States (EU Member States, with the exception of Denmark) and observer countries (NO, GE, MD, UA, ME, AM, RS), the European Commission and the EMN Service Provider (ICF))[11]. Each EMN NCP is appointed by the relevant national government. EMN NCPs are located within Ministries of the Interior, Ministries of Justice, specialised governmental agencies dealing with migration, research institutes, non-governmental organisations and national offices of international organisations.

The EMN Steering Committee

The EMN Steering Committee provides strategic guidance on EMN activities. It is chaired by the European Commission and is composed of a representative from each EU country, as well as observers from the European Parliament, Norway, Georgia and the Republic of Moldova. The European Commission is assisted in its coordinating role by a secretariat and other service providers.

The EMN produces reports, studies and other publications that analyse migration and asylum policies and track legislative developments in this field. The EMN publishes the latest developments on migration and asylum in a quarterly bulletin and maintains a glossary of terms related to migration and asylum. The Network also regularly organises webinars, round tables, conferences and other events, both at EU and national level.

EMN outputs proactively respond to the immediate information needs of EU and national policymakers. These include:

- Annual reports on migration and asylum[12]
- Studies on relevant topics
- Informs on issues of immediate priority
- Country factsheets
- Ad-hoc queries[13].

[9] EC, *Council Decision of 14 May 2008 establishing a European Migration Network,* https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32008D0381 (Accessed on 18.06.2024)

[10] EP, EC, *Regulation (EU) No 516/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 April 2014 establishing the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund*, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32014R0516 (Accessed on 18.06.2024)

[11] European Commission, *About the EMN, Who are we?*, https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/networks/european-migration-network-emn/about-emn_en (Accessed on 18.06.2024)

[12] European Commission, *EMN annual reports*, https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/networks/european-migration-network-emn/emn-publications/emn-annual-reports_en (Accessed on 18.06.2024)

[13] *Idem*, *EMN ad-hoc queries*, https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/networks/european-migration-network-emn/emn-publications/emn-ad-hoc-queries_en (Accessed on 18.06.2024)

EMN Funding

The EMN is funded by the European Commission through the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund. A biennial budget is allocated to support the work of each Member State's EMN NCP, each of which is co-financed from national funds. Work programmes biennial EMN work programmes are drawn up by the EMN and approved by the European Commission. The EMN publishes status reports on progress made in implementing the EMN work programmes[14].

Asylum, Migration And Integration Funds

The Commission finances, through specialised funds, projects dedicated to asylum, migration and integration, established over a 7-year period.

The Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (2014–2020)

The Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) was set up for the 2014–20 period, with a total of EUR 3.137 billion for the seven years. It will promote the efficient management of migration flows and the implementation, strengthening and development of a common Union approach to asylum and immigration. This fund will contribute to the achievement of four specific objectives:

- Asylum: strengthening and developing the Common European Asylum System, ensuring that EU legislation in this area is applied efficiently and uniformly;
- Legal migration and integration : supporting legal migration to EU countries in line with labour-market needs and promoting the effective integration of non-EU nationals;
- Return: improving fair and effective return strategies, which contribute to combating illegal migration, with a focus on the sustainability and effectiveness of the return process;
- Solidarity: ensuring that EU countries most affected by migration and asylum flows can count on the solidarity of other EU countries.

This fund will also provide financial resources for the activities and future development of the European Migration Network (EMN). The EMN aims to meet the needs of EU institutions and of EU countries' authorities and institutions for information on migration and asylum by providing up-to-date, objective, reliable and comparable data, with a view to supporting the policymaking process.

Special financial incentives have been included in AMIF for EU countries to support the Union Resettlement Programme, including with a focus on the Union's common priorities. A similar financial mechanism is provided for the transfer of beneficiaries of international protection from an EU country under high migratory pressure to another[15]. All EU countries, except for Denmark, participate in the implementation of this fund. Examples of beneficiaries of programmes implemented under this Fund may be state and federal authorities, local public bodies, non-governmental organisations, humanitarian organisations, private and public-law companies, and educational and research organisations[16].

[14] *Ibidem*

[15] Council of the EU, *EU policy on migration and asylum*, https://www.consilium.europa.eu/ro/policies/eu-migration-policy/ (Accessed on 18.06.2024)

[16] EU, *Funding, grants and subsidies from the European Union*, https://european-union.europa.eu/live-work-study/funding-grants-subsidies_ro (Accessed on 18.06.2024)

The Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (2021–2027)

The Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) is set up for the 2021–2027 period, with a total of EUR 9.88 billion. The Fund seeks to further boost national capacities and improve migration management procedures, and to enhance solidarity and the sharing of responsibilities between Member States, in particular through emergency assistance and the relocation mechanism[17].

AMIF will contribute to the achievement of four specific objectives:

- to strengthen and develop all aspects of the Common European Asylum System, including its external dimension
- to support legal migration to the Member States, including by contributing to the integration of third-country nationals
- to contribute to combating illegal migration and to ensuring effective return and readmission to third countries
- to enhance solidarity and the sharing of responsibility between the Member States, in particular towards those most affected by the challenges related to migration and asylum

Actions funded under AMIF may include a wide range of initiatives, such as[18]:

- ensuring uniform application of the EU acquis (common set of rules) and of priorities related to the Common European Asylum System, legal migration and return
- providing support and services in line with the status and needs of the person concerned, in particular vulnerable groups
- supporting resettlement, humanitarian admission and transfers of applicants for and beneficiaries of international protection
- supporting the development and implementation of policies to promote legal migration, such as developing mobility schemes to the EU and raising awareness of the appropriate legal channels for immigration
- supporting integration measures tailored to the needs of third-country nationals and early integration programmes that focus on education, languages and other forms of training (such as civic-orientation courses and vocational guidance) in order to prepare their active participation and their acceptance by the receiving society.
- supporting reception infrastructures for third-country nationals, including the possible joint use of such facilities by more than one Member State
- supporting an integrated and coordinated approach to return management at EU and Member State level, building capacity for effective and sustainable return, and reducing incentives for illegal migration
- supporting assisted voluntary return and reintegration

[17] EP, *Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (2021–2027)*, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/RO/legal-content/summary/asylum-migration-and-integration-fund-2021-2027.html (Accessed on 18.06.2024)

[18] European Commission, Funded actions under AMIF, https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/funding/asylum-migration-and-integration-funds/asylum-migration-and-integration-fund-2021-2027_en (Accessed on 18.06.2024)

- cooperation with third countries on asylum, legal migration and combating irregular migration, as well as on effective return and readmission for the purpose of migration management[19].

Examples of beneficiaries of programmes implemented under AMIF may include:

- state and federal authorities
- local public bodies
- non-governmental organisations
- humanitarian organisations
- private and public-law companies
- education and research organisations[20].

Following Ireland's official notification of 7 February 2022 to opt in to AMIF, the Commission confirmed Ireland's participation in AMIF by Decision (EU) 2022/507 of 29 March 2022[21]. Ireland therefore participates in AMIF from 7 February 2022. Irish beneficiaries are thus eligible alongside other EU countries, with the exception of Denmark, which does not participate in AMIF, in accordance with Articles 1 and 2 of Protocol No 22 on the position of Denmark, annexed to the Treaty on European Union (TEU) and to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU)[22]. Third countries, non-EU countries, may be associated with AMIF and eligible for funding, provided they have signed an agreement with the EU on the criteria and mechanisms for determining the EU country responsible for examining an asylum application lodged in an EU country or in that third country[23].

The specific agreement covering the participation of a third country in AMIF must at least:

- allow cooperation with the EU country and with EU institutions, bodies, offices and agencies in the field of asylum, migration and return, in the spirit of the principle of solidarity and the fair sharing of responsibilities
- be underpinned, throughout the Fund's duration, by the principles of non-refoulement, democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights
- ensure a fair balance regarding the contributions and benefits received by the third country participating in the fund;
- lay down the conditions for participation in the fund, including the calculation of financial contributions to the fund and its administrative costs;
- not confer on the third country any decision-making power as regards the fund

[19] *Idem*, *Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund*, https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/funding/asylum-migration-and-integration-funds/asylum-migration-and-integration-fund-2021-2027_en (Accessed on 18.06.2024)

[20] European Commission, *AMIF beneficiaries*, https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/funding/asylum-migration-and-integration-funds/asylum-migration-and-integration-fund-2021-2027_en (Accessed on 18.06.2024)

[21] European Commission, *Ireland and Denmark*, https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/funding/asylum-migration-and-integration-funds/asylum-migration-and-integration-fund-2021-2027_en (Accessed on 18.06.2024)

[22] *Ibidem*

[23] European Commission, *Associated countries*, https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/funding/asylum-migration-and-integration-funds/asylum-migration-and-integration-fund-2021-2027_en (Accessed on 18.06.2024)

- guarantee the EU's rights to ensure sound financial management and to protect its financial interests
- provide for the third country to grant the necessary rights and access to the responsible authorising officer, OLAF and the Court of Auditors[24].

In addition, the participation of the third country should also be covered by the annual or multiannual AMIF work programme. Currently, there are no associated countries, nor are any negotiating their association with AMIF.

Conclusions

The integration of migrants in the European area is a major challenge, but also an opportunity to strengthen social and economic cohesion in the European Union. The process requires well-coordinated policies that ensure the inclusion of third-country nationals in all aspects of social, economic and cultural life. Action plans, such as the 2016 Action Plan for the integration of migrants and the Pact on Migration and Asylum, set out strategic frameworks that promote rights and access to education, employment and social services, contributing to the reduction of inequalities and to the fight against discrimination. Beyond formal access, however, the academic literature has insisted that genuine integration requires a "legal and institutional framework" for intercultural education, in which the specific characteristics and particularities of minority and migrant communities are not only safeguarded through adequate provision but also reflected in the school curricula of the majority itself.[25]

The European Migration Network (EMN) plays a crucial role in this context, facilitating the exchange of information and good practices between Member States through the national contact points and the Steering Committee. It supports the development of informed, evidence-based policies and strengthens cooperation at European level. Equally, the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF), implemented over the 2014–2020 and 2021–2027 periods, has provided essential financial resources for managing migratory flows, supporting integration and strengthening the capacities of Member States in managing asylum.

Beyond institutional coordination, however, the durable inclusion of migrants also rests on the mediating capacity of civil society, considered in the literature one of the most important regulatory mechanisms of democratic societies. Civil society organisations, structured around members who serve the general interest through democratic processes, operate as intermediaries between public authorities and citizens, and where necessary as amenders of policies and practices on the ground[26], a function that becomes particularly salient in the field of migrant integration, where access to housing, education, employment and healthcare is shaped daily by the work of non-governmental and community actors alongside state institutions.

---

[24] European Commission, *Associated countries*, https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/funding/asylum-migration-and-integration-funds/asylum-migration-and-integration-fund-2021-2027_en (Accessed on 18.06.2024)

[25] Brie, Mircea, *National Minorities: Levels of Educational Analysis*, în Polgár, István; Horga, Ioan; Brie, Mircea (eds.) (2017), *Migration and European Integration of Minorities*, Saarbrücken: Lambert Academic Publishing, p. 17.

[26] Brie, Mircea; Costea, Ana Maria; Petrila, Laurențiu (2023), „Perceptions of Civil Society in Armenia and Azerbaijan in the Context of the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict", *Civil Szemle*, vol. XX, nr. 2, p. 101.

The success of migrant integration depends on the continued commitment of European institutions, national authorities and civil society, which must work together to create an inclusive and fair environment. The consistent allocation of financial and human resources, together with the promotion of intercultural dialogue, is essential to transforming the challenges generated by migration into opportunities for sustainable development. In this way, the European Union can build a more diverse, resilient and united society, capable of responding to the global dynamics of migration.

References

Brie, Mircea, National Minorities: Levels of Educational Analysis, în Polgár, István; Horga, Ioan; Brie, Mircea (eds.) (2017), Migration and European Integration of Minorities, Saarbrücken: Lambert Academic Publishing.

Brie, Mircea; Costea, Ana Maria; Petrila, Laurențiu (2023), „Perceptions of Civil Society in Armenia and Azerbaijan in the Context of the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict", Civil Szemle, vol. XX, nr. 2.

Matiuța Cristina (2016), Integration through culture: The role of cultural participation in fostering european identity, în Stoica Alina, Horga Ioan Ribeiro Maria Manuela Tavares (eds), Culture and Paradiplomatic Identity: Instruments in Sustaining EU Politics, Editura Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

EC, Council Decision of 14 May 2008 establishing a European Migration Network, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32008D0381

European Commission, Associated countries, https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/funding/asylum-migration-and-integration-funds/asylum-migration-and-integration-fund-2021-2027_en

European Commission, Ireland and Denmark, https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/funding/asylum-migration-and-integration-funds/asylum-migration-and-integration-fund-2021-2027_en

European Commission, AMIF beneficiaries, https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/funding/asylum-migration-and-integration-funds/asylum-migration-and-integration-fund-2021-2027_en

European Commission, Funded actions under AMIF, https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/funding/asylum-migration-and-integration-funds/asylum-migration-and-integration-fund-2021-2027_en

European Commission, About the EMN, Who are we?, https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/networks/european-migration-network-emn/about-emn_en

Council of the EU, EU policy on migration and asylum, https://www.consilium.europa.eu/ro/policies/eu-migration-policy/

EP, EC, Regulation (EU) No 516/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 April 2014 establishing the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32014R0516

EP, European Parliament legislative resolution of 10 April 2008 on the proposal for a Council decision establishing a European Migration Network, https://eurlex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2009:247E:0052:0060:RO:PDF

EP, The Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (2021–2027), https://eur-lex.europa.eu/RO/legal-content/summary/asylum-migration-and-integration-fund-2021-2027.html

EU, Funding, grants and subsidies from the European Union, https://european-union.europa.eu/live-work-study/funding-grants-subsidies_ro

Journal of Identity and Migration Studies
JIMS – Volume 19, number 2, 2025

Lived Experiences and Coping Strategies of Nigerian Immigrants Facing Xenophobia in South Africa: a Qualitative Phenomenological Study

Olawale James GBADEYAN
Eyitayo J. OYEYIPO
Olubukola M. ARATUNDE
Ademolu O. ADENUGA
Esther Olapeju FAGBEWESA

Abstract. This Xenophobia towards the African migrants is a constant social problem in South Africa, where Nigerian immigrants are often discriminated against, stereotyped and socially excluded. This qualitative phenomenological study examines the lived experiences of Nigerian immigrants regarding xenophobia and the strategies they use to cope with daily life. Using semi-structured in-depth interviews with 30 Nigerian immigrants living in Johannesburg and Cape Town, the study employed Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) to examine participants' meaning-making processes. Four interrelated themes emerged: (1) everyday experiences of xenophobic hostility and marginalisatiomen, (2) psychological and emotional consequences of discrimination, (3) institutional and structural constraints, (4) resilience and adaptive coping strategies. The findings show that xenophobia is not confined to episodic violence, but is implicated in routine social and institutional interaction. Coping strategies involved dependence upon ethnic networks, religious faith, entrepreneurial self-reliance, emotional control, and future-aimed hope. The study adds phenomenological insight into the subjective realities of Nigerian immigrants and underscores the need for inclusive migration policies and psychosocial support interventions.

Keywords: xenophobia, Nigerian immigrants, phenomenology, qualitative research, coping strategies, migration.

Introduction

Trends in international migration within the African continent have advanced significantly in recent decades, and this process can be explained by the uneven nature of developmental trends, frequent political crises, and the growth of transnational networks (Castles, de Haas and Miller, 2014). In this scenario, South Africa is one of the most economically developed polities on the continent, thus being a key destination for migrants across sub-Saharan Africa due to employment opportunities, security, and social progress (Crush and Ramachandran, 2014). However, the nation has also experienced a series of Xenophobic violence and everyday discrimination against African immigrants, which in turn creates a situation of paradox wherein South Africa is both a place of opportunities and the enforced mechanisms of extreme exclusion.

The xenophobia phenomenon is an extensive one in South Africa and is well documented as a long-term social construct that has its basis in historical, political and economic imbalances. Scholars, including Crush (2008) and Neocosmos (2010), argued that the socio-economic restructuring that occurred in the post-apartheid period, the high rate of unemployment, and limited access to national resources have intensified the perception of competition between citizens and non-nationals. In general discourse, migrants are often depicted as a danger to the economic stability and social order. This hostility has, at times, culminated in massive violence, displacement and loss of life with long-term psychological and social impacts on the migrant communities (Landau, 2011).

Nigerian immigrants occupy a very stigmatised role in popular and institutional discourses among the African migrants in South Africa. Oftentimes, they have been stereotyped as criminals, drug dealers and fraudulent economists, stereotypes that are spread through media images and in day-to-day encounters (Neocosmos, 2010). Such images influence people's sentiments and the policies of institutions such as policing, labour, and the provision of housing and social services. Empirical analysis indicates that Nigerian migrants often face racialised surveillance, verbal harassment, and lack of access to social and economic opportunities in urban social settings like Johannesburg and Cape Town (Crush and Ramachandran, 2014). These events add to the sense of insecurity and alienation as well as psychological distress, which complicate social integration and belonging.

In spite of the fact that structural factors of xenophobia have been studied in a rather profound manner, there is a relative lack of studies that focus on the subjective experiences of migrants regarding discrimination and exclusion. The extant literature, to a large extent, relies on macro-level attitudes that focus on policy failures, economic competition, and nationalistic visions (Crush, 2008; Landau, 2011). Although these methods offer significant contextual explanations, they usually hide the way in which xenophobia is practised in normal life by its victims. The constructionist approach to xenophobia should not only dismiss it as a burst of violence or rhetoric but also undermine its everyday forms, such as micro-aggressions, social distancing, and everyday institutional obstacles. An increasing body of qualitative research indicates that these daily experiences become a core part of migrants' well-being, their identity negotiation, and their obligation to belong to host societies (Adjai and Lazaridis, 2013).

Phenomenological methods provide a methodological and epistemological approach to filling this gap by preempting lived experience and meaning-making. Inspired by the philosophical tradition of Martin Heidegger, interpretive phenomenology focuses on how people give meaning to their experiences in particular socio-historical circumstances. In this sense, xenophobia is not a remote and external social phenomenon but a process, which is given a meaning by the embodied experience of hostility and exclusion along with the ability of migrants in daily life to resist such experiences. Therefore, phenomenological enquiry will facilitate a subtle discussion of the perceptions, interpretations and reactions of Nigerian immigrants to xenophobia in South Africa, and will unveil the affective hues and existential resonances of marginalisation, most frequently overlooked by quantitative surveys and policy investigations.

Current empirical research on the African migrants in South Africa has shown that the xenophobia experiences are not limited to incidences of extreme violence but are entrenched in the daily social and institutional relationships. Migrants often argued that there is discriminatory treatment in the labour market, policing, access to health care, and the housing market, which, in

totality, adds to structural vulnerability (Adjai and Lazaridis, 2013). Such daily exclusions shape what can be called a chronic feeling of precarity, as well as how migrants navigate city life and interpersonal relations. Such experiences are further enhanced by racialisation stereotyping that makes Nigerian immigrants hyper-visible as foreigners and immoral outsiders (Neocosmos, 2010). The combination of racialisation, nationality, and migrant status, therefore, generates a particular type of social marginalisation, which is worth a particular scholarly interest.

Although the topic of xenophobia in South Africa has become increasingly popular, few studies have considered the issue using the phenomenological approach when addressing the lives of Nigerian immigrants, in particular. This is a profound place of ignorance, considering the high presence of Nigerians in the publicity about migration and crime, as well as their notable presence in the economic sectors of urban settings. With the focus on the accounts of the Nigerian immigrants, the current work adds to a more refined perception of how xenophobia is practised, negotiated and challenged in daily existence. These findings are a crucial source of information concerning the migration governance framework, social cohesion programs, and psychosocial support interventions designed to support inclusivity and wellbeing among migrant communities.

Based on the aforementioned, this study intends to provide answers to the following research questions: (1) How do the Nigerian immigrants experience xenophobia in South Africa in their daily lives, and (2) What coping mechanisms do they use to manage and make sense of these experiences? The study will use a qualitative phenomenological approach to produce in-depth, context-based knowledge that will supplement current macro-level examinations and form part of arguments on migration, belonging, and social exclusion in modern societies worldwide.

Literature Review

Of Xenophobia, Patterns, Impact And Coping Strategies

Xenophobia, often defined as the fear or hatred of that which is perceived to be foreign or "other" has become a central concept in migration research, particularly in contexts where host populations interpret immigration as a threat to economic, political, or cultural stability (Crush & Ramachandran, 2014). The research on xenophobia explains that it is not only part of episodic violence, but rather takes root in the everyday discrimination, stereotyping, and institutional prejudice experienced by migrants (Mpofu, 2020). Several scholars, including Mpofu (2020), Osunkunle (2023) and Mgogo & Osunkunle (2023), have argued that xenophobic attitudes are developed and strengthened by discursive processes that portray migrants as economic risks or moral annoyers. The common depictions by the media are that immigrants are illegal, criminal or a burden, and thus, the exclusionary attitudes are normalised. These accounts perpetuate the existence of xenophobia by instilling biased views into the discourse and policy discussions, making xenophobic exclusion a product and a perpetuator of structural injustices in host communities.

The modern xenophobia in South Africa is determined by the socio-historical context. Apartheid left behind its legacy of deep structural inequalities that have remained central in the migration policies and the general attitude of people towards non-nationals (Crush, 2008). Historical reviews indicate that the post-apartheid identity politics were characterised by attempts at tightening the citizenship borders, and migrants, especially African-Other immigrants, were often formed as outsiders (Akinrinde & Tar, 2020). These processes have influenced institutional practices, policing and attitudes of the communities, thus creating a repetitive xenophobic hostility.

Empirical reviews show that xenophobic activities in South Africa are not only the result of individual social tensions but are also supported by systemic variables like lack of employment, poverty, uneven development, etc. The disregard of structural differences contributes to the scapegoating discourse, which makes migrants easy targets of the wider socio-economic discontent (Ngcamu, 2025; Crush and Ramachandran, 2014). The xenophobic riots that hit the non-nationals in May 2008 are still historic in the contemporary history of South Africa, and violence broke out in major urban centres, leading to deaths, displacement, and destruction of migrants-owned property (South Africa Riot, 2008). The following outbreaks and periodic conflicts depict that xenophobia is not a historical oddity but a repetitive theme in post-apartheid South Africa. Patterns of habitual discrimination against migrants in relation to housing, policing, employment and access to basic services are always established in the literature. Such daily omissions accumulate to form a social atmosphere of othering and marginalisation (Ngcamu, 2025; Mgogo and Osunkunle, 2023). Migrants complain of not being treated equally in certain areas, including hospitals, where healthcare providers and officials are biased, and in workplaces, where they experience unfair layoffs or restrictions (Mgogo & Osunkunle, 2023).

Even though the topics of African migrants to South Africa are researched on a variety of nationalities, Nigerian immigrants tend to become a highly stigmatised group, both in society and in scholarly literature. This is based on problematic media representations that Nigerians are associated with criminality and illicit activities, although evidence shows these generalisations have not been empirically proven. There has been a lot of propagation of stereotypes regarding the participation of Nigerians in organised crime, which reinforces the xenophobic ideals (Ngcamu, 2025).

The research on Nigerians in South Africa maintains that xenophobia of this group is more of a socio-political panic than a factual evaluation of the input of immigrants (Olaniyi, 2009). The continuation of negative stereotypes weakens migrants' access to social capital and economic opportunities. It is also shown in literature that xenophobia is not just manifested against Nigerian migrants in the form of violence, but it is also manifested in the form of microaggressions, institutional mistrust, and social marginalisation. Research on the reactions of the Nigerian immigrants reveals that migrants are taking proactive measures to struggle with xenophobia rather than passively as victims (Lombard, 2023).

The xenophobic consequences of migration on migrants go beyond the physical damages to include the long-term emotional and psychological health consequences. According to qualitative studies, lack of protection by the law enforcement is one of the factors that record discrimination, fear, uncertainty, identity crisis and vulnerability as some of the psychological outcomes (Nyikadzino, 2023). The findings are also in line with the psychological studies on acculturative stress that have found the tension of coping with hostile social environments to be a predictor of anxiety, depression, and low levels of life satisfaction in migrants. Literature on acculturation demonstrates that it is the state of marginalisation, which is the absence of attachment to host or origin cultures, that is linked to the worst mental health outcomes (Guvercin et.al., 2024).

Sociological research on xenophobia has a focus on its role as an identity boundary maintenance mechanism. Even when faced with political and moral obligations regarding human rights, host populations can resort to exclusion to strengthen a sense of national belonging and social solidarity (Mpofu, 2020). This process is consistent with general intergroup relations

theories, in which out-group threat to superior group status elicits protective reactions towards out-groups. Media and everyday discourse on culture are important element that contributes to the development of xenophobic attitudes. A study of South African university students demonstrates the spread of negative stereotypes in print media and social discourse, where immigrants are portrayed as undeserving of existence as others, and these impressions affect younger generations (Mgogo & Osunkunle, 2023). Such xenophobic discourses, which are propagated by the media, legitimise exclusion and ascribe socio-economic issues to the existence of migrants.

Due to the high levels of xenophobia in host settings, studies have also focused on the process of coping with exclusion and hostility among migrants. The conceptualisation of coping strategies among immigrant populations is situated within the acculturation framework, with a focus on how individuals negotiate identity, belonging, and cultural participation in new settings (Berry, 1997). It has been found that social support, religion, community entrepreneurship, and emotional regulation strategies can serve as protective measures against the adverse outcomes of discrimination.

Adaptive coping strategies are associated with better psychological well-being and longer duration of migration. Research on immigrant populations indicates that integration, which is defined as participation in the host society while retaining cultural affiliations, produces the most positive psychological outcomes (Guvercin, 2024). Nevertheless, endemic xenophobia poses serious obstacles to integration, which in most cases compel the migrants to engage in other modes of resilience that give more priority to the survival of the community, rather than general socio-cultural integration.

Research Methodology

The study adopted a qualitative phenomenological approach to probe the life experiences and coping mechanisms of the Nigerian immigrants in the South African context when faced by xenophobia. Phenomenology provides a powerful means of exploring how people experience, interpret, and give meaning to their corporeal and socio-cultural experiences, especially within limited socio-historical tapestries (Creswell and Poth, 2018; Gbadeyan and Osadola, 2023; Gbadeyan et al., 2024). The study was informed by an interpretive-phenomenological position and presupposed the emergence of meaning-making in the quotidian lifeworlds of the participants, drawing on the philosophical tradition of Martin Heidegger. This orientation allowed a penetrating analysis of xenophobia as a socio-psychological rift in the daily practice, but not a series of violent events.

Purposive sampling was strategically used to sample the Nigerian immigrants who were staying within the metropolitan centres that have a historical record of xenophobic conflict, especially in Johannesburg and Cape Town. Inclusion criteria required that one be a citizen of Nigeria, aged at least 18, and a resident of South Africa for at least 5 years. This criterion ensured that the subjects were well attuned to the host sociopolitical setting, enabling meaningful consideration of xenophobic experiences. Hence, 30 respondents were purposively selected for in-depth interviews, in line with the traditional breadth of sample recommended for interpretative phenomenological analysis (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009), which emphasises depth rather than numerical breadth. Recruitment was done through community organisations, migrant associations and informal snowballing networks.

The rich data were collected through in-depth, semi-structured interviews lasting 60-90 minutes. Interview questions were carefully designed to elicit descriptions of xenophobic encounters, emotional and psychological reactions, perceived consequences for everyday life, and coping strategies. The use of open-ended questions encouraged reflexive discourse and enabled participants to express their experiences in their own words. The sessions were conducted in English, audio-recorded with informed consent, and transcribed word-for-word. Field notes and reflexive memos were recorded alongside observations of the environment and emerging analytical impressions, thereby enhancing methodological transparency (Creswell and Poth, 2018).

The collected data were analysed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), following the systematic protocol outlined by Smith et al. (2009). The methodology stages included iterative reading of the transcript, line-by-line coding, theme emergence, thematic clustering, and cross-case interpretative synthesis. The idiographic orientation of IPA helped examine each participant's meaning construction in a granular manner before developing themes. Peer debriefing and reflexive journaling were established to enhance the rigour of analysis and address the possible research bias. Analytical decisions were carefully documented in an audit trail and this enhanced the credibility of the study.

Findings and Discussions

This section presents the empirical results of the phenomenological investigation conducted through in-depth interviews with Nigerian immigrants living in Johannesburg and Cape Town. The results directly address the research objectives stated in the study: to examine the lived experiences of Nigerian immigrants facing xenophobia in the South African sociopolitical context, and to investigate the coping mechanisms they have adopted to manage the negativity. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) identified four superordinate themes, which were interrelated; (1) quotidian manifestations of xenophobic hostility; (2) affective and psychological sequelae of exclusion; (3) institutionalised discrimination and structural vulnerability; and (4) resilience, coping, and meaning-making. These themes summarise the short-term and long-term effects of xenophobia on the lifeworlds of participants, as well as how they interpret their lives to find a way to navigate hostile social environments.

Theme 1: Day-to-day experiences of Xenophobic Hostility and Othering.

Respondents who participated in the research described xenophobia as an omnipresent element in mundane practices, as opposed to a deviation. Instances of hostility were reported across a range of social spaces, including transit centres, workplaces, residential neighbourhoods, and commercial areas. Stories revealed the frequent verbal harassment, the usage of derogatory epithets, and suspicion that was based solely on national origin or accent. These types of interactions developed a long-standing sense of being marked as an outsider in the routine social interactions.

Some of the respondents narrated how their everyday activities, such as shopping, using a transport system, or even conversation, were nascently marked by exclusionary cues. Indicatively, many participants complained that service staff often ignored them, spoke to them in an arrogant manner, or told them they were stealing their jobs. A respondent noted that

"Sometimes even you do not need to say something. As soon as they listen to your accent, they change their face. Before you open your mouth, they scrutinise you as if you are trouble". Male-34-Years Old

The respondents also explained how xenophobia became practised by hegemonic stereotyping, especially the connection of the Nigerians with crimes and fraud. These stereotypes were seen as highly dehumanising, reducing people to one stigmatised identity and disregarding personal histories, qualifications and aspirations. Another respondent also revealed that Nigerians are not viewed as other humans or migrants who have come to earn a living; they are seen as Nigerian, and that is it. Then you are already condemned. Another notable trend in the interviews was the prevalence of verbal harassment and microaggressions. Respondents claimed that they were being given pejorative epithets, mocked because of their accents or scapegoats for socio-economic woes and problems. These interactions were usually carried out openly, such as in the street, on transport, in shops, and at the workplace. One participant recounted:

When I go out and have to greet, or when they come to my shop where I sell, some of them (South Africans) change their voices as soon as they hear my Nigerian accent. They say things like, You Nigerians are the cause of the majority problem here. The number of such utterances is such that I can look forward to them every time I go outside". Female-42-Years Old

The humiliation and verbal aggressions, according to the Nigerians, have been characterised as normal insults which have entered the social fabric in the country. Most respondents revealed that it is not necessarily about screaming and fighting, but the everyday indirect comments and verbal abuse. For instance, when somebody passes derogatory comments such as "it is time that you go back home, we are losing our jobs to you people". They may actually offer it as a joke, but it is no longer a joke when it is heard on day to day basis. The cumulative effects of such microaggressions create a sense of unwelcome. The fact remains that even when comments are made in a joking manner, they still carry an underlying aggression as they assert their outsider status. Some respondents observed that such statements are especially painful when made openly, thereby exposing them to humiliation and social stigma.

Importantly, Nigerians living in South Africa have stressed the chronic nature of daily xenophobia; as a result, numerous behavioural changes in social settings were documented to prevent conflict, such as minimising social engagements, avoiding specific neighbourhoods, or concealing aspects of self. These adaptation strategies are representative examples of how xenophobia reformulates the embodied presence of migrants in the host society, forcing them to work out the issues of safety and belonging in everyday situations. Similarly, they also face consistent labelling as foreigners in their everyday interactions, often before any substantive interaction has occurred. Accent, skin tone, and mannerisms are signs that others may classify as outsider traits, a participant explicated that:

They already know that I am not one of them, even before I reveal my identity. The moment they noticed this, everything changed. You may not be seen as an ordinary person again, but as Nigeria, which should not be given an opportunity to excel. Male-Postgraduate Students 40-Years Old

Most of the time, the instant classification determines the direction and content of subsequent communication. The participants explained how they are regarded as being Nigerian as a trigger to suspicion and emotional isolation. Being labelled a foreigner also involves constant doubts about belonging. Even years after living in the country, respondents reported that they

were repeatedly questioned about how long they intended to remain or when they would return home. These types of inquiries are viewed as a symbolic expulsion of the social community. The unremitting othering reinforces participants' social identity, reinforcing the view that their existence in South Africa is contingent and temporary, regardless of their legal or unlawful status or social contributions.

Theme 2: Xenophobia Emotional and Psychological Impact.

The psychological and emotional impacts of xenophobia have emerged as widespread and highly reflected dimensions of the realities of the lives of Nigerian immigrants in South Africa. Through the participants' storylines, xenophobia does not only express itself as external social enmity but also as an internal mental load that shapes a sense of self, emotional management, and relationships with the host society. Instead of isolated episodes of discrimination or even violence, xenophobia is lived as a chronic illness, which builds up emotional tension over the course of time. This chronicity lies at the core of respondents' descriptions of distress, who, in the course of frequent exposure to hostility, have had their resilience eroded; this becomes a slow destruction of emotional strength and personal sense of safety.

A strong emotional expression is the fear, or affective orientation, that organises daily behaviour and expectancy plans for how to meet someone. Nigerian migrants explained fear not only as a response to previous events but also as an anticipatory condition that shapes future interaction expectations. Although it is not an explicit aggression, Nigerians mention that they still experience a feeling of some form of unease in social places, which is based on the uncertainty of xenophobic interactions. One of the respondents indicated that: “You no longer wait until something bad occurs. It is already preparing you with your mind”. This anticipatory fear helps create a constant state of psychological tension in which every daily activity, such as commuting, seeking services, or meeting strangers, becomes infused with emotion. The sustained vigilance of the social settings to notice any dangerous situation creates a certain hypervigilance, which, according to the participants, is mentally fatigating.

In addition to fear, the Nigerian migrants describe the humiliation and shame resulting from instances of denigration in the public as psychological tensions. Xenophobic experiences are seen as attacks on dignity, especially when the victims are humiliated in the presence of other people. These instances cannot be readily dismissed as mere insults, but they are internalised as symbolic messages of social value and inclusion. According to one of the interviewed respondents in Johannesburg:

“it leaves an imprint when they call you names in front of people. You begin to wonder whether this is the way they think of you or it is who you are”

Such humiliations in experiences interfere with the sense of social legitimacy of Nigerian migrants and add to the sense of reduced self-worth. In the long run, habitual exposure to demeaning treatment weakens self-concept, leaving participants with a sense of perpetual need to explain their existence in the host society.

Emotional exhaustion is also among the effects that the respondents report about being exposed to xenophobia. The emotional strain required to control responses, repress anger, and stay calm and composed during aggressive interactions causes exhaustion. Some of the participants report feeling tired on the inside or feeling numb, and this conveys that they have developed coping strategies that entail distancing themselves from emotions as a result of lengthy

exposure to discrimination. Although emotional withdrawal serves as a protection mechanism against instant distress, it has psychological expenses in the long run. The majority of Nigerians admit that when they suppress emotional reactions, their ability to empathise, trust, and be emotionally open in social relations is limited. One of the participants comments that "you begin to seal your heart a bit, since when you experience everything, it becomes too bulky to bear". Although this emotional withdrawal is an adaptive mechanism in the short run, it risks increasing social isolation and limiting the prospects for productive interpersonal interaction.

Management of anger, therefore, becomes another emotional burden that supplements the psychological xenophobic burden. Along with short-term emotional reactions, Nigerian migrants report more lasting effects related to identity and sense of belonging. The experiences of xenophobia confront the Nigerians with their self-comprehensions as befitting the social community, and a negotiation of identity in relation to exclusion continues to take place. Most of the respondents claim to be caught between belonging and non-belonging, physically present there in South Africa, but symbolically located outside the ethical confines of social inclusion. The liminal status creates a state of existential distress, with the participants grappling with the desire to stay stable and have a place in the world, and with the constant reminders of unbelonging. This identity conflict has affected them emotionally, as evidenced by the respondents' descriptions of loneliness, disillusionment, and rootlessness. To others, the long-term exposure to xenophobia also makes one wonder whether long-term residence in South Africa can be done emotionally.

The experiences of the Nigerian migrants in South Africa also indicate the role of xenophobia in interpersonal mistrust and relationship openness. Recurrent instances of antagonism lead to widespread suspicion among members of the host community, which in turn prompts them to adopt defensive social stances. Such a loss of trust is not only within the context of a one-on-one deal but also within a broader view of the social institution, in which players say they no longer believe the authorities or service providers will be able to help them in times of need. The psychological implications of the loss of trust include the constriction of social worlds and Nigerian migrants finding themselves increasingly dependent on co-ethnic networks as sources of emotional security. As important as such networks are, the shrinking of social horizons also imposes restrictions on cross-cultural interaction and social assimilation, further consolidating patterns of social division.

Although they are all emotionally and psychologically overwhelming, participants' accounts also include instances of resilience and emotional meaning-making. Other participants define reframing xenophobic experiences as expressions of structural injustice and not personal failure, which helps them to defend their self-esteem. One interviewee notes, "I remind myself of the fact that this is their issues, not my worthiness". This cognitive reframing can be considered a significant emotional coping mechanism as it enables the participants to dissociate personal identity with stigmatising accounts. Some say they had to rely on their religious beliefs, life ambitions, or future aspirations to remain hopeful amid perpetual misery. These meaning-making activities do not remove the emotional suffering but offer interpretive resources by which the sufferers may place their plight in a wider discourse of survival and meaning.

Theme 3: Institutionalised Discrimination and Structural Vulnerability.

In addition to interpersonal aggression, respondents revealed that they experienced xenophobia at the institutional and structural levels. The experiences of Nigerian migrants are

clear testimonies indicating that xenophobia is not just a hostility levelled at an individual level, but is actually interwoven with the institutional edifice and wider structural framework that determines the day-to-day life of the Nigerian immigrants in South Africa. Institutionalised discrimination manifests itself in interactions with employers, law enforcement, landlords, and those who provide public services, which creates a feeling of total vulnerability and precarity. These are not singular anomalies but structural exchanges in which a systematic restriction on socio-economic progress and entrenched marginalisation within the host society are sustained. Nigerians reported being treated discriminately by employers, landlords, and law enforcement officials. These experiences were found to be more harmful than typical verbal animosity, as they had a direct impact on livelihoods, housing security, and individual safety.

In the labour and employment sector, the majority of respondents narrated experiences of unequal treatment amounting to structural injustices, not just single-handed prejudices. Many Nigerians claimed that they were not engaged in formal jobs, even with relevant qualifications, or were marginalised into precarious employment characterised by low wages and poor job security. In similar cases, Nigerian immigrants were paid less than their South-African counterparts when doing the same jobs, some were not given the appropriate promotion or were sacked without adhering to the due process. Some others said they were exposed to extra scrutiny during hiring or were asked to submit more paperwork than their domestic counterparts. A participant narrated that:

"When they (South Africans) need hardworking people, they are eager to recommend us(Nigerians); however, when a problem arises, they tell you that it is because you are a foreigner. When a promotion comes around, then you are not really needed anymore."

These statements reflect empirical evidence that migrants in South Africa are overrepresented in precarious industries and face discriminatory employment opportunities, thereby increasing their economic vulnerability (Crush and Ramachandran, 2014). Institutional reproduction of inequality as a means of market exclusion continues in a cycle in which migrants become disposable labour, thereby hampering long-term stability and socio-economic integration.

The experiences with law enforcement agents were reported as especially traumatising; over time, Nigerians' encounters with law enforcement officers turned out to be a highly relevant point of institutionalised discrimination in South Africa. Many Nigerians reported regular checks of identity, harassment, and a sense of profiling due to nationality or accent. Such experiences instilled in people a sense of precarity in the law, even among individuals who had legitimate documentation. "Even when there is nothing wrong about your papers you still feel scared when you see the police," stated one of the respondents. He narrated further that "You never know whether it is going to be another problem today." This kind of testimony aligns with the extant literature in South Africa and depicts policing as coercive and exclusionary, thereby exacerbating fear of protection (Landau, 2011). The feeling that governmental bodies, supposed to protect the population's security, act as sources of danger increases participants' mistrust and makes them more susceptible.

Structural barriers also manifested in housing and access to basic services. Nigerians were denied accommodation or charged exorbitant rents when they provided information about their nationality. There was a sense of discrimination in public service, especially in healthcare facilities, which restricted access to care. One of the participants in the study revealed categorically that in healthcare facilities, they take longer to attend to you or address you in a

manner that you should not have been there. These testimonies align with studies that reveal that migrants often face obstacles to accessing essential services due to bureaucratic procedures and a negative attitude toward other people in institutions (Adjai and Lazaridis, 2013). These exclusions also act as structural processes that control migrants' access to resources, thereby strengthening social marginalisation outside interpersonal interaction. The accrued effects of institutionalised discrimination create structural vulnerability, which is a situation characterised by an increase in the level of exposure to economic insecurity, legal precarity, and social exclusion. Respondents explained how bureaucracies limit their ability to plan, invest, or participate fully in community life. The instability of employment, housing, and legal recognition creates long-term stress and limits agency. This tendency repeats larger theoretical arguments according to which xenophobia is ingrained in structural structures that actively marginalise migrants so that they become outsiders of social and institutional hierarchies (Neocosmos, 2010).

Theme 4: Strength, coping mechanisms, and resilience in the face of Xemophobia in South Africa

In the face of unremitting exposure to xenophobic enmity, institutionalisation of exclusion, and psychological distress, the Nigerian immigrants in South Africa have been seen to have exhibited a continuum of coping mechanisms to help them navigate ordinary life. The resilience practices we capture in the current research are not about the absence of suffering, but rather a dynamic, continuous process of meaning-making, emotional regulation, and strategic adjustment within constrained social environments. The coping strategies operate at individual, relational, and collective levels and demonstrate participants' concerted efforts to maintain dignity, psychological well-being, and a meaningful sense of agency in the context of chronic marginalisation and xenophobia.

One of the salient coping strategies is emotional regulation, involving selective disengagement and emotional distancing. Respondents reported a conscious restriction of emotional investment in aggressive interactions as a protective measure for their psyche. Instead of confronting discriminatory behaviour, most of them embrace silence, avoidance, and emotional withdrawal. A female participant commented, "When you respond to everything, you will be broken. I could go away sometimes and defend my peace." Such forms of self-regulation are also consistent with previous studies suggesting that marginalised populations often resort to emotional suppression and disengagement as adaptive mechanisms to long-term discrimination (Pascoe and Richman, 2009). Even though these strategies can buffer the short-term emotional damage, the respondents admit that prolonged disengagement can lead to the development of emotional isolation.

Religiosity was also revealed as a key pillar of support and spiritual survival. Religious practices, including prayer and participation in religious communities, provide interpretive schemes that help individuals negotiate suffering and uncertainty. According to a respondent, "faith is a mediator of hope, a moral basis, and reassurance in the face of fear and despair". Another participant revealed that, when life becomes difficult, he prays and remembers that he is in the process of a mission. In this case, religion serves not only as a coping tool but as a medium to existential meaning, as an opposition to internalised accounts of rejection. This observation resonates with research highlighting the importance of spirituality in enhancing resilience among migrants facing structural challenges (Connor, 2010).

Co-ethnic and migrant networks are another key coping arena based on social support. Those involved emphasise the importance of connection with other Nigerians and other African migrants who have had similar experiences of rejection. These networks provide emotional support, practical help, and a sense of belonging, which can be lacking in host-community interactions. One of the respondents noted that when you communicate with people who can empathise with your plight, you do not feel alone. These solidarities serve as protective social spaces, allowing the expression of vulnerability without the threat of punitive judgment. In line with previous research, ethnic networks are used as a safeguard against discrimination and as a strategic tool to bypass structural constraints, such as employment and housing (Portes and Rumbaut, 2014).

Cognitive reframing is another pivotal approach in which participants reframe their xenophobic experiences to maintain self-esteem. Instead of making the hate treatment personal, the respondents interpret the xenophobic behaviour as a symptom of the larger socio-economic problems in South Africa. One participant commented that it is not the fact that I am useless, but that the system is broken. These reframing externalisations shift blame and oppose stigmatising discourses which describe them as undeserving outsiders. These cognitive strategies are fundamental aspects of resilience, helping one maintain positive self-concepts despite recurrent discrimination (Major et al., 2002).

There is also economic perseverance and future oriented goal set. A great number of respondents express strong adherence to long-term goals involving financial security and family duty, including family duty across borders. These objectives serve as motivation anchors that help one stick through tough times. One of the participants cited the reason as, I continue going because my family relies on me. Giving up is not an option." This futuristic stance situates the current affliction within a framework of sacrifice and improvement, sustaining effort even in the face of structural limitations. These results are consistent with the reports that project future and goal orientation as drivers of migrant resilience (Silove, 2013).

Recommendations

Based on the empirical findings presented herein, it is clear that responses to xenophobia must be multi-level, going beyond the individualistic perspective that views the phenomenon as structural and psychosocial. Accordingly, we offer a series of recommendations regarding policy reform, institutional practice, and community-level interventions, as well as opportunities for future research. National and local governments should strengthen and implement anti-discrimination frameworks that make it clear that migrants cannot be excluded institutionally from the labour market, housing sector, policing bodies, and service provision arenas. To reduce legal precariousness and the testing of unjust standards, it is indispensable to ensure coherence between migration policy and social inclusion policy. Officials should be educated on the issue of implicit bias and xenophobic stereotyping in institutional cultures. Empirical evidence suggests that anti-discrimination policies are most effective when they are accompanied by a system of accountability and independent oversight agencies to enable migrants to report abuses without fear (Crush & Ramachandran, 2014; Landau, 2011).

Furthermore, Governments should implement migrant-friendly service policies in public institutions, such as law enforcement agencies, healthcare services, and other municipal service providers. Such practices can be optimised through culturally responsive training, information

dissemination in languages other than English, and migrant liaison officers, all of which help build trust between migrants and institutions. Healthcare protocols must guarantee non-discriminatory care regardless of nationality since restricted access to basic services further builds structural vulnerability and worsens mental health (Adjai & Lazaridis, 2013). Institutions are also encouraged to work with civil society organisations to set up legal aid clinics and rights awareness programmes, empowering migrants with the knowledge to navigate bureaucratic systems.

Host community and migrant group dialogues are important community-based programmes should also be encouraged. The sustained, facilitated interaction between host communities and migrant groups is aimed at breaking down xenophobic narratives and creating an understanding based on contact. Intergroup contact organised on an equal-status, mutual-interest basis has been empirically associated with decreases in prejudice and increases in social cohesion (Allport, 1954/1979). Credible channels for psychosocial support, conflict mediation, and information dissemination must be buttressed by faith-based organisations and migrant associations. The harmful effects of discrimination on mental health can be overcome by investing in community centres that offer counselling, peer support and skill-training (Williams & Mohammed, 2013).

Finally, given the documented emotional and psychological sequelae of xenophobia, there is an exigent need for trauma-informed migrant-focused mental health services. Interventions should include culturally appropriate counselling, group support and referral to social services. Distress may be reduced by programmes to enhance coping resources, such as cognitive reframing, peer support, and future-oriented goal setting as long as structural reforms are made to avoid the undue shifting of adaptive burdens onto migrants (Masten, 2014; Schmitt et al., 2014) Together these suggestions emphasise the fact that meaningful change needs to be based on institutional reform, community involvement and psychosocial support in a rights-based arrangement that takes into account the structural origins as well as the experienced effects of xenophobia.

References

Adjai, C., & Lazaridis, G. (2013). Migration, xenophobia and new racism in post-apartheid South Africa. International Journal of Social Science Studies, 1(1), 192–205.

Akinrinde, O. O., & Tar, U. (2021). An empirical-causative analysis of the politics of xenophobia in South Africa. Law Research Review Quarterly, 7(4), 383–402. https://doi.org/10.15294/lrrq.v7i4.48055

Berry, J. W. (1997). Immigration, acculturation, and adaptation. Applied Psychology, 46(1), 5–34.

Castles, S., de Haas, H., & Miller, M. J. (2014). The age of migration (5th ed.). Guilford Press.

Connor, P. (2010). Contextualising immigrant religiosity: The impact of religious and secular contexts on the religious involvement of immigrants. Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, 49(2), 351–367. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-5906.2010.01510.x

Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches (4th ed.). SAGE.

Crush, J. (2008). The perfect storm: The realities of xenophobia in contemporary South Africa. Migration Policy Series No. 50.

Crush, J., & Ramachandran, S. (2014). Xenophobic violence in South Africa: Denialism, minimalism, realism. Migration Policy Series.

Gbadeyan, O. J., & Osadola, O. S. (2023). Healing the wounds of insurgency in the North East: Reflections on the critical roles of women in mediation and peace-building. Gender and Behaviour, 21(2), 21746-21755.

Gbadeyan, O. J. (2025). You can become a millionaire: Interrogating the deception of gambling adverts on Nigeria's youth in Lagos metropolis. Journal of Gambling Issues. Advance online publication.

Gbadeyan, O. J., Ola, A. A., Osadola, O. S., & Ojo, O. M. (2024). Strengthening women engagement in post-Conflict Peace-building in North-East Nigeria: An interrogation of the UN Resolution 1325. Cogent Arts & Humanities, 11(1), 2286067.

Guvercin, Y., Chowdhury, S., Durmaz, B., & Yazici, M. (2024). Acculturation strategies and their impact on psychological health. Proceedings of the London International Conferences, 11, 99–108. https://doi.org/10.31039/plic.2024.11.256

Landau, L. B. (2011). Exorcising the demons within: Xenophobia, violence and statecraft in contemporary South Africa. UNHCR.

Lombard, F. (2023). Immigrant responses to xenophobia in post-apartheid South Africa: From victims to agents (Master's thesis, University of the Western Cape). University of the Western Cape Repository. https://etd.uwc.ac.za/handle/11394/xxxx

Major, B., Quinton, W. J., & McCoy, S. K. (2002). Antecedents and consequences of attributions to discrimination: Theoretical and empirical advances. Advances in Experimental Social Psychology, 34, 251–330. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0065-2601(02)80007-7

May 2008 South Africa riots. (2008). In Wikipedia. Retrieved March 20, 2026, from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/May_2008_South_Africa_riots

Mgogo, Q., & Osunkunle, O. (2023). Students' perceptions of the influence of media on perpetuating xenophobia in South African universities. The Journal for Transdisciplinary Research in Southern Africa, 19(1), 1–15. https://doi.org/10.4102/td.v19i1.1234

Mpofu, S. (2020). Mediating xenophobia in Africa: Unpacking discourses of migration, belonging and othering. Palgrave Macmillan.

Neocosmos, M. (2010). From foreign natives to native foreigners: Explaining xenophobia in post-apartheid South Africa. CODESRIA.

Ngcamu, B. S. (2025). Understanding Xenophobic Attacks in South Africa: A Systematic Literature Review. Modern Africa Politics History and Society, 12(2), 83–113.

Nyikadzino, R. (2023). The psychosocial effects of xenophobia on immigrants living in townships in Johannesburg, Gauteng, South Africa. International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science, 7(2), 45–58. https://doi.org/10.12345/ijriss.v7i2.5678

Olaniyi, R. (2009). Nigerian immigrants and xenophobic violence in South Africa (Master's thesis, University of Ibadan). University of Ibadan Repository. https://etd.ui.edu.ng/handle/123456789/xxxx

Pascoe, E. A., & Richman, L. S. (2009). Perceived discrimination and health: A meta-analytic review. Psychological Bulletin, 135(4), 531–554. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0016059

Portes, A., & Rumbaut, R. G. (2014). Immigrant America: A portrait (4th ed.). University of California Press.

Silove, D. (2013). The ADAPT model: A conceptual framework for mental health and psychosocial programming in post-conflict settings. Intervention, 11(3), 237–248. https://doi.org/10.1097/WTF.0b013e3283644ee8

Smith, J. A., Flowers, P., & Larkin, M. (2009). Interpretative phenomenological analysis: Theory, method and research. SAGE.

Journal of Identity and Migration Studies
JIMS - Volume 20, number 1, 2026

Forced Migration as Inheritance: Identity, Memory, and the 1942 Burma Exodus

Ashwathi SHARMA

Abstract. The 1942 exodus of Indian families from Burma to India marked a moment of forced migration shaped by war, racialized violence, and an abrupt rupture. While this movement has often been narrated as a bounded historical event, the paper approaches it as an ongoing condition that continues to unfold within families across generations. Drawing on oral histories and intergenerational narratives, the paper examines how fear, loss, and uncertainty experienced during flight persist as postmemory and shape descendants who come to inhabit ideas of displacement and belonging. The paper foregrounds displacement as a lived and inherited dimension of migrant identity rather than a completed act of movement. The work contributes to migration studies by showing how forced migration endures not only in place but in memory and everyday forms.

Keywords: migration, forced displacement, oral histories, intergenerational memories.

Introduction

Migration The 1942 exodus of Indians from Burma[1] to India constituted one of the most significant episodes of wartime forced migration in South and Southeast Asia. Following Japan's invasion of Burma and the rapid collapse of British colonial administration, nearly half a million Indian civilians returned to India under conditions of acute precarity. Many families undertook arduous journeys on foot across mountainous terrain toward the Indian border, while others came by the sea route. What had been a nation of settlement, livelihood, and intergenerational continuity suddenly became a space of chaos and uncertainty. There is limited documentation and scholarship of the exodus, both as a humanitarian crisis and a logistical failure of the colonial administration. The implications (both short and long term) of the sudden forced evacuation and displacement for the civilians, who, for migrant identity, remain comparatively underexamined, have not been investigated (Tinker, 1975, and Ramamurthy, 1994).

During the Second World War (1939-1945), over two million Indian soldiers served in the British Indian Army, making it the largest volunteer force in the world at the time (Tinker, 1975). The British transported many Indians to work on plantations and in other labor-intensive industries in Southeast Asia, such as Burma and Malaya. By the 1830s, Indians were sent as laborers to

[1] I use colonial-era names such as Burma to reflect the historical context the period under study. I choose to retain the names that were commonly used at the time to maintain historical accuracy and to remain consistent with the language found in primary sources, archival materials, and oral histories. Using these terms, I acknowledge the power structures that shaped the events and experiences I am examining. I am aware of the political and ethical complexities of using colonial nomenclature and have made this decision consciously, rather than uncritically. Some examples are Burma (Myanmar), Rangoon (Yangon), Arakan (Rakhine), Akyab (Sittwe), Moulmein (Mawlamyine), Prome Road (Pyay Road), Ceylon (Sri Lanka).

colonies such as Kenya, Guyana, Fiji, Sri Lanka, and South Africa. Large-scale Indian migration to Burma began after the annexation of Lower Burma in 1885 (particularly for infrastructure projects, such as railways and docks). By the 1920s, around 2 lakh Indians entered Burma annually, and by 1931, they comprised 59.5% of the population. Indians also occupied positions in legal, administrative, and financial capacities, owned businesses, thereby transforming Burmese cities into hubs of commerce and influence (Chakravarti, 1971).

The paper approaches the forced displacement not only as a historical rupture but as a formative and sudden movement, the effects of which continue to pass down the generations. Drawing on oral narratives of second and third generation descendants of the displaced families, the paper examines how displacement persists as an intergenerational circumstance, rather than a once completed event. It underscores the enduring ways in which the forced movement shapes our understanding of belonging and identity. Migration is not treated as a singular transition from one national territory to another, but as a framework through which identity is negotiated over times.

The paper is anchored on two interrelated questions: How does the 1942 forced migration from Burma to India continue to structure identity across the later generations of the displaced families? What does an intergenerational, postmemory-driven approach reveal about the persistence of displacement long after physical movement has stopped? By foregrounding the two questions, the paper hopes to contribute to migration and identity studies by reframing forced migration as an ongoing social process rather than a one-off historical episode.

The dispersed settlement of the families across different regions of India confounds the narratives of return. Arrival in India did not produce a seamless recovery of belonging and assimilation. On the contrary, many families entered social contexts that were marked by economic instability, altered status, and the immediate need to reconstruct livelihoods and a sense of community. For the later generations, the history of rupture is not expressed as a unique inherited trauma. It expresses as a subtle and omnipresent awareness of contingency, of an understanding that home can be fragile. Such positionings indicate that forced migration endures not only in memory but also in everyday forms of belonging.

By situating the exodus within larger discourses on migration and displacement, the paper argues that forced migration produces subjectivities that extend beyond first-generation survivors[2]. The endurance of displacement across the generations to come challenges our understanding of migration studies that confine analysis to departure and settlement. The paper calls attention to how migration becomes embedded within familial cultures and intergenerational understanding. By examining the dynamics, the paper positions the exodus as a case through which to reconsider how identity is shaped by inherited experiences of movement and rebuilding, long after borders have been crossed.

[2] This becomes crucial given that communities continue to cope with the enduring effects of loss, displacement, and community fracture. By focusing on personal narratives, inherited memories, and the tangible remnants of life, the oral histories and life-history interview methods reveal experiences that are absent from official historical records. They provide insights on how history remains, not only in documented incidents but also in artefacts carried back, family narratives passed down, and the emotions that influence how people remember. They underscore the connection between personal and family histories, providing room for diverse interpretations of the past.

The figures and tables below show the distribution of the Indian population in Burma. The data is from the 1931 census. Cities like Rangoon, Pegu, and Arakan have larger Indian populations. In Rangoon, the Indian population is higher than that of the Burmese and other ethnic groups. People speaking Telugu, Tamil, Oriya, and Bengali constitute a higher percentage of the population.

Indigenous Races		*Other Races*	
Burmese	121,998	Indians	212,929
Karens	3,226	Chinese	30,626
Others	2,358	Indo-Burmans	12,560
		Europeans	4,426
Total	127,582	Anglo-Burmans	9,977
		Others	2,315
		Total	272,833

Fig.1- Population of Rangoon (from the 1931 census)

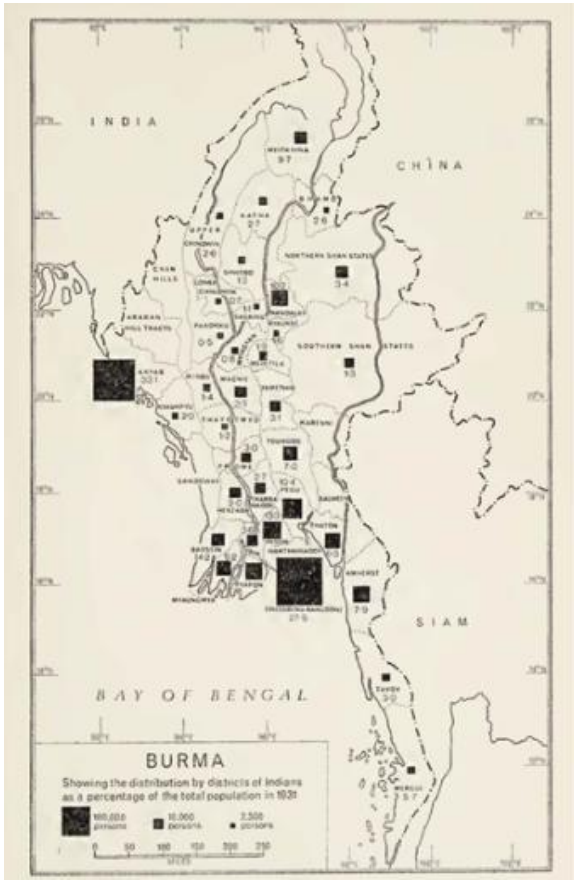

Fig.2 - Population distribution by districts
(Indians as a percentage of the total population in 1931)

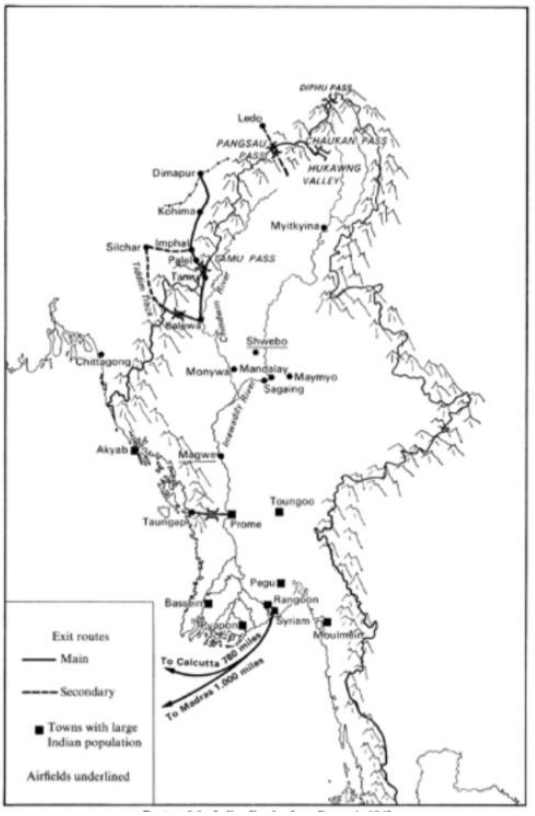

Fig. 3- Routes of evacuation

Conceptual Framework: Identity And Postmemory

The paper approaches the event under investigation through the lens of memory studies by situating forced migration within the transmission of experience down the generations. While scholarship on migration has conventionally prioritized settlement and integration, memory studies foreground how the events persist beyond their historical moment through narrative and inheritance. In this framework, displacement is not only a geographical or political rupture. It is a memory that circulates within families and reshapes identity over time.

The concept of postmemory offers a unique lens for examining the intergenerational processes. Postmemory describes the relationship of the 'generation after' to experiences that preceded their birth, but affect and shape their existence. These inherited memories are mediated through stories, silences, gestures, and familial atmospheres. They are not direct recollections, but neither are they distant historical facts; rather, they operate in the space between lived experience and imaginative reconstruction. In contexts of forced migration, postmemory enables an understanding of how displacement becomes embedded within the identities of those who did not themselves cross borders.

The construct of postmemory, elucidated by Marianne Hirsch, provides a crucial lens for analysis. Hirsch's formulation of postmemory describes how later generations inherit, internalize, and live with the experiences of those who endured traumatic events firsthand. Among the

descendants of the exodus under investigation here, stories of hunger, starvation, uncertainty, abrupt departure, and loss circulate within families as narratives that are brought to remembrance. The narratives and recollections do not just bring to light the past. They shape emotional tendencies toward risk, mobility, and stability. Even among those born decades after the event, displacement functions as a configuring memory, by orienting how they understand their place and space within their relationship to a homeland they did not physically inhabit (Hirch, 2012).

The narratives highlight ways in which migration goes beyond the boundaries of departure and arrival. For second- and third-generation descendants, the event serves as an orienting narrative. It is a point of departure that explains struggles (social and economic) and a persistent sense of insecurity. Stories of walking for days without food, starvation, of loss, leaving loved ones and belongings behind circulate in the recollected accounts. When narrated, the stories produce affective residues: caution, resilience, instability, and a heightened value placed on education and financial security. In this sense, migration is remembered not only as movement but as vulnerability.

In any event, postmemory does not suggest a seamless transmission of trauma. Intergenerational memory is mediated, shaped, and reshaped with new social contexts. The dispersal of the families across India complicates the process. While descendants grow up within distinct regional, linguistic, and social environments, the memory of displacement continues to operate as a shared reference point. The act of migration and displacement becomes both particular and portable, in that they are anchored in a specific event while also being adaptable to diverse settings.

Maurice Halbwachs coined the term *collective memory* to describe how communities, families, and nations construct shared memories that shape their social identities. Halbwachs emphasized that memory is not individual but socially shaped and sustained by group interactions and environments. His work significantly influences how we understand the transmission of histories and identities within societies. Halbwachs argues that collective memory is an active, socially constructed process (selective and shaped by the present), to help communities process events. His work is anchored on how shared memories shape cultural narratives and group identity over time. Halbwachs' framework is crucial for examining how personal and community narratives are constructed and transmitted across generations. The memory of distressing journeys transcends individual grief, becoming part of a shared experience of displacement. It helps explain how personal memories evolve within families and communities into collective memory (Halbwachs, 1952).

Therefore, foregrounding memory within migration studies requires attention to structure. The event under investigation unfolded within the social and racial hierarchies of colonial Burma, where the Indian community occupied a complex and insecure position within the colonial administration. The sudden transformation of the hierarchies during the Second World War intensified vulnerability and contributed to the scale and urgency of flight. While the paper does not enumerate the entire political history of the period, acknowledging the structural conditions is essential for understanding why the forced displacement occurred and how it was experienced. In this context, postmemory is not devoid of history. It is, in fact, bound to the configurations of colonial rule and the war that shaped both the event and the years that followed.

By integrating postmemory into the analysis, the paper complements models that restrict the act of migration to a linear sequence of departure and settlement. On the other hand, it

proposes that forced migration can persist as an intergenerational condition, thereby structuring identity, even after the physical movement has ended. Thus, the act of displacement becomes not only something that happened, but something that is continually lived through memories and narratives. This perspective invites scholarship on migration to engage with the relational and mnemonic dimensions of identity formation.

Methodology

The paper draws on semi-structured conversations conducted with second and third-generation descendants of families displaced in 1942. The exchanges situate the exodus within a longer migratory trajectory, focusing on narratives of the families moving to Burma. The broader framing allowed displacement to emerge not as a single event, but as part of a history of mobility shaped by colonial rule. The conversations allowed participants to guide the direction while ensuring attention to the intergenerational transmission. Questions invited reflection not only on remembered stories, but also on how the stories circulated within the families, who narrated them, when they were told, what details were emphasized, and what emotional resonances lingered.

Many accounts of displacement emerged, embedded within discussions of education, work, financial positions, and more. Displacement appeared not as a singular dramatic narrative but as a quiet presence. Working across the generations required attentiveness to relationships to memory. For some, stories were vivid and frequently recounted. For others, knowledge was fragmentary and transmitted through partial anecdotes and indirect references. Listening highlighted how forced migration can be inherited through storytelling, but through dispositions toward stability, mobility, and belonging.

My positionality shapes the process of listening. As a third-generation member of a family that experienced displacement, I approach the narratives as a scholar and an inheritor. The insider location facilitated trust and recognition in interviews, often allowing conversations to move beyond formal recounting into spaces of shared reflection. It required sustained reflexivity regarding identification and the interpretive weight of familial memory. Rather than claiming neutrality, the paper acknowledges that intergenerational research on displacement unfolds within the proximity of relationality. I argue that this method foregrounds the ethical and affective dimensions that are inherent in studying inherited migration, instead of diminishing analytical rigor[3].

Participants are in different regional and socio-economic contexts, yet are linked by familial histories in Burma. The dispersion allows the analysis to trace how postmemory adapts

[3] My study is grounded in both academic research and personal experience. My great-grandparents were one of the many families who left for Burma in 1942, leaving behind not only a home but also a way of life, and hence I approach this topic with a familial connection. Their narratives, which has been passed down through the generations, serves as a foundation for my research on material culture, intergenerational memory and displacement.
As a researcher, I find myself in a liminal space, neither fully an insider nor entirely an outsider to the participants that I aim to interact with. My personal connection to the topic grants me accesses to familial narratives which in invaluable. However, this connection also poses challenges, particularly the risk of over-empathy, which may influence my interpretation of participants' narratives. By acknowledging the emotional value of the narratives, I understand that my family's history enriches my research by bringing a personal and empathetic lens to the participants who I interview.

across contemporary environments, highlighting both convergence and divergence in how displacement is remembered. Therefore, the methodological approach positions listening as central to understanding migration. By attending to narrative texture, intergenerational mediation, and researcher positionality, the study hopes to illuminate how forced migration persists within family worlds, not just as historical knowledge.

Narratives

The narratives are based on findings from a pilot study that examined patterns and conceptual frameworks. The themes that emerged (those related to displacement and intergenerational memory) suggest processes that are appropriate for a larger population impacted by comparable historical circumstances. The study provides a methodological and heuristic basis, enabling cautious extrapolation to a larger number of participants and guiding the structure of later, more comprehensive research. Participants were silent about life before the departure, but they often recalled the journey with vivid sensory details, such as heat, starvation, loss of family members, separation, and illness. Participants recall narratives of difficult decision-making, separation, and loss. Traumatic events take center stage in the recollections, overriding the more stable, everyday memories.

The months of flight are defined, while the pre-war years become hazy. Instead of being formed by continuity, memory becomes a repository of vulnerability. The narratives underscore perseverance and resourcefulness and are consistent with narratives of resilience. Most participants recall being told about the rosy days in Burma while referring to the friendliness of Burmese neighbors, the lower cost of living, and the cleanliness of the neighborhoods. For the families, migration meant earning a better living, fulfilling family obligations, educating the children, and sending money back home.

One of the participants, Jaya, shared stories with her by her mother. Jaya's mother was a young girl when her family (her parents and 10 of her siblings) moved to Rangoon in the early 1920s. Their relatives had moved to Rangoon a few years earlier and set up a hotel there. The older children were compelled to work in the hotel after school due to the family's precarious financial situation. With the advancement of Japan into Burma, the families spent many nights in underground bunkers, constantly keeping an ear out for the air-raid siren. Noise from the bombings left some of the children disturbed and shocked for days. Reflecting on those days, Jaya adds that the immediate decision of her family was to leave Rangoon.

Another participant shares that his grandfather moved to Rangoon in the late 1870s and ran a hotel near a military camp. They were a large family. He shares, "My mother and my siblings returned to India in an earlier ship, along with relatives, and disembarked at Madras. My father returned a few months later, after locking up the hotel. Back in those days, older people did not deposit money in banks. My father locked our possessions in a metal trunk and handed the keys to our Burmese neighbours, hoping to return someday. He boarded the last ship to leave Rangoon. My father was disturbed for a few months (after his return to Madras) due to the shocks from the bombings. It took him a while to recover, both emotionally and psychologically."

When Jaya's family decided to return to India, they had to carefully consider their options. During the war, bribes were common. The Burmese officers took bribes to let passengers onto the steamers. Securing additional tickets for the ship required paying a hefty sum. This forced the family to make the tough decision to separate. The elder siblings took the land route (via the Ledo

Pass, Nagaland, and Assam), while the parents and younger siblings returned via a steamer. The terrain was treacherous, and the rain made the route extremely hazardous. Many who took the land route died due to cerebral malaria, lack of assistance, and access to treatment.

Another participant recalls his father's account of the laborious return to Calcutta. His father was a Reuters correspondent for Rangoon. He recalls, "People working for the press and those employed in government jobs were not allowed to leave Burma. When the war broke out, my father sent us, along with my mother and her father, on a steamer. The first place one could get off was Calcutta, and our family deboarded there. We had no idea what to do in this city, but somehow, we managed. He continues, "My father had not contacted us for close to a year. We had given him up for dead. In 1943, he took the land route and was emaciated by the end of the journey. He contracted malaria, which worsened his health. When he reached Kohima, he called us, and that was when we knew he had been alive all along. About ten months later, he joined us in Calcutta".

Across the conversations, the exodus emerged through family narratives that functioned as foundational stories. The accounts underscored the immediacy of departure, the loss of property (both movable and immovable), and long journeys of uncertain conditions. While there were nuances that set apart each conversation, there was a repetition of urgency, uncertainty, and resilience. For second-generation participants, the recollections were described as part of childhood memory. They were mostly retold during family gatherings, as an anchor to explain present circumstances and as lessons in resilience. The exodus became a starting point to explain shifts in economic positions, emphasis on education, and the importance of 'family' as a unit. When framed as stories of survival, they highlighted the necessity of perseverance and adaptability. The thematic repetition created a shared narrative. Migration is not remembered as geographic relocation. It is also a defining moment that anchors familial understanding.

There were also silences and fragmentation in the narratives. Some participants described knowing that their grandparents came from Burma, while possessing limited details about the journey. Details were fragmented and pieced together later to get a linear timeline. The fragmented nature of memories shapes the boundaries of postmemory. The absence of a detailed narrative produces a different mode of inheritance. This is characterized by curiosity and then awareness. In these situations, displacement is not fully articulated. The partial knowledge challenges postmemory that depends on explicit storytelling. Silences and gaps become a medium of inheritance by transmitting the weight of an experience that is not easy to retell. Jaya adds that her grandmother, who had sixteen children, had to make tough decisions about which children would take the land route, and which would take the steamer.

A consistent form of intergenerational transmission emerged in the everyday dispositions towards security and stability. Some participants described growing up in households that emphasized financial discipline and education. While the values were not always directly linked to the displacement, they were often framed as responses to an event of sudden loss. Thus, displacement became embedded within a realm of stability—the memory of having lost home and livelihood once translated into an acute awareness of contingency.

Most families returned with almost no material possessions. Families left behind their documents and other belongings. New employment opportunities were sought after their return to India. Children were sent to schools. Financial frugality and an increased emphasis on education took priority. Jaya counts, "There was an inner drive that compelled my aunts and uncles to pursue

education and secure employment. It was quiet, but a powerful determination pushed them. They thought it would help put the past behind them. The memories of starvation and acute hunger never left". This form of transmission brings to light how forced migration persists beyond just the recollection and remembrance of the narrative. It shapes how families approach finances, ownership, education, and mobility. The legacy of displacement is entwined into everyday practices, thus enduring the event as an inherited sensitivity to instability.

Conclusions

The paper approaches the 1942 exodus not merely as a historical episode of wartime displacement. It positions the exodus as an enduring intergenerational condition that continues to shape experiences. By placing the forced migration within the framework of postmemory, the paper argues that displacement persists through narratives, repetition, silences, and dispositions long after physical movement has ceased. In doing so, it shifts attention from migration as an event to migration as an inheritance.

For the later generations dispersed across India, 1942 is rarely encountered as a closed chapter of family history. Rather, it operates as a formative point of reference — sometimes vividly narrated, sometimes only partially known, yet consistently present as an explanatory backdrop to family values and self-understandings. Stories of abrupt departure and precarious arrival circulate alongside subtler inheritances: financial caution, emphasis on education, attentiveness to political uncertainty, and a quiet recognition that home can be fragile. Through these mechanisms, forced migration becomes embedded within everyday life, shaping how belonging and stability are imagined.

Foregrounding these processes complicates conventional temporal models within migration studies. Much scholarship continues to organize migration around departure, transit, and settlement, implicitly suggesting that mobility concludes once relocation is achieved. The case of the Burma–India exodus demonstrates instead that migration may endure as a structuring presence across generations. Even in the absence of ongoing cross-border movement, descendants live within the affective and relational afterlives of displacement. Migration, in this sense, is not only a demographic shift but a durable orientation toward the world - a sensitivity to contingency, a recalibration of security, and an inherited awareness of vulnerability.

At the same time, attending to subtle forms of transmission expands how forced migration is understood within memory studies. The intergenerational afterlives of the Burma exodus are not always marked by overt trauma or dramatic recollection. Rather, they often manifest through partial narratives, silences, and everyday practices. Such understated transmissions challenge assumptions that displacement must be preserved through vivid storytelling to exert influence. Instead, they reveal how migration can persist quietly within familial cultures, shaping identity without necessarily being foregrounded as trauma.

By positioning memory studies within migration scholarship, this paper contributes to broader efforts to rethink the relationship between movement and identity. It suggests that the legacies of forced migration are not confined to first-generation survivors nor exhausted by questions of integration or assimilation. Instead, they unfold across decades within the relational spaces of family and across dispersed geographies. The Burma-India exodus offers a lens for reconsidering migration as an ongoing social process, one that extends beyond borders and across time through the intimate channels of intergenerational memory.

Understanding migration as an inherited condition invites an expansive conception of identity. It recognizes that displacement does not simply relocate bodies; it reorients sensibilities, expectations, and attachments in ways that endure. For the descendants of those who fled Burma in 1942, migration remains present not as a continuous movement but as a remembered and reworked inheritance. To account for such afterlives is to acknowledge that the histories of forced migration do not conclude with arrival. They continue, quietly yet persistently, within the making of identity itself.

References

Chakravarti, N.R. (1971). The Indian Minority in Burma. Oxford University Press.

Halbwachs, M. (1952) On Collective Memory, Translated from Les cadres sociaux de La memoir, Presses Universitaires de France.

Hirsch, M. (2012). The Generation of Postmemory - Writing and Visual Culture After the Holocaust. Columbia University Press.

Ramamurthy, S. (1994). Remembering Burma. School of Oriental and African Studies University of London.

Tinker, H. (1975) A long forgotten journey - The Indian Exodus from Burma, 1942. Cambridge University Press.

Journal of Identity and Migration Studies
JIMS - Volume 20, number 1, 2026

Albinism: Environmental Migration And Protection

Bright NKRUMAH

Abstract: Each year, environmental crises compel many people to seek refuge in other states. While this is a legitimate reason, harms caused by the environment are not stricto senso eligible for international protection under the 1951 Refugee Convention. In the Southern Hemisphere, year-round exposure to solar ultraviolet radiation (UVR) has harmful effect on the health of human inhabitants. While the entire population near the equator bears the brunt of UVR, persons with albinism (PWA) are most susceptible. The lack of melanin in the eye, hair and skin makes this demography vulnerable to skin cancer when exposed to elevated UVR. Against this backdrop, it is likely that a disproportionate percentage may adapt by migrating to regions with a temperate climate. But, considering that a person fleeing environmental harm falls outside the conventional definition of refugee, the paper draws from existing literature to examine the eligibility of PWA for long-term complementary protection.

Keywords: albinism; complementary protection; cancer; melanin; refugee

Introduction

Each year, hundreds of women, children, and men flee from the Southern Hemisphere in pursuit of a better life in the Northern Hemisphere. Over time, a handful of these will become 'undocumented' migrants (Schinkel 2009).[1] Accordingly, they may be subject to enforced or self-removal (Park 2018).[2] In some countries, these actions are undertaken to free up economic opportunities for citizens, while reducing fiscal strain on public resources. Still, it is likely that some migrants will appeal their removal. Among these are persons with albinism (PWA). One of the reasons why this demography will be unwilling to return to the Southern continents (Africa, Latin America, Southeast Asia, and Western Asia) is the fear of deprivation of life. Unlike political refugees or victims of armed conflict, the threat faced by PWA is not triggered by (non)state actors. Rather, it springs from elevated ultraviolet solar radiation (UVR). Yet, the nature of this harm falls outside the remit of persecution, and by extension, the conventional definition of refugee. Against this backdrop, the paper explores the eligibility of PWA for long-term complementary protection.

Drawing from existing literature, international instruments, and case law, this article proceeds as follows: Beside the present 'Introduction', the rest of the paper is divided into four parts. In the section labelled 'Albinism and solar ultraviolet radiation', the paper examines prevailing environmental conditions in the Southern Hemisphere and how it impacts PWA. It pays considerable attention to the effects of UVR. It then guides the reader through the susceptibility of PWA to UVR. The section argues that whereas all populations are at risk of elevated UVR, the physiology of PWA makes them more susceptible. Such a discussion could be helpful in appreciating the distinct vulnerability of this group, and perhaps a consideration for international

[1] Undocumented migrants refer to people residing in a country without legal authorization.
[2] Self-removal implies the voluntary departure of an undocumented migrant. Enforced deportation is the formal removal or mandatory expulsion of non-citizens from the state.

protection. In the third section, christened 'Albinism and refugee', examines the eligibility of PWA for refugee protection. It draws from the jurisprudence of the United States Appeals Court and the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) to determine the eligibility PWA for international protection based on their medical condition. In the fourth section dubbed 'Complementary protection and albinism', the paper examines the scholarly debate around the former. It briefly explores the debate around the procedural and substantive rights inherent in complementary and refugee protection. The section further considers the (in)eligibility of PWA for complementary protection in Europe and North America. These regions were considered in light of their relative mild climate and quality health care. In the era of uncertainties around immigration issues, it is hoped that this section will inspire a global policy reform to respond to the challenges of PWA. The final section, 'Conclusion', provides suggestions on how complementary protection could serve as a tool for safeguarding undocumented PWA.

Albinism and solar ultraviolet radiation

The sun produces UVR that is felt by all regions and populations. UVR is an invisible part of the energy that is produced by the sun (McAuliffe & Blank 1991). It remains invisible because its wavelengths are shorter than light. UVR has both beneficial and detrimental (photobiological) effects on people. In terms of the former, a small quantity enhances the production of vitamin D. It is also used in medicine for the treatment of vitiligo, psoriasis, osteoporosis, rickets, and lupus vulgaris. However, excess quantity can be deleterious to human health.

The entire spectrum of UVR can be grouped into three layers. First, ultraviolet A (UVA). This form of electromagnetic radiation makes up about 98% of solar UVR exposure (Dixon & Dixon 2004: 155). It has a longer wavelength, spanning 315-400nm. Its extended wavelength has two effects on the skin. On the one hand, it allows it to penetrate deeper into the dermis, resulting in aging, dark spots, and wrinkles. On the other hand, its long wavelengths reduce the amount of energy intensity that reaches the Earth. Consequently, it rarely results in DNA damage and skin cancer.

Second, ultraviolet B (UVB). In contrast to (UVA), this radiation has a shorter wavelength (280-315nm). For this reason, only a few of its electromagnetic radiation reaches the Earth. It accounts for less than 2% of the total UVR on Earth (Makgabutlane & Wright 2015: 1). Approximately 90-95% of its energy is absorbed by the ozone layer and cloud cover. As an illustration, the build-up of optically dense clouds in Sweden and the USA led to reductions of UVB by 70% and 50% in the countries, respectively (Makgabutlane & Wright 2015: 1). Then again, its shorter wavelength is associated with high-energy (radiation) that penetrates the epidermis, causing apoptosis (cell death) in skin cells. Accordingly, a large number of sunburns and skin cancers have been attributed to UVB.[3]

Third, ultraviolet C (UVC). It has the shortest wavelength, and thus, the most energetic, of the three UVRs. Its radiation spans 100-280nm. In view of the distance, it is almost completely absorbed by the atmosphere (ozone layer, oxygen, and water vapor). Since it is blocked from reaching the Earth's surface, its high energy rarely has a direct effect on human health. That said,

[3] It is important to insert here that arc welding and other non-solar UVR can also result in skin cancer.

one ought to exercise caution here. Bearing in mind that there is limited scholarship on UVC, one cannot conclusively declare that there are no (in)direct effects on humans.

Vulnerability to UVR is often associated with the UV Index (Fioletov, et al. 2010). The index is an estimation of the radiation wavelength and energy intensity that reaches the Earth. The wavelength and energy are intertwined, as the former informs the amount of energy that reaches the Earth. As discussed in Table 1, UV Index can be grouped into five categories (Sunray 2025). The Index determines the level of risk one will bear.

UV Index	Risk to Skin Cancer
0-2	Low risk
3-5	Moderate risk
6-7	High risk
8-10	Very high risk
>= 11	Extreme risk

Table 1: UV Index

Susceptibility to high UV Index (hereinafter, Index) is shaped by a region's proximity to the equator. A disproportionate percentage of countries in the Southern Hemisphere are in the tropics and experience yearlong high UV Index. Among these are Africa (Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Tanzania, and Uganda), South America (Bolivia, Chile, Ecuador, and Peru), and Southeast Asia (Indonesia and Sri Lanka) (Wright et al. 2013). As a consequence, Sirithanabadeekul (2019) suggests that people ought to avoid going outside between the hours of 0:00 and 15:00 when the Index reaches 3. The author further suggests that at an Index of 6, individuals ought to apply sunscreen. These recommendations are useful but fail to address two problems. If people are to stay indoors during business hours, what ramifications will it have on outdoor workers?[4] The question is pressing as a disproportionate percentage of people in Southern countries earn their living through small-scale trade and the informal sector. Again, with the cost of sunscreen averagely priced at $10, how will families below the poverty line sustain the use of the product? In contrast, a considerable number of countries in the Northern Hemisphere tend to have moderate UV Index with a temperate climate. Table 2 provides an excerpt of the average UV index experienced by countries based on their geographical location (Wright et al. 2012, 693; Schmalwieser et al. 2017, 1352-55; Bonneau 2022; Bone Moncayo 2024: 330).

Country/Continent	Average UVR Index
Norway	5
Sweden	5
Germany	5
Canada	6
UK	8 or less
USA	9-10
Ecuador	10-12

[4] Many people earn their income through outdoor occupations, as shoemakers, construction workers, carpenters, hawkers, gas attendants, and barbers.

Country/Continent	Average UVR Index
Peru	11-12
Venezuela	11-12
Thailand	11-12
Tanzania	11+
Ethiopia	11+
Madagascar	11+
South Africa	11+
Kenya	13+
Nigeria	14

Table 2: Average UVR Index by country

According to Fitzpatrick (1975), adaptation to high UV Index is shaped by one's phototype. The author justifies his assertion through the classification of skin types and their differentiated responses to UVR. Table 3 identifies Fitzpatrick's six categories of skin types and their sensitivity to UVR. The classification evolved from an initial study of how 'white' skin responds to UVR. It begins with three categories of white skin: skin type I (fair skin, freckles, blue, or light eyes), skin type II (red or blond hair, blue, brown, or hazel eyes), and skin type III (brown hair, blue, brown or hazel eyes). Subsequently, brown skin was added to the Table. This section was subdivided into two: skin type IV (brown hair and dark eyes), skin type V (brown eyes, black, or dark brown hair). The final group is skin type VI (dark brown eyes, black, or dark brown hair). The scholar concluded that individuals with fairer skin have less pigmentation, and extremely sensitive to UVR. In the Southern Hemisphere, PWA stand or fall in this camp.

Skin type	Unexposed skin color	Core features	History of sunburn	Level of Sensitivity to UVR
I	White	Fair skin Blue or light eyes Freckles	Always burns on minimal sun exposure	Extremely sensitive
II	White	Blonde or red hair Blue, hazel or brown eyes Freckles	Burns very readily	Very sensitive
III	White/Light Brown	Brown hair Blue, hazel or brown eyes	May burn on regular sun exposure with no protection	Moderately sensitive
IV	Light Brown	Brown hair Dark eyes	Burns rarely	Relatively tolerant
V	Brown	Brown eyes Black or dark brown hair	Despite pigmentation, may burn surprisingly easily on sun exposure	Very variable

Skin type	Unexposed skin color	Core features	History of sunburn	Level of Sensitivity to UVR
VI	Black	Brown eyes Black or dark brown hair	Rarely burns Sunburn is difficult to detect on very pigmented skin	Relatively insensitive

Table 3. Skin type classification

Albinism transcends ethnicity, gender, and geographical enclave. The exact number of people is evasive (UN 2025). From the Latin word *albus*, albinism implies 'white' (Nkrumah 2021a). It is a rare medical condition, and non-contagious (Nkrumah 2019). It is passed on from parents to children through reproduction. The condition leads to mutations in genes responsible for the production of melanin. The suppression of melanin results in limited or a lack of pigmentation in the eye, hair, and skin (Nkrumah 2021b). There are two types of albinism. First, ocular albinism (OA). This is a relatively mild form of the condition. Persons in this camp have an insufficient amount of melanin. It is rare to find someone with the condition. The limited melanin only affects the eye, with no effect on the skin or hair. A person with OA often experiences photophobia (eye sensitivity to light) and blurred vision (Nkrumah 2021b). Given its inconspicuous nature, persons with OA tend to have similar hair, and skin complexion as the general populace. Second, oculocutaneous albinism (OCA). This type represents an acute form of the condition. Persons in this camp lack melanin in the eyes, hair, and skin. Besides vision problems, they have white hair, eye and skin complexion (Nkrumah 2021a). These features make one conspicuous in a predominantly black and brown communities. Arguably, their visibility in such communities tends to shape census in terms of the regional distribution of PWA. An example might help illustrate what has been said. The United Nations (2025) estimates that five percent (5%) of the world population is carriers of the gene. Of this demography, 1 in 20 000 individuals in Europe, and North Africa have albinism. But in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), it states that 1 in 5 000 people are carriers (UN 2025). This implies that an estimated 200 000 PWA are in SSA.

In the Southern Hemisphere, the limited amount or absence of melanin in the eye, hair, and skin makes PWA highly sensitive to extended UVR. Some have attempted to adapt to elevated UVR by wearing hats, protective clothes, sunglasses, and sunscreen. Yet non-melanoma cancer, and mortality rates are on the rise among the group. Nakkazi (2025) estimates that 87% of the global PWA diagnosed with cancer are in the Southern Hemisphere. In Africa, a PWA is 18-20 times more likely to be diagnosed with cancer than their melanoma compatriots (Kiprono et al. 2014: 3). This demography is plagued with different kinds of cancer, including squamous cell carcinoma, basal cell carcinoma, and cutaneous melanoma (Nakkazi 2025). Amidst these conundrums, the poor healthcare systems have done little to ameliorate their plight. Inadequate technology for diagnoses, and early treatment of skin cancer has resulted in the deaths of 90% of PWA before the age of 30 (Beyondsuncare 2024). Bearing in mind the environmental threat, it is likely that a section of this group may seek refuge in regions or countries with a moderate UV Index. This development raises a central discursive question: Is albinism as a medical condition eligible for international protection?

Albinism and refugee

Each year, hundreds of people from the Global South flee to the Global North in search of good fortune (Nawyn 2016). Over time, a disproportionate percentage will become undocumented migrants. This happens, at least in part, because some have overstayed their non-immigrant visas. Others may have crossed the border discreetly or with forged traveling documents. Under any of these conditions, one is liable for expulsion. Article 33 of the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (hereinafter, '1951 Refugee Convention') stipulates that '[n]o Contracting State shall expel or return ('refouler') a refugee in any manner whatsoever to the frontiers of territories where his life or freedom would be threatened'. The provision, however, inserts a caveat. That, such a threat ought to be persecution 'on account of his race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion' (art 1(A)(2) 1951 Refugee Convention). Scott (2020: 6) opines that although environmental disasters engender adversity, 'people displaced in that connection may appear to fall outside of the refugee law paradigm'.

Accordingly, any past or future harm that is neither tied to persecution nor a political event is ineligible for refugee. That is the dilemma faced by PWA. A disproportionate percentage fled their countries due to elevated UVR. This position is reflected in the landmark judgement of Australian High Court. In *Applicant A v Minister for Immigration* (1997: 248), Dawson J pronounced that '[b]y including in its operative provisions the requirement that a refugee fear persecution, the Convention limits its humanitarian scope and does not afford universal protection to' a person feeling 'natural disaster'.

In terms of medical condition, the opinion of the Court in *Applicant A v Minister for Immigration* (1997: 248) demonstrate that 'epidemic' or medical condition is omitted from the grounds for seeking refuge. This observation was underscored by the ECtHR in *N. v. the United Kingdom*. In this matter, the applicant was diagnosed as HIV-positive with considerable immunosuppression. Upon receiving a notice of removal, she appealed the decision by stating that her life expectancy would be dramatically reduced if she is expelled. She intimated that her home country, Uganda lacks the required medical treatment for HIV. The state countered her claim by asserting that she will not suffer acute physical, and mental suffering. It intimated that through donor-funded programs, antiretroviral drugs are available, and at reduced costs in her home state. [5] The Court cogently held that 'although the applicant applied for, and was refused, asylum', she has failed to demonstrate that 'her removal to Uganda would put her at risk of deliberate, politically motivated, ill-treatment' condition (*N. v. the United Kingdom*, para 46). It concluded that her claim of 'serious medical condition and the lack of sufficient treatment' in her home country is not adequate grounds for seeking international protection.

Similar reasoning was adopted in *Bensaid v. the United Kingdom*. The applicant was suffering from a psychotic illness. He was given a notice of removal on the grounds that his legal status was attained by deception. In his appeal, the applicant submitted that there is a high risk that he 'would suffer relapse of psychotic symptoms on being returned' (*Bensaid v. the United Kingdom*, para 16). He indicated that the action would place him at risk of inhuman treatment as his home country lacks efficient medical facilities for his condition. The respondent countered that

[5] Home state is in reference to country of origin. Host state implies country of resident.

Algeria has a hospital that could administer the prescribed medication for the applicant. In its decision, the ECtHR observed that the applicant failed to provide evidence to support the claim that there would be a relapse of his condition when the expulsion is carried out. It further reasoned that the claim of inadequate health facilities or family support is speculative. The plea of the state to remove the applicant was upheld by the Court.

Besides the above, the most compelling jurisprudence relevant to the subject-matter at hand is *Makatengkeng v Gonzales*. The primary applicant in this matter was a PWA. After overstaying his visitor visa, an immigration judge ordered his removal. He applied to the United States Court of Appeal to overturn the decision. He alleged that he suffers from visual acuity due to albinism. As a result, he 'would be unable to find a job' when expelled to Indonesia (*Makatengkeng v. Gonzales*, p.4). The Court observed that it is likely that 'his life will be threatened' when he is removed (*Makatengkeng v Gonzales*, p.18). It added that there is 'a well-founded fear' of being 'light-skinned Indonesians generally and albinos in particular' (*Makatengkeng v. Gonzales*, p.19). However, the applicant's claim of privation did not resonate with the Court. It maintained that even in the aggregate, the repercussions of unemployment 'do not rise to the level of persecution' (*Makatengkeng v. Gonzales*, p. 4, 10). The Court concluded that it cannot grant the motion to withhold removal based on socio-economic conditions.

It has to be admitted that from the aforesaid decisions, albinism as a standalone medical condition is ineligible for refugee status. This phenomenon inspires a discursive question: can undocumented PWA invoke elevated UVR to seek complementary protection? To respond to this question, the next section examines the meaning of this mechanism, and the prospect of PWA in accessing it.

Complementary protection and albinism

In defining the concept simply and without equivocation, complementary protection is a care that is provided to emigrants who fled their country due to reasons that fall outside the protected grounds of the 1951 Refugee Convention. In the recent past, the notion has gained substantial scholarly discourse. Much of this discourse has been about the *procedural*, and *substantive* aspects of the mechanism. In terms of the former, the discourse mainly revolves around who or what conditions fall within the realm of the mechanism. McAdam (2007: 2-3) succinctly defined it as a protection that is offered to individuals that are outside their home state, but the conditions for leaving fall 'outside the formal legal definition of refugee'. Lister (2019: 212) affirms McAdam's (2007) account by framing complementary protection as 'international protection' afforded to a migrant whose reason for fleeing 'is not covered by the Refugee Convention'. The author elaborates on this definition by mooting that this demography includes those fleeing 'environmental' harms (Lister 2019, 212). If one draws from McAdam and Lister accounts, the threshold for complementary protection is fourfold: (i) the individual has fled her home country; (ii) the reason for fleeing was *not* persecution; (iii) the individual requires protection for a duration of time; and (iv) the individual is unwilling to return to their home state. Conceivably, complementary protection and refugee regimes share similar attributes. In both cases, the applicant ought to have fled their country, sought protection, and been unwilling to return to their home state. Both regimes offer protection to non-citizens upon arrival or at the frontier of the host state. The distinctive feature between the two is 'persecution'. The environmental harm faced by undocumented PWA is not persecution. But, considering that the source of the harm cannot be

easily averted, the group ought to be eligible for complementary protection on a long-term basis, with eventual access to full citizenship. Now that the question of eligibility has been cleared, it is imperative to consider what kind of protection they may be afforded by the host state.

On the substantive aspect, the question of how recipients of complementary protection ought to be treated has been much rehearsed in contemporary literature. Lister (2019: 214) moots recipients of complementary protection do not deserve similar treatment as conventional refugees. He contends that since the circumstance of complementary protection falls below the threshold of a conventional refugee, treatment ought to be on a sliding scale. The author contends that refugees deserve special treatment since: (i) the threat in their home country is long-term; (ii) there is no remedy to that threat; and (iii) granting them permanent residence is economical or ethical. In sum, beneficiaries of complementary protection are not eligible for the same status as a refugee. However, for recipients of complementary protection, Lister (2019: 214-15) asserts that: (i) the threat in their home country is short-term; (ii) that threat can be remedied through aid; and (iii) refoulement is economic and ethical.[6] To be exact, Lister (2019: 214) succinctly posits that 'aid in place may be cheaper, at least in the long run, than providing complementary protection'. The fault in this reasoning is readily apparent if one examines the actual cost associated with the removal and subsequent aid for PWA. There are two expenses to consider. First, the cost of removal. As demonstrated in Table 4, the estimated cost to arrest, detain, and remove an undocumented PWA is rather costly (GOVUK 2013; Lewis 2024; USDHS 2025). Second, the total amount of financial aid that will be required for the purchase and shipment of resources could be exorbitant. This includes funding the cost of sunscreen, sun protective gear, equipment for diagnosis, and treatment of nonmelanoma skin cancers. But complementary protection could yield gains for PWA and citizens. Social assistance program for the former could create employment opportunities for the latter. This aspiration could be better realized when the home state elects to share the cost of maintaining its citizens abroad. The former could assist by partially covering the cost of food, housing, healthcare, or utilities. Cost sharing between the states will 'ensure the fair and equitable allocation of' responsibilities between states, hence, benefitting PWA (Foster 2006: 224). This approach is not 'an attempt to minimize state obligations', but to reduce the material burden on the host state (Foster 2006: 224).

Supposing -without actually maintaining it- that Lister's (2019) examination of complementary protection is from an economic standpoint, McAdam (2007) does so from a human rights perspective. The latter declare that beyond statuses, there should be no differential treatment between refugees and recipients of complementary protection in terms of safeguarding the right to life. Perhaps this debate could be better resolved through the lens of international and regional human rights standards. Article 2(1) of the ICCPR stipulates that '[e]ach State Party to the present Covenant undertakes to respect and to ensure to *all individuals within its territory* […] the rights recognized in the present Covenant.' As life is the fulcrum of all rights, Article 6 imposes an obligation on states to safeguard 'the inherent right to life' of 'every human being'. As a consequence, Article 9 of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (ICRMW) codifies the 'right to life of migrant' regardless of their residential status (OHCHR 1990). That said, neither the ICRMW nor the ICCPR

[6] Refoulement implies the expulsion of asylum seekers or refugees to their home countries.

speaks to the duties of host states to beneficiaries of complementary protection. [7] The silence seems to suggest that international norms defer to states the mandate to decide for themselves the kind of treatment to afford this group.

State	Estimated cost of removal
United States	$17,121
UK	$20,000
Sweden	$34,000

Table 4: Cost of removal of an undocumented PWA

At the regional, Article 6 of the American Convention on Human Rights stipulates that '[e]very person has the right to have his life respected'. In the same breadth, Article 2 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) asserts that '[e]veryone's right to life shall be protected […] No one shall be deprived of his life intentionally' (Own emphasis). Strikingly, both instruments adopt indefinite pronouns in reference to the subjects. The use of 'everyone', or 'every person', demonstrates the intent of the instruments to safeguard the life of all individuals (in the respective regions) without reference to residential status. It is, therefore, not ironic that the right to life has remained central in jurisprudence relating to expulsion of (non)citizens. In Stubbings and Others v. The United Kingdom (para. 61), the ECtHR held that the potential impact of expulsion on the life expectancy of an applicant is a key determinant in retention or otherwise of undocumented migrants. This reasoning is affirmed in the landmark case, D. v. The United Kingdom. The case relates to the removal of a convicted immigrant drug courier who is undergoing treatment for AIDs. The applicant claimed that he would suffer irreparable damage in the home country. He submitted that his life expectancy will drastically decline as there is no adequate medical assistance in his home country, St Kitts. The ECtHR heard that 'lack of treatment with anti-HIV therapy and preventative measures for opportunistic disease would hasten his death if he were to be returned' (D. v. The United Kingdom, para 20). Bearing in mind the applicant's condition and lack of care in the home state, the Court held that the implementation of the decision to remove the applicant would infringe on his right to life. It concluded that, 'his removal would expose him to a real risk of dying under most distressing circumstances' (D. v. The United Kingdom, para 53). The judgment establishes a precedent that the removal of an immigrant ought to occur under conditions that will not result in (un)timely death or deprivation of the right to life. In this sense, the Court upheld the plea of the applicant to withhold his removal (para 41).

Again, a number of cases have upheld the right to life as a benchmark for withholding the removal of an applicant. In Bensaid v. the United Kingdom (para 40), the Court stated that the fear of the applicant is distinct from the threat to life in D. v. the United Kingdom. Similar reasoning was adopted by the Court of Appeals in Makatengkeng v. Gonzales. It stated that the applicant's claim of future economic hardship does not 'pose[…] a threat to life' (Makatengkeng v. Gonzales, p.18). As such, it is likely that the Court in Makatengkeng v. Gonzales could have arrived at a

[7] None of the 93 articles of the ICRMW guarantees the right of undocumented migrants to remain in the host state.

different conclusion had the victim grounded his argument on how the removal would drastically reduce his life expectancy.

In essence, American and Strasbourg's jurisprudence has established four precedents that provide credence for the eligibility of PWA to complementary protection. At the primary level, the source of their harm is natural. In N. v. the United Kingdom (para 43, own emphasis), the ECtHR held that the only reasonable grounds to overturn the decision of the state to remove the applicant will have to spring from a compelling argument that the victim suffers 'from a naturally occurring illness'. At this point, a careful examination of 'natural' is necessary to set a reliable boundary from non-natural illness. The prefix to 'naturally occurring illness' is natural. From its Latin origin, natura, natural describes a condition that springs from nature (Ducarme & Couvet 2020: 2). It connotes 'birth' or 'to be born'. Ducarme and Couvet (2020: 4) define natural as a 'a series of material things devoid of human influence'. As such, an illness that is natural ought to have been induced by a condition that is detached from human influence (Wilson 2019). Albinism fits this interpretation. In many instances, the transfer of (albinism) genes from parent to child is a natural occurrence, without genetic modification. It may have been passed on to an offspring under a circumstance where one or both parents were oblivious of their heredity. Thus, the passing of the genetic trait is biological, and not deliberately orchestrated by (non)state actors (N v UK, paras 29, 43).

At the secondary level, the life expectancy of undocumented PWA will be drastically reduced when expelled. In D. v. The United Kingdom (para 53), the ECtHR granted relief when it found that the removal of the applicant would 'expose him to a real risk of dying under most distressing circumstances.' A similar fate awaits PWA in their home countries. Harmful environmental condition poses considerable threat to their life expectancy, considering that the Southern Hemisphere is an epicenter of UVR. As the group has inadequate pigmentation, continued exposure to elevated UVR will induce cancer and inflict irreparable damage on the skin. This experience will exacerbate their physical and mental suffering. In extreme cases, non-treatment of UVR-related cancer will dramatically reduce the life expectancy of victims. Put differently, incessant UVR and lack of medical care in the home country constitute future fears that ought to be considered when deliberating on the removal of PWA. It might be prudent that PWA are not returned, bearing in mind the unfavorable conditions in the home countries. This observation was affirmed in Airey v Ireland (para 26) when the Court mooted that the primary obligation of the state is to 'safeguard the individual in a real and practical way'. In contrast, the expulsion of PWA will not only reduce their life expectancy, but cause them to die 'under most distressing circumstances' (D. v. The United Kingdom, para 53). The granting of complementary protection for PWA will safeguard them from exposure to irreparable damage in the home state. A claim for complementary protection could be substantiated on their unique vulnerability and basic human rights to life. Accordingly, host states have a better prospect of safeguarding their life than when expelled. The ECtHR made a similar observation in Rantsev v. Cyprus and Russia. In this matter, the applicant complained of the failure by the Cypriot police to protect his daughter from irreparable damage. The Court intimated that states have an obligation 'to take positive steps to protect potential victims' from actions that threaten life and human dignity (Rantsev v. Cyprus and Russia, para 200). This decision brings to bear the dual duties of the states in the provision of complementary protection; to wit, positive and negative duties. The positive obligation of a state is engaged where it is cognizant that the victim will suffer harm in the home state. Under such

circumstance, an expulsion can only be justified when the host state has 'satisfied [itself] that the conditions awaiting' the victim in the home state will not endanger her life (Soering v. The United Kingdom, para. 85). Failure to comply with this guideline before 'removal would constitute interference by a public authority of' an individual's right to life (MP v Secretary of State for the Home Department, para 118). In the case of PWA, the prevailing harm is elevated UVR, coupled with inadequate cancer facilities to ameliorate their suffering. Accordingly, the ECtHR held that in cases where a condition inflicts 'sufficient adverse effects' on an individual, that condition rises to the threshold of persecution (Bensaid v. The United Kingdom, para. 47). The negative obligation of the state is engaged when it is evident that there are hostile conditions in the home state that will be detrimental to the victim. This observation aligns with the fears of PWA, considering that the environment or inadequate structural conditions pose a considerable threat to their life. Under such circumstances, the Court affirms that there ought to be a stay of deportation even if the intent to expel is sine qua non 'in a democratic society' (Bensaid v. The United Kingdom, para. 48).

At the tertiary level, there is inadequate medical treatment in the home country. The ECtHR has demonstrated that it could overturn a decision to remove an applicant under a condition where the home state is unable or unwilling to provide relevant health care. In N. v. the United Kingdom (para 43), the Court held that the victim ought to demonstrate that there is a 'lack of sufficient resources to deal with [her condition] in the receiving country'. In the case of PWA, Dos-Santos-Silva et al. (2022) observe that there are global disparities in access to cancer treatment. The expulsion of PWA will exacerbate their susceptibility to skin cancer or early death. Maatouk & Lucero-Prisno III (2025) add that skin cancer mortality disproportionately affects populations in the Southern Hemisphere due to several barriers. The authors linked the prevalence to the inadequate treatment facilities, dermatologists, and pathologists. Roky et al. (2025) affirm that in the Southern Hemisphere, the lack of technology makes it difficult for early diagnosis and treatment of skin cancer. Inadequate facilities and professional help in the home country ought to be considered in decisions concerning the return of a PWA.

Finally, community integration. At the individual level, PWA have higher rates of social acceptance in the Northern Hemisphere than in majority-black-or-brown communities. Their physical trait (light skin and hair) of PWA enables them to integrate more quickly and seamlessly into majority-white communities. Even if they have been in the host state for a brief period, their new sense of 'invisibility' or resemblance to the majority of the residents reinforces their sense of belonging. In the Northern Hemisphere, it is conceivable that they are perceived as individuals instead of a fragment of a different race or foreign group. The building of relationships and social networks with people of similar appearance empowers PWA to embrace their condition and carve a new identity for themselves. The ECtHR reasons that how well a victim has integrated into the local community ought to be considered in the execution of the expulsion order. In PO (Nigeria) v. Secretary of State for the Home Department, para. 210), it underscored that the removal of an applicant who has built family or social ties will serve as an 'interference' in their life. The removal of an undocumented PWA could, therefore, be seen as a breach of their right to life and dignity. Similarly, in Sisojeva and Others v. Latvia (para 101), it held that the execution of an expulsion order would gravely interfere with the 'strong personal or family ties in the host country'. It is likely that some PWA may have built a family despite residing in the host state irregularly. Thus, expulsion not only severs such ties but deprives them of their new sense of identity and quality of life.

In sum, the paper submits that undocumented PWA in Northen hemisphere ought to be considered for complementary protection based on the following: (i) their expulsion to the Southern Hemisphere will drastically reduce their life expectancy; (ii) the environmental threat they fear is incessant; (iii) there is inadequate healthcare facility for cancer treatment; and (iv) some have established social ties. To that end, it is imperative that immigration judges and public officials takes into account these facts when drafting and interpreting immigration policies.

Conclusions

In the contemporary era, one of the pervasive remedies for containing mass emigration has been the expulsion of undocumented migrants to their home country. Although this action complies with the domestic law and values of the host state, in some cases, the execution of a removal order could drastically reduce the life expectancy of the victim. This is particularly so in the case of PWA. A disproportionate percentage of the group migrated from regions with elevated UVR. Exposure to year-round UVR, and ill-equipped health facilities makes the Southern Hemisphere unsafe for habitation. The unique medical condition of the group makes them susceptible to elevated UVR. The paper found that since this form of radiation has a shorter wavelength, it is biologically and photobiologically detrimental to the health and life of the group. UVR poses a considerable threat to life when there is continuous exposure. UVR has been responsible for erythema, sunburn, and skin cancer among PWA in the Southern hemisphere.

The paper found that both the ECHR and the American Convention on Human Rights codify the right to life, notwithstanding one's residential status. Undocumented PWA are entitled to this legal safeguard. The right to life imposes a positive duty on the states to withhold expulsion if such acts will result in endangering the life of the victim. It is from this safeguard that the paper argues for the eligibility of PWA for complementary protection. To satisfy this requirement, a victim ought to demonstrate that the expulsion result triggers events that will drastically reduce her life expectancy. Also, there ought to be evidence that she will suffer acute physical and mental suffering when sent back to the home country. But such a claim cannot be sustained simply by asserting that one suffers severe health condition. One ought to demonstrate that there is an inadequate health facility for treatment in the home country. That said, their fear for fleeing or unwillingness to return was/is neither tied to persecution nor any of the conventional reasons for seeking refuge. As such, they are ineligible for international protection.

The paper found that contemporary jurisprudence of the American and European courts has established a benchmark that calls for complementary protection for persons who fall outside the refugee regime (yet merit international protection). Transposing these benchmarks to the present discussion, the paper found that undocumented PWA meet the threshold. It found that the life expectancy of the group will drastically decline upon being returned to the Southern Hemisphere. In considering cases of expulsion, immigration judges ought to be cognizant of the threats that this demography faces in their home countries. Elevated UVR and poor healthcare conditions remain two hostile conditions that threaten their life in their home countries. UVR-related cancer and mortality rate of PWA underscore the urgency for the granting of complementary protection for the group. To that end, the paper entreats judges and policymakers and to consider the eligibility of PWA for complementary protection on a long-term basis, with eventual access to full citizenship.

References

Applicant A v Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs (1997) 190 CLR 225.

Airey v Ireland, App No 6289/73 (A/32), [1979] ECHR 3; (1980) 2 EHRR 305.

Bensaid v United Kingdom (App no 44599/98) [2001] ECHR 82, (2001) 33 EHRR 10.

Bone Moncayo, BX, Ulloa Vaca, CA & Pazmiño Pacheco, AK 2024, 'Analysis of UV Radiation Monitoring: Distribution of Stations in South American Countries During the Summer Season' in International Conference on Science, Technology and Innovation for Society, eds JL Ballesteros, AED Restrepo, J Normey & H Espinosa, Springer Nature Switzerland, Cham.

Bonneau, C 2022, 'Top 20 Skin Cancer Hot Spots In The World And Why They're on The List', Available from: < https://healthmatch.io/blog/top-20-skin-cancer-hot-spots-in-the-world-and-why-theyre-on-the-list >[Last accessed 20.2.2026].

D v United Kingdom (App no 30240/96) ECHR 2 May 1997, (1997) 24 EHRR 423.

Dixon, AJ & Dixon, BF 2004, 'Ultraviolet radiation from welding and possible risk of skin and ocular malignancy,' Medical Journal of Australia, vol. 181, no. 3, pp. 155-157.

Dos-Santos-Silva, I., Gupta, S., Orem, J., & Shulman, L. N. (2022). Global disparities in access to cancer care', Communications Medicine, vol. 2, pp. 1-4.

Ducarme, F & Couvet, D 2020, 'What does "nature" mean?' Palgrave Communications, vol. 6, pp. 1-8.

Fioletov, V., Kerr, J. B., & Fergusson, A. (2010). The UV index: definition, distribution and factors affecting it. Canadian journal of public health, 101(4), I5-I9.

Fitzpatrick, TB 1975, 'Soleil et peau', Journal of Medical Esthetic, vol. 2, pp. 33-34.

Foster, M 2006, 'Protection elsewhere: The legal implications of requiring refugees to seek protection in another state', Michigan Journal of International Law, vol. 28, pp. 223-289.

GOVUK (UK government) 2013, 'Costs involved in detaining and removing illegal migrants', Available from: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7ce61440f0b65b3de0bd2f/28426_UK_average_costs_involved_in_detaining_each_illegal_immigrant.pdf>[Last accessed 20.2.2026].

Kiprono, SK, Chaula, BM & Beltraminelli, H 2014, 'Histological review of skin cancers in African Albinos: a 10-year retrospective review', BMC Cancer, vol. 14, no. 1, pp. 1-4.

Lewis, R 2024, 'Sweden to offer refugees $34K to return to home countries, report says' Available from: <https://abc3340.com/news/nation-world/sweden-to-offer-34k-for-refugees-to-return-to-home-countries-report-says-scandanavia-migration-illegal-immigrants-europe-refuge>[Last accessed 20.2.2026].

Lister, MJ 2019, 'Philosophical foundations for complementary protection' in The political philosophy of refuge, eds D Miller & C Straehle, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Maatouk, C & Lucero-Prisno III, DE 2025, 'Barriers to Skin Cancer Diagnosis and Treatment in Low-and Middle-Income Countries and Solutions: A Literature Review' Public Health Challenges, vol. 4, pp. 1-8.

Makatengkeng v. Gonzales, 495 F.3d 876 (8th Cir. 2007).

Makgabutlane, M & Wright, CY 2015, 'Real-time measurement of outdoor worker's exposure to solar ultraviolet radiation in Pretoria, South Africa', South African Journal of Science, vol. 111, no. 5-6, pp. 1-7.

McAdam, J 2007, Complementary protection in international refugee law, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

McAuliffe, DJ & Blank, IH 1991, 'Effects of UVA (320–400 nm) on the barrier characteristics of the skin', Journal of Investigative Dermatology, vol. 96, no. 5, pp. 758-762.

MP v Secretary of State for the Home Department [2018] ECLI:EU:C:2018:276 (Case C-353/16).

N. v. The United Kingdom, App. No. 26565/05 (ECHR, 27 May 2008)

Nawyn, SJ 2016, 'New directions for research on migration in the Global South', International Journal of Sociology, vol. 46 no. 3, pp. 163-168.

Nkrumah, B. (2021a). Anywhere but here: a calculus for protection of children with albinism. Journal of international migration and integration, 22(2), 729-748.

Nkrumah, B. (2021b). Drifting Apart? Africans' with Albinism and the UDHR at 70. 1023 Alternation 2519-5476; DOI: 10.29086/2519-5476/2021/sp38c18.

Nkrumah, B. (2019). How did we get here? Reflections on the UDHR and South Africans with albinism. South African Journal of Criminal Justice, 32(2), 181-201.

OHCHR (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights) 1990, 'International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families', Available from: <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/cmw.pdf >[Last accessed 16.2.2026].

Park, KS 2018, 'Self-deportation nation', Harvard Law Review vol. 132, pp. 1878-1941.

PO (Trafficked Women) Nigeria CG [2009] UKAIT 00046 (23 November 2009).

Rantsev v. Cyprus and Russia (Application No. 25965/04).

Roky, AH, Islam, MM, Ahasan, AMF, Mostaq, MS, Mahmud, MZ, Amin, MN & Mahmud, MA 2025 'Overview of skin cancer types and prevalence rates across continents', Cancer Pathogenesis & Therapy, vol. 3, pp. 89-100.

Schinkel, W 2009, 'Illegal aliens' and the state, or: Bare bodies vs the zombie', International Sociology, vol. 24, no. 6, pp. 779-806.

Scott, M. (2020). Climate change, disasters and the refugee convention, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Sirithanabadeekul, P. 2019. Thailand's UV Index Rating and the Risk of Sunburn. Available from: <https://www.samitivejhospitals.com/article/detail/uv-index>[Last accessed 20.2.2026].

Sisojeva and Others v. Latvia [GC], no. 60654/00, ECHR 2007-II.

Stubbings and Others v. The United Kingdom (Application nos. 22083/93, 22095/93).

Sunray, 2025, 'Where in the World Has the Highest UV Index?' Available from:< https://www.sunrayallday.com/blogs/posts/where-in-the-world-has-the-highest-uv-index?srsltid=AfmBOopD_bzSXhbp8wC4izIPzEIORaV4d5edBUNFknGx2Zco7_PkiSqn> [Last accessed 20.2.2026].

UN (United Nations) 2025, 'International Albinism Awareness Day 13 June', Available from:< https://www.un.org/en/observances/albinism-day#:~:text=The%20common%20lack%20of%20melanin,and%20North%20America%20have% 20albinism. >[Last accessed 20.2.2026].

USDHS (U.S. Department of Homeland Security) 2025, 'DHS Announces Historic Travel Assistance and Stipend for Voluntary Self-Deportation', Available from: < https://www.dhs.gov/news/2025/05/05/dhs-announces-historic-travel-assistance-and-stipend-voluntary-self-deportation >[Last accessed 19.2.2026].

Wilson, R 2019, What Is Nature? International Journal of Early Childhood Environmental Education, vol. 7, pp. 26-39.

Wright, C. Y., Davids, L. M., Summers, B., & Norval, M. (2013). Solar ultraviolet radiation in South Africa: clinical consequences for the skin', Expert Review of Dermatology, vol. 8, no. 6, pp. 693-706.

FOCUS

Rethinking The Theory Of Transnational Migration: Critical Community In Transnational Transference

Amir Akiva SEGAL

Abstract. This paper revisits the theory of transnational migration with a particular focus on transnational transference. The goal is to elucidate the mechanisms behind transnational transference. This is done by a segment within these communities that is involved in the transfer of values, ideas, or perceptions. The paper proposes the concept of 'Critical Community,' as introduced by Thomas Rochon and further developed by Sean Chabot, as a framework to bridge existing gaps in understanding transnational transference. By revisiting foundational studies and applying the 'Critical Community' concept to recent research, this paper provides a perspective on how migrants undertake transnational activities. The application of this concept provides valuable insights for future scholars seeking to investigate the dynamics of transnational transfer and its varying levels of engagement within migrant groups.

Keywords: migration, critical community, transnational transference, political influence

Introduction

This paper rethinks transnational migration theory, with a specific focus on the mechanisms of transnational transfer. I wish to suggest the concept of 'critical community' as an explanation for the 'how' of transnational transfer and to demonstrate that this concept can provide an answer to a long-standing lacuna in transnational theory. The concept of 'Critical Community,' initially introduced by Thomas Rochon (1998), was later used by Sean Chabot in two papers and was recently introduced and further developed in three recent publications. "Critical community" is a group of people who engage in the transference of ideas. Chabot applied this concept to political and protest groups, showing how one group's ideas can influence another across different countries and cultures (Chabot & Duyvendak, 2002; Chabot, 2004). For Chabot, the critical community is what enables the "Transnational diffusion between protest groups" (Chabot, 2004, p. 19).

In three recent papers, this concept has reappeared to describe the political influence of Jewish migrants from the United States to Israel on the Israeli political discussion (Segal & Greenspan, 2024) and to show the way baseball was introduced to Israel by a critical community of Jewish migrants from the United States (Segal, 2023). In these two papers, the 'critical community' serves as a basis for transnational transfer, and philanthropy is the other aspect that enables this transfer. In yet another paper, the critical community in discussion is of Soviet Union Jews in Berlin during the 1920s and how they were cultural agents of the Soviet culture and political influence (Zhuravel Segal, 2024)

This paper aims to extend the application of 'critical community' beyond political and protest groups, proposing it as a valuable framework for understanding the mechanisms and variations in transnational engagement. By examining recent and past studies, this paper seeks to elucidate the 'how' of transnational transference and highlight the differential ways and extents of migrant engagement.

Transnational Migration And Transference

The concept of transnational migration has attracted significant scholarly attention since Nina Glick Schiller, Linda Basch, and Christina Blanc-Szanton's landmark publication (Glick et al., 1992). Introduced as a new paradigm for the study of migration, transnational migration has been viewed as an outcome of technological and political developments (Castles, De Haas, and Miller, 2020; Clavin, 2005; Glick Schiller, 2009, 2018a, 2018b; Portes et al., 1996, 1999, 2001, 2017; Smith & Guarnizo, 1998).

When the concept was first introduced, transnational migration was considered a new type of migration (Glick Schiller, Basch, and Blanc-Szanton, 1992, 1994; Portes et al., 2017). Glick Schiller et al. (1992, p. 1) described it as follows:

We call this experience "transnationalism" to emphasize the emergence of a social process in which migrants establish social fields that cross geographic, cultural, and political borders. Migrants are considered transnational when they develop and maintain multiple relationships—familial, economic, social, organizational, religious, and political—across borders.

The concept of transnationalism was first introduced in the early 20th century, but gained significance in academic discussions of migration only in the 1990s. During the 1960s and 1970s, this concept was usually used to describe corporations with branches in more than one country. Later, it was applied to institutions located in more than one country (Glick Schiller, Basch, and Szanton Blanc, 1995; Vertovec, 2003, 2009; Clavin, 2005).

Since the first prominent papers on transnational migration (Glick Schiller et al., 1992, 1994), it is clear that the transnational connections and relations are not being engaged by all members of the transmigrant community – or diaspora. That was later shown in multiple studies, including a study of the transmigrant communities from Columbia, El-Salvador and the Dominican Republic in United States and showed that only few are involved in the transnational activities, and even fewer in the political transnational activity – yet some are involved sometimes or in ad-hock events (Guarnizo, Portes & Haller, 2003); a study of the transnational identity and activity of Jewish youth in Ukraine (Golbert, 2001); a study of the Dominican transmigrants in the United States showed that only few were involved in many of the transnational activities (Itzigsohn, Cabral, Medina & Vazquez, 1999); a study of transmigrants business enterprises showed a diversity in the ways and extents of transnational connection (Portes & Martinez, 2019); A study of opposition groups acting in the Sri-Lankan and Turkish diasporas showed that only some of the diaspora communities were active, and even them in various degrees of activity (Adamson, 2019). This suggests that many have noted that the migrant community does not engage homogeneously in transnational connections, activities, and transfers – some are more engaged. In contrast, others are not engaged at all. This understanding is so broad and deep among transnational theory scholars that in a review paper about transnational migration and engagement it was said that from a transmigrant community only small part are involved in these activities (Portes, Guarnizo and Landoltd, 2017) and a paper reviewing the way to study transnational relations it

was recommended to study, and to interview, only the few that are engaged in the transnational connection (Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2004).

Another question remains: how does transnational transfer actually happen? To explore this, we draw on the concept of a critical community (Chabot, 2004), which originates from the field of social movement studies. In analyzing political and protest groups, the concept of 'Transnational Diffusion' describes how one political or protest group influences another from a different country or culture (Chabot & Duyvendak, 2002; Chabot, 2004). Chabot (2004) explained the transnational spread of ideas between the Gandhian non-violent movement in India and the civil rights movement led by Martin Luther King Jr. in the United States. He stated that a critical community forms when "members make the adoption of foreign protest methods possible by employing them to develop new oppositional discourses or organize collective action campaigns" (Chabot, 2004, p.23).

Critical Community

To understand transnational transfer, it is beneficial to explore the concept of 'Critical Community.' This concept, introduced by Thomas Rochon (1998), describes a small group of individuals who influence and disseminate new ideas across societies. Rochon argued that these communities are vital in developing and spreading new ideas through social movements.

This concept was suggested by Thomas Rochon (1998) when Rochon tried to explain how values are created and then transferred between societies. He claims that this is done by "small communities of critical thinkers play in developing new ideas and inspiring their dissemination through larger social movements." That "have developed a sensitivity to some problem, an analysis of the sources of the problem, and a prescription for what should be done about the problem" (Rochon, 1998, p.22).

Later, this concept was used by Sean Chabot in the study of political and protest groups. The concept of transnational diffusion refers to the influence of one political or protest group on another group from a different country and culture (Chabot & Duyvendak, 2002; Chabot, 2004). In his research concerning the transnational diffusion between Gandhi's independence movement in India and the civil rights movement in the United States, Chabot (2004, p.23) observed that members of critical communities "make the adoption of foreign protest methods possible by employing them to develop new oppositional discourses or organize collective action campaigns." These protest groups are often interconnected, sometimes through members who have lived in both countries, and sometimes through shared ideologies and values. The members of the critical community in the destination country reframe the ideas of the protest group in the country of influence.

In the case of the connection between Gandhi's movement in India and the civil rights movement in the United States, the critical community consisted of African American activists who were part of Martin Luther King Jr.'s circle and had learned about Gandhi's teachings during their time in India. These connections led to King visiting India in 1959, learning about Gandhi's concept of nonviolent direct action and applying it to the American civil rights movement. This case of transnational diffusion was facilitated by the critical community of African American scholars active in the American civil rights movement, who traveled to India to learn from the Gandhian movement (Chabot & Duyvendak, 2002; Chabot, 2004).

Chabot further explained the importance of what he called “dialogue” in spreading ideas and action repertoires among social movements (Chabot, 2010). Dialogue is a cyclical process where a group first gains “awareness” of an idea, and then the idea (or activity) is moved and “translated” from one movement to another in a different location. The movement that adopts these ideas and activities then “experiments” with them until they are eventually spread and integrated.

The idea of a "critical community" was also adopted by Edward Goetz (2005) as he tried to explain the emergence of "Growth Management" as a concept of the "Smart Growth Movement" and used the concept of critical community by Rochon to explain the creation of the values, but mostly to policy demands of this movement. Therefore, it involves the creation and dissemination of ideas, as well as fostering this movement.

Recent studies, such as those by Segal (2023) and Segal & Greenspan (2024), have applied the concept of ‘Critical Community’ to various transnational contexts. For example, the introduction of baseball in Israel by American Jewish migrants and the influence of American conservatism on Israeli politics both show how ‘Critical Community’ helps facilitate transnational transfer. These studies demonstrate that the concept of a ‘Critical Community’ can explain the transfer of not only political ideas but also cultural practices.

As shown in a paper about baseball in Israel (Segal, 2023), baseball was introduced to Israel due to the efforts of a group of Jewish migrants from the United States, who received support and collaboration from members of the American Jewish community. Therefore, this example can be seen as a case of transnational cultural diffusion driven by a key community — mainly members of the American Jewish community, most of whom migrated to Israel.

Another recent study that demonstrates the importance of the concept ‘critical community’ (Segal & Greenspan, 2024) focuses on how the establishment organizations that were facilitated by the actions of Jewish migrants from the United States and Israelis who spent years in the United States, together with funding from American Jewish philanthropists associated with American conservatism. Therefore, this study supports the role of a “critical community” in building these organizations and the transnational transfer of conservative ideas from the United States to Israel. The organizations that were studied in that research provide a place for people who desire this kind of ideological home, many of them Jewish migrants from the United States. Ideas from American conservatism have a significant influence on them. This critical community enables and promotes philanthropic support to these organizations, thus facilitating the transfer of conservative ideas from the United States to Israel. It also enacts what Chabot called "dialogue" (Chabot, 2010) as the new acquisition of conservative ideas is translated to Israel.

That study demonstrated how American Jewry serves as a critical community for the political transfer of American conservatism to Israel, so much so that people born in Israel are becoming supporters of this ideology. Some American Jews, as part of the Jewish diaspora, are engaged in the attempt to influence Israel by promoting Israeli conservatism derived from American conservatism.

The last example of the use of the concept 'critical community' came in a historical study of Soviet Union Jews in Berlin during the 1920s and how they were agents of the Soviet culture and political influence that was, as it seems, part of the Soviet Union's attempts at cultural diplomacy (Zhuravel Segal, 2024). This recent paper has two important contributions to the development of the concept 'critical community'. First, it is a historical study – not part of a

sociological or social science publication – in this regard. Second, and more importantly, it demonstrates an example of a critical community supported by a government to enhance its diplomatic endeavors, thereby extending the concept beyond the activities of individuals in protest groups and expanding the circumstances in which this concept is applicable.

This indicates that the concept of a "critical community" can be applied beyond cases in which a political or protest group is affected by another group from a different country and culture, as described in previous studies (Chabot & Duyvendak, 2002; Chabot, 2004), and beyond being a small group of scholars (Rochon, 1998). This may explain the "how" of transnational transference. This concept may be beneficial in cases of transnational transfer where the transfer is conducted by a small group of people who convey values, beliefs, political ideas, cultural aspects, work methods, and other aspects. Therefore, it seems the concept of 'critical community' might be able to address the lacuna in the transnational transference theory.

Looking Back At Possible Critical Communities

The notion that transnational connections and transnational transfers are not undertaken by all members of the diaspora or the migrant community is not new. Alejandro Portes and others have noted that only a small portion of transmigrants are engaged in transnational activities, such as business entrepreneurship or political activity (Portes, 2003; Portes & Landolt, 2017; Guarnizo, Portes, & Haller, 2003). However, Portes (2003) claims that this limited group has a highly influential connection with the country of origin. This conclusion was later confirmed in a study on immigrants' enterprises and the ways and extent to which different migrants are engaged in them (Portes & Martinez, 2019).

This notion is returned to several other papers. A paper about the Dominican diaspora in the United States indicated that there are different ways and extents of engaging in transnational activity by entrepreneurs, political activists, civil society organizations, etc. (Itzigsohn, Dore Cabral, Hernandez Medina, and Vazquez, 1999), and same was shown in a paper about the Mexican transmigrants in the United States (Weber, 1999). A paper about migrants from the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, and Haiti showed various transnational activities, done to different extents by these migrants (Itzigsohn, 2000). This aspect was also shown in a paper about musicians collaborating to create together "World music" (Glick Schiller & Meinhof, 2011).

Peggy Levitt's (1998, 2001) concept of Social Remittances offers one of the earliest systematic accounts of how ideas, practices, and identities circulate across borders through migrant networks. Levitt emphasizes everyday actors—families, congregations, and neighborhood associations—as transmitters of "normative structures, systems of practice, and social capital." In contrast, the "Critical Community" functions at a higher level of intentionality and organization. It is not merely a byproduct of kinship networks but rather a self-conscious group engaged in ideological, political, or cultural translation. In this sense, while social remittances capture the content of what travels, critical communities explain the agency and structure that make such travel effective.

Another conceptual neighbor is Epistemic Communities (Haas, 1992), defined as networks of professionals who share a standard set of causal beliefs and normative commitments, shaping international policy outcomes. Both epistemic and critical communities revolve around the transmission of ideas and the pursuit of normative change. However, the latter are not limited to professional expertise; they may include activists, migrants, philanthropists, or cultural mediators

whose influence stems from their positionality between societies rather than from institutional authority. Hence, "Critical Community" broadens the epistemic community framework to encompass social, cultural, and diasporic forms of knowledge exchange.

Similarly, Transnational Advocacy Networks (Keck & Sikkink, 1998) describe actors who mobilize around principled ideas to influence state behavior. However, advocacy networks presuppose formalized organization and a clear political purpose, whereas critical communities may act informally and disseminate ideas through cultural, philanthropic, or artistic channels. For example, as shown in the baseball case (Segal, 2023), cultural diffusion can precede and even enable later political or ideological mobilization. Thus, "Critical Community" captures the formative, often pre-political phase of transnational connection.

By bridging these frameworks, the "Critical Community" contributes a missing layer to transnational theory: an analytical focus on the mediating collectivity that operates between individuals and institutions, as well as between informal cultural transfer and formal political activism. In this sense, it fills the long-standing lacuna in the "how" of transnational transference.

Historical and contemporary diasporas offer numerous examples of groups that can be retrospectively understood as critical communities. Examining these cases extends the explanatory reach of the concept beyond its original sociocultural and Jewish contexts.

One early example can be found in the Irish-American diaspora during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Irish migrants in the United States were not only financial supporters of Irish nationalism but also transmitted republican and labor-organizing ideals back to Ireland (McCaffrey, 1976; O'Day, 1999). Small circles of journalists, clergy, and activists—often moving back and forth between New York and Dublin—functioned as a critical community that reframed Irish independence within the context of American democratic discourse. Their transnational networks fostered both the cultural mythos and the institutional models of the later Irish Free State.

A second case involves the Cuban exile community in Miami after 1959. Although the Cuban diaspora is vast and heterogeneous, a small elite of intellectuals, business owners, and media figures constituted a distinct critical community promoting neoliberal and anti-communist values (Eckstein, 2009). Through philanthropic foundations, think tanks, and cultural media, they facilitated the circulation of ideological and economic models that reshaped U.S. foreign policy toward Cuba while also preparing alternative cultural imaginaries for a "future Cuba." This case highlights how critical communities can influence not only the original society but also international discourses surrounding it.

A third illustrative example comes from the Iranian student diaspora in Europe and North America during the 1960s and 1970s. Organizations such as the Confederation of Iranian Students operated as transnational hubs of intellectual exchange (Afary, 1991). Members who studied abroad absorbed global leftist and anti-colonial ideas, translating them into the idioms of Iranian political opposition. Many returned after the 1979 revolution, bridging the global New Left with local revolutionary discourse. The Iranian case illustrates how education, exile, and activism intersect to form a critical community whose transnational position catalyzes political transformation.

Together, these examples demonstrate that the analytical utility of "Critical Community" extends well beyond its initial empirical base. Whether through philanthropy, activism, or cultural innovation, small groups situated between societies consistently mediate transnational transfers of value, ideology, and practice.

Therefore, the concept of 'critical community' can be valuable for more than political or protest movements, and for more than "a small community of scholars." This concept can resolve a lacuna in the literature of transnational theory. This concept can help us understand the "how" of transnational transfer and differentiate between groups within migrant societies.

Methodological Extension: Researching Critical Communities

While conceptually robust, the study of critical communities remains methodologically underdeveloped. To advance this field, future research could explore several complementary directions.

First, operationalizing the concept requires identifying empirical markers of a critical community. These may include: (a) sustained cross-border communication and travel; (b) shared interpretive frameworks or normative commitments; (c) a dual orientation toward both origin and destination societies; and (d) observable acts of translation, adaptation, or reframing of ideas. Network analysis could reveal the relational architecture of these communities, while discourse analysis could unpack the narratives that sustain them.

Second, ethnographic and historical approaches could trace how critical communities evolve. Archival research may uncover the transnational biographies of individuals who function as "bridge figures" (cf. Levitt, 2001), while multi-sited ethnography could observe how such communities operate in practice. Combining qualitative and quantitative network mapping would allow scholars to link subjective meaning-making with structural connectivity.

Third, attention should be paid to the interaction among multiple critical communities. Within a single diaspora, several such communities may coexist—religious, cultural, political—each promoting different visions of transnational belonging. Comparative studies could examine whether these communities compete, cooperate, or remain mutually isolated. The interplay among them might illuminate the internal heterogeneity of transnational engagement.

Ultimately, future research should investigate the contextual factors that influence the effectiveness of critical communities. These include the political openness of the destination society, the presence of supportive institutions (such as media or philanthropy), and the degree of receptivity in the original society. One working hypothesis could be that the more institutionalized a critical community becomes (through formal organizations, educational institutions, or foundations), the more durable its transnational influence will be. Conversely, loosely organized communities may act more flexibly but have shorter temporal impact.

By developing such methodological tools, scholars can move from identifying critical communities descriptively to analyzing their mechanisms systematically. This would not only enrich transnational theory but also connect it with broader discussions in social movement research, diaspora studies, and global sociology.

Conclusion and Discussion

This paper examines the potential for rethinking the theory of transnational transfer and migration. By focusing on an explanation of the "how" of transnational transfer, I suggest using the concept of a "critical community." The concept of a 'Critical Community' can explain not only the more active members of a migrant society but also the way various values, ideas, perceptions, or cultural aspects, which might not only differ from each other but also conflict with one another.

This paper argues for the rethinking of transnational migration theory by focusing on the concept of 'Critical Community.' This concept clarifies how transnational transfer operates and how different values, ideas, or cultural aspects may be involved. The cases of baseball and conservatism in Israel illustrate how critical communities can facilitate the transnational diffusion of ideas.

I argue that the introduction of both baseball and conservatism to Israel, as discussed in the relevant papers, has been a process of transnational diffusion prompted by a critical community. Looking back at papers dealing with transnational connections and transference, as well as transmigrants, the concept of 'critical community' can explain the group of migrants who are more actively engaged in transnational activities, as these papers explicitly mention. Hence, this concept helps explain how the relevant transnational transfer is accomplished.

Therefore, 'Critical Community' can be a valuable concept for transnational theory. As shown in recent papers, as well as older papers on transnational migration, the Critical Community can explain the differentiation of migrant societies, as well as understand the "how" of transnational transfer.

Future studies can address some of the ways that critical communities enable the transnational transfer. One aspect can be the way values, ideas, or cultural aspects manifest in the society of the destination. Chabot (2010) suggested that transnational diffusion happens by a process of "dialogue." Dialogue is a cyclical process whereby a group first develops "awareness" of an idea. Subsequently, the idea is dislocated and "translated" from one place to another in a different place. The movement that absorbs these ideas and activities then "experiments" with them till eventually they are diffused and integrated. This concept was introduced in a paper that did not even mention the concept of 'critical community'; yet 'dialogue' is a concept that can contribute to the ways a critical community works. In one of the recent papers that used the concept of 'critical community,' the concept of 'dialogue' was also used to understand the way American conservatism is transferred to Israel and the way this ideology is being "translated" to Israel – by using a combination of American ideas and work methods with Israeli work methods (Segal & Greenspan, 2024).

Other aspects to be elaborated in the future are to understand better how the size of the critical community, along with its characteristics and the context of its operation (the context of both societies), impacts the way the critical community works. That is, with the way the critical community is part of a group or a society of migrants, and perhaps the interactions, if any, between critical communities.

References

Adamson, F. B. (2019). "Non-state authoritarianism and diaspora politics." Global Networks 20(1): 1–20.

Afary, J. (1991). The Iranian Constitutional Revolution, 1906–1911: Grassroots democracy, social democracy, and the origins of feminism. Columbia University Press.

Castles, S., De Haas, H., & Miller, M. J. (2020). The age of migration: International population movement in the modern world. London and New York: Guilford Press.

Chabot, S., & Duyvendak, J. W. (2002). Globalization and transnational diffusion between social movements: Reconceptualizing the dissemination of the Gandhian repertoire and the "coming out' routine. Theory and Society, 31, 697–740.

Chabot, S. (2004). Framing, transnational diffusion, and African American intellectuals in the Land of Gandhi. International Review of Social History, 49(S12): 19–40.

Chabot, S. (2010). "Dialogue Matters: Beyond the Transmission Model of Transnational Diffusion between Social Movements," In Rebecca Kollins Givan, Kenneth Roberts, and Sarah Soule (eds.), The Diffusion of Social Movements, Cambridge, 99–124.

Clavin, P. (2005). Defining transnationalism. Contemporary European History, 14(4), 421–439.

Eckstein, S. (2009). The immigrant divide: How Cuban Americans changed the U.S. and their homeland. Routledge.

Glick Schiller, N. (2005). Transnational social fields and imperialism: Bringing a theory of power to Transnational Studies. Anthropological Theory, 5(4), 439–461.

Glick Schiller, N. (2009a). Theorizing about and beyond transnational processes. In M. Cervantes-Rodríguez, R. Grosfoguel, & E. Mielants (Eds.), Caribbean migration to Western Europe and the United States (pp. 18–40). Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Glick Schiller, N. (2009b). A global perspective on migration and development. Social Analysis, 53(3), 14–37.

Glick Schiller, N. (2010). A global perspective on transnational migration: Theorising migration without methodological nationalism. In: R. Bauböck & T. Faist, Diaspora and transnationalism—Concepts, theories and methods (pp. 109–130). Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

Glick Schiller, N., & Meinhof, U. H. (2011). Singing a new song? Transnational migration, methodological nationalism, and cosmopolitan perspectives. Music and Arts in Action, 3(3), 21–39.

Glick Schiller, N. (2018a). Theorizing Transnational Migration in Our Times: A Multiscalar Temporal Perspective. Nordic Journal of Migration Research, 8(4), 201–212.

Glick Schiller, N. (2018b). Theorising about and beyond transnational processes. In J. E. Fossum, R. Kastoryano, & B. Siim (Eds.), Diversity and contestations over nationalism in Europe and Canada (pp. 31–62). London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Glick Schiller, N., Basch, L., & Blanc-Szanton, C. (1992). Towards a transnational perspective on migration: Race, class, ethnicity, and nationalism reconsidered. New York: New York Academy of Sciences.

Glick Schiller N., Basch, L., & Blanc-Szanton, C. (Eds). (1994). Nations unbound: Transnational projects, postcolonial predicaments and deterritorialized nation-states. London, UK, and New York, NY: Routledge.

Glick Schiller, N., Basch, L., & Szanton Blanc, C. (1995). From Immigrant to Transmigrant: Theorizing Transnational Migration. Anthropological Quarterly, 68(1), 48–63.

Glick Schiller, N., & Çaglar, A. (2009). Towards a comparative theory of locality in migration studies: Migrant incorporation and city scale. Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, 35(2), 177–202

Glick Schiller, N., & Meinhof, U. H. (2011). Singing a new song? Transnational migration, methodological nationalism, and cosmopolitan perspectives. Music and Arts in Action, 3(3): 21–39.

Goetz, E. G. (2005). The Big Tent of Growth Management: Smart Growth as a Movement. In: Bengston, David N., tech. Ed. Policies for Managing Urban Growth and Landscape Change: A Key to Conservation in the 21st Century. Gen. Tech. Rep. NC-265. St. Paul, MN: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, North Central Research Station. 45-51

Golbert, R. (2001). Transnational orientations from home: Constructions of Israel and transnational space among Ukrainian Jewish youth. Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, 27(4), 713–731. https://doi.org/10.1080/13691830120090467

Guarnizo, L. E., Portes, A., & Haller, W. (2003). Assimilation and transnationalism: Determinants of transnational political action among contemporary migrants. American Journal of Sociology, 108(6), 1211–1248.

Haas, P. M. (1992). Introduction: Epistemic communities and international policy coordination. International Organization, 46(1), 1–35.

Itzigsohn, J., Cabral, C. D., Medina, E. H., & Vázquez, O. (1999). Mapping Dominican transnationalism: narrow and broad transnational practices. Ethnic and Racial Studies, 22(2), 316–339. https://doi.org/10.1080/014198799329503

Itzigsohn, J. (2000). Immigration and the boundaries of citizenship: The institutions of immigrants' political transnationalism. International Migration Review, 34(4), 1126–1154.

Itzigsohn, J., Dore Cabral, C., Hernández Medina, E., & Vázquez, O. (1999). Mapping Dominican transnationalism: Narrow and broad transnational practices. Ethnic and Racial Studies, 22(2), 316–339.

Keck, M. E., & Sikkink, K. (1998). Activists beyond borders: Advocacy networks in international politics. Cornell University Press.

Levitt, P. (1998). Social Remittances: Migration-Driven Local-Level Forms of Cultural Diffusion. The International Migration Review, 32(4), 926–948. https://doi.org/10.2307/2547666

Levitt, P. (2001). The transnational villagers. University of California Press.

Levitt, P., & Glick Schiller, N. (2004). Conceptualized simultaneity: A transnational social field perspective on society. The International Migration Review, 38(3),1002–1039.

McCaffrey, L. J. (1976). The Irish diaspora in America. Indiana University Press.

O'Day, A. (1999). The Irish diaspora: A comparative history. Longman.

Portes, A. (1996). Transnational communities: Their emergence and significance in the contemporary world system. In R. P. Smith (Ed.), Latin America in the world economy (pp. 151–168). Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

Portes, A. (1997). Globalization from below: The rise of transnational communities. In D. Kalb, M. Van der Land, R. Staring, N. Wilterdink, & B. Van Steenbergen (Eds.), The ends of globalization: Bringing society back in (pp. 253–270). Boulder, CO: Rowman and Littlefield.

Portes, A. (2001). Introduction: The debate and significance of immigrant transnationalism. Global Networks, 1(3): 181–194.

Portes, A. (2003). Conclusion: Theoretical Convergences and Empirical Evidence in the Study of Immigrant Transnationalism. The International Migration Review, 37(3), 874–892.

Portes, A., Guarnizo, L. E., & Landolt, P. (1999). The study of transnationalism: Pitfalls and promise of an emerging research field. Ethical and Racial Studies, 22(2), 2017–237.

Portes, A., Guarnizo, L. E., & Landolt, P. (2017). Commentary on the study of transnationalism: Pitfalls and promise of an emergent research field. Ethical and Racial Studies, 40(9): 1486–1491.

Portes, A. & Martinez, B. (2019). They are not all the same: Immigrant enterprises, transnationalism and development. Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, 46(10), 1991–2007.

Rochon, T. R. (1998). Culture Moves: Ideas, Activism, and Changing Values. Princeton University Press. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv346r3k

Segal, A. A. (2020). Employment in the process of migration and absorption of Jewish migrants from the United States to Israel. Hagira - Israel Journal of Migration, 10, 120–140 (In Hebrew).

Segal, A.A. (2023). "Homeland Run: Israeli Baseball and American Transmigrants". Contemporary Jewry, 43(1): 97 – 120.

Segal, A.A. & Guetzkow, J. (2023). "Transnational Immigrants Encounter the Workplace: North American Jewish Migrants in Israel Who Work in Fundraising". Migration Letters, 20(7): 1167–1184.

Segal, A.A. & Greenspan, I. (2024). "The Creation and Americanization of Israeli Conservative Civil Society: Critical Community and Transnational Transference", Israel Studies Review, 29(2): 144–169.

Smith, M. P., & Guarnizo, L. E. (1998). Transnationalism from below. New York: Routledge.

Zhuravel Segal, A. (2024). "A Red City: Russian Jews and the Soviet Cultural Presence in Weimar Berlin", Medaon – Magazin für jüdisches Leben in Forschung und Bildung, 18(35): 1–9

BOOK REVIEWS

Eleanor Paynter: Emergency in Transit: Witnessing Migration in the Colonial Present. Oakland: University of California Press, 2024. 286 pages. ISBN 978-0-520-40290-4.

Dan APATEANU

Eleanor Paynter's *Emergency in Transit* is a rigorous and intellectually ambitious study of the language through which contemporary Europe has learned to speak about migration. Rather than accepting the familiar formula of the "migration emergency" as a neutral description of an objectively exceptional situation, Paynter argues that emergency is itself a political and cultural technology. In her reading, it is a shifting apparatus of discourse, law, policy, and institutional practice that converts mobility into danger, renders certain bodies highly visible as threats, and naturalizes racialized forms of exclusion (pp. 1–7). The great strength of the book lies in the fact that it does not merely denounce these processes in abstract terms. It reconstructs, with patience and precision, the social worlds through which emergency is experienced, reproduced, and contested in present-day Italy.

The volume is carefully organized. After the introduction, "Emergency Imaginaries" (pp. 1–30), the book unfolds in two main parts. Part I, "Arrivals," includes three chapters: "Strange Grief and Elegiac Possibilities in the Black Mediterranean" (pp. 31–57), "Hospitality as Emergency Response" (pp. 58–83), and "Emergent Practices of Hospitality in the Camp" (pp. 84–114). Part II, "The Right to Remain," contains "Street Vendor as Witness" (pp. 115–139), "Seen and Unseen in the City" (pp. 140–166), and "Oranges and Riot Gear" (pp. 167–190). The study closes with an epilogue, "Mobility in an Age of Emergency, or, A Small and Stubborn Possibility" (pp. 191–198), followed by an appendix (pp. 199–205), notes (pp. 207–230), and a substantial bibliography (pp. 231–254). This architecture is especially effective because it moves from the spectacle of arrival to the longer temporalities of labor, urban presence, memory, and political survival.

One of the most persuasive aspects of the introduction is Paynter proposal of "testimony as method," a formulation that names not only the use of testimonies as documentary material, but also a broader epistemic commitment to reading migrant narratives, interviews, films, artworks, and public acts of witnessing as forms of knowledge production in their own right (pp. 4–7). This approach allows the author to move between oral history, ethnography, narrative analysis, visual culture, and political theory without losing analytical coherence. The book repeatedly shows that the question is not simply what migrants suffer, but how they narrate, frame, and intervene in the meanings imposed on their movements.

The introduction establishes the stakes of the argument through the 2016 Campidoglio protest in Rome, where migrants publicly declared, "We are not dangerous . . . we are in danger!" (pp. 1–4). That reversal is central to the book's interpretive force. Paynter demonstrates that

emergency discourse does not merely register urgency. It organizes perception. It creates what she calls an emergency imaginary of foreignness in which migrants appear as the embodiment of rupture, risk, and non-belonging. What is represented in media and politics as a sudden border crisis is shown instead to be a protracted regime of management that governs who may be seen as worthy of protection, who may remain visible only as a problem, and who may be denied full political subjectivity altogether (pp. 2–7).

Another major contribution of the book is the way it links migration to the colonial present. Paynter argues that the current management of Mediterranean mobility cannot be understood outside the longer histories of empire, racial hierarchy, and selective collective memory that continue to shape Italian and European public life (pp. 11–20). Through the framework of the Black Mediterranean, she insists that the sea is not simply a geographical threshold but a racialized political space where colonial relations are rearticulated in contemporary form. This perspective allows her to show that the language of emergency works precisely because it obscures historical continuity. By presenting migration as unprecedented, it suppresses the colonial and postcolonial entanglements that connect Africa, Italy, labor, border control, and racialization.

Part I, "Arrivals," is where Paynter's argument becomes especially concrete, because the first three chapters show how the emergency apparatus is produced not only through policy and media discourse, but also through mourning, reception, and the unstable spaces of encampment. Read together, these chapters demonstrate that arrival is never a simple threshold moment. It is already structured by racialized visibility, by institutional delay, and by the struggle over who may testify to what migration means. This first section is therefore fundamental to the book's structure: it moves from death at sea, to formal reception, to improvised forms of hospitality that emerge precisely where the official system fails.

Chapter 1, "Strange Grief and Elegiac Possibilities in the Black Mediterranean," is one of the most conceptually striking chapters in the volume. It opens with Zakaria Mohamed Ali's documentary return to Lampedusa and with the image of the boat cemetery, using this scene to establish the Mediterranean as a site of contested witnessing rather than a mere backdrop of catastrophe (pp. 31–33). Paynter's key intervention here is to show that border deaths do not enter public memory innocently. They are narrated, staged, and filtered through institutions that often transform politically produced deaths into depoliticized "tragedies at sea." The chapter is especially strong in the way it insists that the sea is simultaneously a material border, a narrative battlefield, and what is called a "liquid archive" in which the terms of remembrance are constantly being negotiated (pp. 32–33).

The chapter's most original concept is "strange grief," the form of official mourning through which the state appears compassionate while preserving migrants as strangers even in death (pp. 38–40). Paynter develops this argument through the discussion of the 2003 and 2013 state funerals for migrants who drowned near Lampedusa. These ceremonies, she argues, positioned the Italian state as mourner and witness while displacing its own complicity in border violence. The 2013 commemoration is particularly revealing: survivors were excluded, the ceremony was delayed, and the conferral of honorary Italian citizenship on the dead contrasted sharply with the precarious legal status of the living survivors, who remained in reception limbo (pp. 39–40). What emerges from this analysis is not simply a critique of hypocrisy, but a more precise claim: official grief can function as a technology of depoliticization, severing contemporary shipwrecks from the colonial and postcolonial histories that connect Italy to the Horn of Africa.

Chapter 1 is also notable for refusing to stop at critique. In its later pages, it turns to artistic and memorial practices that attempt to produce more adequate forms of witnessing. Paynter's reading of Barca Nostra and of the Katër i Radës shows how migrant boats can move between evidence, relic, artwork, and memorial, without ever stabilizing into a single meaning (pp. 54–56). This discussion is particularly persuasive because it demonstrates that memorialization is itself ambivalent: such objects may either deepen public understanding or become aestheticized and detached from the dead they should recall. For that reason, the chapter does not sentimentalize art. Rather, it asks under what conditions elegy can interrupt the emergency imaginary instead of reproducing it. The result is a chapter that combines political theory, memory studies, and visual analysis.

Chapter 2, "Hospitality as Emergency Response," shifts the focus from sea crossings to the Italian reception system and offers one of the book's clearest demonstrations that emergency continues well after disembarkation. Paynter begins by showing that accoglienza is not a transparent language of welcome. It is a layered term that joins official procedures, everyday assistance, and the promise of integration, even as these same structures keep migrants legally and socially suspended (pp. 60–61). Her central claim is that reception should not be read as a neutral bridge between arrival and integration, but as a site where foreignness is continuously produced and negotiated. This reframing is particularly effective because it dislodges a common assumption in migration studies, namely that reception is simply benevolent unless it fails. In Paynter's account, the contradictions are built into the system itself.

The chapter develops this point through what it calls the "paradoxes of proximity," especially in the case of Campobasso and its CAS structures (pp. 61–65). Migrants are physically near Italian society but socially held apart from it; they are expected to prepare for life in Italy while being housed in marginal locations and deprived of the very conditions that would make integration plausible. The Campobasso center, situated in the industrial zone outside the city, becomes emblematic of this logic: it is visible enough to generate local anxiety, yet distant enough to minimize meaningful contact (pp. 65–66). Paynter's use of oral testimony is crucial here. Encounters recounted by Sulayman and Bakary show that the rhetoric of hospitality coexists with bus drivers who pass migrants by, employers who tell them to "go back" to their own country, and a general atmosphere in which Black foreignness is treated as a civic disturbance rather than as a social fact to be engaged (pp. 66–68).

Equally important is the chapter's attention to temporality. Time in the CAS appears undefined, administratively managed yet existentially empty. Residents wait for documents, for hearings, for decisions, while legal work remains largely inaccessible and everyday life is reduced to meals, classes, and boredom. Paynter captures this suspended temporality with precision, and Salvatore's comment that the CAS contract contains a start date but no end date gives the chapter one of its sharpest institutional insights (pp. 64–65). The broader analytical achievement of Chapter 2 lies in showing that reception is not simply insufficient hospitality. It is a form of conditional hospitality, even "hostipitality," in which care and control remain inseparable (pp. 60–61).

Chapter 3, "Emergent Practices of Hospitality in the Camp," extends and radicalizes the previous chapter by turning to Piazzale Maslax and the Baobab Experience in Rome (pp. 84–90). Here Paynter studies the informal camp not as a residual or accidental space, but as a constitutive part of the emergency apparatus. This is a major strength of the book. Rather than treating the

camp only through the familiar language of exception and bare life, she argues that such improvised sites are generated by the failures and exclusions of formal reception itself (pp. 88–89). In other words, the camp is not outside the system; it is one of the forms the system produces. That argument is both analytically strong and politically consequential, because it forces the reader to see encampment as a routine outcome of migration governance rather than as a regrettable anomaly.

What makes the chapter especially compelling is its attention to visibility. Piazzale Maslax appears as a place where residents and volunteers must constantly negotiate whether being seen is a protection or a danger (pp. 86–88). Paynter shows that the camp is crossed by multiple gazes: the surveillance of the state, the voyeurism of outsiders, the advocacy gaze of volunteers, and the self-representations of the camp's residents. Out of this unstable field of visibility emerge practices of what she calls "emergent" accoglienza. Emmanuel's testimony is exemplary here: his account of being left in the street, losing his documents in police raids, and being pushed to start the bureaucratic process all over again condenses the administrative cruelty that turns survival itself into an emergency (pp. 102–103).

At the same time, the chapter insists that the camp is not reducible to abandonment. Baobab's assemblies, multilingual translation practices, shared decision-making about tents and risk, and the collective diary kept by residents and volunteers reveal forms of hospitality that are practical, political, and inventive (pp. 102–104). Paynter therefore frames the camp as a site of radical or abolitionist hospitality, one that responds to immediate needs while also challenging the border regime that created those needs in the first place (pp. 103–104). This is perhaps the strongest of the first three chapters in ethnographic terms, because it captures both fragility and agency without romanticizing either. Taken together, Chapters 1 through 3 provide a powerful opening movement for the book: they show that the so-called migration emergency is narrated through death, administered through reception, and contested in the improvised social worlds migrants and their allies build in order to survive it.

Part II, "The Right to Remain," is where Paynter most fully demonstrates that the migration "emergency" does not end with disembarkation. Instead, it continues in the ordinary geographies of work, circulation, housing, tourism, and public visibility. This second half of the book is especially effective because it refuses to treat arrival as the decisive analytical moment. What matters just as much is what happens afterward: how migrants try to remain, to work, to narrate themselves, and to claim a place within Italian social space. Chapters 4, 5, and 6 are therefore crucial to the architecture of the volume, because they show that emergency is reproduced not only by borders and reception centers, but by the everyday structures that regulate who may be seen as legitimate within the city and the labor market.

Chapter 4, "Street Vendor as Witness", is one of the most original chapters in the book because it reconceptualizes ambulant labor as a mode of testimony rather than merely a symptom of marginality (pp. 115–139). Paynter focuses on Senegalese vendors in Tuscany who sell books, especially Bay Mademba's 2011 memoir "Il mio viaggio della speranza: dal Senegal all'Italia in cerca di fortuna" (pp. 118–119). This choice is highly significant. The vendor is not only a precarious worker circulating through tourist areas; he is also a mediator of narrative, someone whose livelihood depends on repeated acts of conversation, persuasion, self-presentation, and autobiographical identification. In this sense, the memoir does not circulate as an inert object. Its meaning is activated in the testimonial exchanges between vendor and passerby, and Paynter is

especially persuasive in showing that those exchanges occur in spaces saturated with the symbolic capital of Italian cultural heritage.

What gives the chapter its particular force is the way it links the local circulation of testimony to broader questions of race, legality, and public perception. Mademba's memoir, as Paynter notes, remains outside the mainstream circuits through which migrant writing is usually canonized, even though it speaks directly to Italian readers and is sold through face-to-face encounters in public space. The result is a layered form of witnessing: the memoir narrates migration, while the act of selling it becomes a second-order testimony about life in Italy. Paynter thus turns the vendor into a critical observer of Italian everyday life, not simply its excluded object. The later pages of the chapter, marked by the memorial display for Idy Diene and the demonstration following the murder of Soumaila Sacko (pp. 136–138), further widen the frame. Street labor appears not as an isolated economic practice, but as part of a wider field of racialized exposure in which work, vulnerability, mourning, and protest become inseparable.

Chapter 5, "Seen and Unseen in the City", is equally rich and arguably the most spatially elaborated chapter in the book (pp. 140–166). Here Paynter turns to Rome and asks what it means for migrants and Italians of African descent to claim a right to the city not only through physical presence, but through cultural authority over its histories and meanings. The chapter is organized around three cases: the "Guide Invisibili" soundwalks, the work of Somali-Italian writer Igiaba Scego, and the occupied site of Metropoliz with its museum project MAAM (pp. 142–143). This structure allows Paynter to move between central, monumental, and peripheral spaces while keeping in view a single analytical concern: the politics of visibility. Her point is not simply that migrants are unseen; rather, they are seen selectively, often as strangers, intruders, or humanitarian subjects, while their interpretive authority over urban space remains denied.

The discussion of the "Guide Invisibili" project is especially compelling because it reverses familiar assumptions about expertise and belonging. Migrants become guides through Monti, Trastevere, and other emblematic Roman neighborhoods, mixing personal memory with urban history and thereby repositioning themselves as narrators of the city rather than as objects within it (pp. 143–145). Amadou Doumbia's commentary on everyday infrastructures, such as the Caritas mensa in Via delle Sette Sale, is particularly important because it inserts migrant life into areas otherwise consumed through the glossy lens of tourism. Paynter shows that these soundwalks are acts of citizenship in a strong sense: they do not beg for sympathy so much as they redistribute cultural authority. This argument becomes even richer when the chapter moves to MAAM and Metropoliz, where a former factory is transformed into a living museum and political space through collective curation (pp. 158–160). The rocket mural, the "Rane infinite", the boats made from migrant-vessel remnants, and the dense visual language of the site, all exemplify how precarious subjects create forms of history, art, and residence that challenge the whitewashed urban narratives of the nation. In this respect, Chapter 5 is not simply about invisibility; it is about the production of counter-visibility.

Chapter 6, "Oranges and Riot Gear", is perhaps the book's most openly political chapter, because it brings together border studies, labor analysis, anti-racist critique, and ethnographic testimony in a single, sharply focused account of agricultural work in southern Italy (pp. 167–190). The opening scene with Ousmane Sangare demonstrating how to cut oranges is memorable not only because of its concreteness, but because it condenses the entire logic of exploitative labor: even the smallest gesture is already governed by a system in which incorrect work means unpaid

work (pp. 167–168). Paynter uses Sangare's testimony to enter the world of the "bracciante", showing how this historically internal Italian labor category has become increasingly racialized and associated with foreigners, especially African and South Asian migrants who arrive through precarious routes. The chapter's key concept, the "refugeeization of labor," is especially powerful because it makes visible the connection between legal precarity and economic exploitation. Migrants do not become vulnerable workers by accident; they are placed in that position through the temporal delays, document renewals, blocked housing markets, and administrative uncertainties that structure their lives.

The chapter is especially strong in demonstrating that this exploitation is systemic rather than exceptional. Paynter shows how the "caporalato" system, informal settlements, lack of contracts, and racialized housing exclusion trap workers in cycles of dependency and movement from one precarious setting to another (pp. 173–177). Yousef's testimony is central here, because it illustrates how even a migrant with papers may still be pushed into exploitative harvest work while waiting for renewal procedures and searching for formal residence arrangements. The discussion of Rosarno, the killing of Soumaila Sacko, and the deaths of Becky Moses and Suruwa Jaithe gives the chapter a cumulative force, reinforced by the statistics from MEDU showing how many workers were technically legal yet still uncontracted and exposed to serious physical and psychological harm (pp. 176–177). Paynter's larger claim is unmistakable: the "emergency apparatus" operates not only in the Mediterranean Sea, but in orchards, camps, transport vans, and informal housing, where migrant labor remains indispensable and yet disposable. By linking these recent deaths to the earlier murder of Jerry Essan Masslo, the chapter also provides a long historical arc, demonstrating that Italy's racialized labor emergency is not new, only newly reframed. For that reason, Chapter 6 gives Part II its strongest political conclusion and confirms the book's central argument that mobility, labor, and racial injustice must be read together rather than separately.

The epilogue is appropriately restrained and reflective. Rather than offering a triumphant resolution, Paynter returns to the question of what mobility might mean in an age saturated by emergency discourse (pp. 191–198). The phrase "a small and stubborn possibility" is particularly apt, because the book's political horizon is neither naive nor fatalistic. It acknowledges that the emergency apparatus intersects with climate change, racism, economic precarity, and conflict, while still insisting that migrant testimony may open other ways of imagining rights, belonging, and collective responsibility. This ending fits the larger intellectual ethic of the book: critique is inseparable from the effort to make alternative futures thinkable.

The documentary apparatus of the volume reinforces its scholarly seriousness. The appendix (pp. 199–205) assembles data on Mediterranean arrivals and deaths, Italian emergency measures, and reception structures, but it also reflects critically on the incompleteness and politics of such data. The notes (pp. 207–230) are extensive, and the bibliography (pp. 231–254) confirms the breadth of the research, bringing together work on migration, race, colonial memory, visual culture, hospitality, labor, and border politics. This is not a merely decorative scholarly apparatus. It supports the central claim that numbers, legal categories, and policy chronologies require interpretation, context, and testimony if they are to illuminate rather than obscure migrant realities.

The book's discussion extends outside the Italian context, and Italy is never presented as an isolated or unique example. Rather, Paynter presents it as a crucial site from which broader questions can be asked about asylum, race, empire, and belonging in contemporary Europe. The

study shows how a nationally specific archive of colonial memory and migration policy can illuminate wider debates on emergency governance and border externalization. This comparative reach increases the value of the book considerably.

The book stands out for maintaining an ethical approach to criticism while avoiding excessive sentimentality. The chapters are attentive to mourning, racial violence, administrative limbo, and precarious labor, yet they do not convert migrants into passive symbols of suffering. Instead, Paynter repeatedly foregrounds narration, protest, creative production, urban presence, and political action. This is why her readings of film, visual art, demonstrations, and everyday practices are so effective. They reveal migrants not merely as victims of a border regime, but as producers of meaning who interpret the spaces through which they move. In this respect, the book's interdisciplinary texture is one of its major strengths. The combination of ethnographic observation with literary and visual analysis enables Paynter to trace the afterlives of the border well beyond the shoreline, into camps, reception centers, city streets, informal economies, and artistic forms.

One of the strengths of the book lies in its sustained attention to language itself. The prefatory "A Note on Language" (p. xvii) is not a marginal clarification, but an important methodological statement. By moving between Italian and English and by retaining terms such as accoglienza, Paynter refuses the illusion that migration can be described through a neutral administrative vocabulary. Translation becomes part of the argument because words carry the institutional, affective, and historical sediment of the worlds that produce them. This sensitivity matters especially in a study centered on witnessing. Testimony is never detached from the language in which it is uttered, translated, mediated, or authorized. Paynter's lexical care therefore reinforces the book's broader claim that emergency is not only a political instrument, but also a linguistic frame through which migrants are made visible in certain ways and inaudible in others.

Overall, Emergency in Transit is an original, carefully researched, and deeply persuasive contribution to contemporary migration studies. It shows that emergency is not simply a response to movement, but a way of organizing law, perception, public feeling, and political legitimacy. At the same time, it insists that migrants are not reducible to figures of vulnerability or abstraction. They are witnesses, interpreters, workers, organizers, and makers of meaning. Through its sustained attention to Italy, the Black Mediterranean, and the colonial present, the book deserves a wide readership among scholars of migration, postcolonial Europe, Italian studies and human rights studies.

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Ademolu Oluwaseun Adenuga is a lecturer and Head of the Department of Criminology and Security Studies at Osun State University, Nigeria. A seasoned security researcher with publications in domestic and foreign outlets, he champions experiential learning through correctional tours, police command visits, and inter-university collaborations. His work focuses on correctional administration, policing, crime prevention, and security sector reform in Nigeria. As the General Secretary of the Nigerian Society for Police and Research Practitioners (NSPRP), he mentors scholars and advocates evidence-based reforms, blending academic rigour with community engagement to prepare future criminologists. Contact: ademolu.adenuga@uniosun.edu.ng.

Dan Apateanu, PhD, is lecturer at the University of Oradea, Department of Political Science and Communication. Email: danapateanu@yahoo.com.

Olubukola Mary Aratunde is a Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology and Anthropology (Specialising in Criminology). She is a Lecturer in the Department of Criminology and Security Studies, Osun State University, Osogbo. Dr. Aratunde's research interest focuses on reintegration programmes for ex-convicts with emphasis on creating long-term strategies to reduce recidivism and promote social inclusion. She is also deeply involved in humanitarian service, mentoring young females in colleges and tertiary institutions. Contact: Olubukola.aratunde@uniosun.edu.ng.

Dr. Oyeyipo Eyitayo is a researcher in the Department of Criminology and Security Studies of Osun State University with a strong academic focus on Penology. He earned his doctoral degree from Landmark University in 2023, where he further developed his research interest in correctional systems, punishment, and rehabilitation studies. With nine years of teaching experience, Dr. Oyeyipo has made significant scholarly contributions through research and publications. He has authored and co-authored about 50 academic articles, with about 20 of these published in Scopus-indexed journals, reflecting the international relevance and quality of his work. Contact: eyitayo.oyeyipo@uniosun.edu.ng.

Esther Olapeju Fagbewesa, PhD, is a Lecturer in the Department of Local Government and Development Studies, Obafemi Awolowo University, Osun State, Nigeria. Her research interests include Public Administration, Governance and Political Analysis ,Gender Equality in the lager Society. She has published in area of public Administration, Governance and policy analysis. Contact: efagbewesa@oauife.edu.ng.

Olawale Gbadeyan, PhD, is a Senior Lecturer and the Head of Department in the Department of Peace and Conflict Studies, Osun State University, Nigeria. He earned his PhD in

Conflict Transformation and Peace Studies from the prestigious university of KwaZulu-Natal, south Africa. His research interests include conflict management, security studies and African studies. He has published in areas of Peace, conflicts and security and is committed to advancing scholarship that bridges theory and practice in Africa. Contact: Olawale.gbadeyan@Uniosun.edu.ng.

Bright Nkrumah is an Assistant Professor at the Department of Environmental Studies. Prior to joining Salisbury University, he was an Assistant Professor at the Water School, Florida Gulf Coast University. He previously served as a Visiting Assistant Professor at the International Development, Community and Environment (IDCE), Clark University, Massachusetts. Bright has previously held the position of Landhaus Fellow at the Rachel Carson Center for Environment and Society, University of Munich. He has served as a scholar-activist at various institutions including the Global Change Institute, University of the Witwatersrand, the Center for Human Rights, University of Pretoria, and University of the Free State. Contact: BXNKRUMAH@salisbury.edu.

Ana Orjuhovschi is Ph. D., Candidate, European Paradigm Doctoral School, Babeș Bolyai University of Cluj Napoca.Contact: orjuhovschia@gmail.com.

Laurențiu Petrila is a Lecturer at the University of Oradea, Department of International Relations and European Studies. He holds a PhD in International Relations and European Studies from Babeș-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca and completed a postdoctoral fellowship in Sociology at the University of Oradea. His research focuses on cultural and social anthropology, societal security, and social transformation through the lenses of migration, culture, and causal extremism. Contact: laurentiu.petrila@didactic.oradea.ro.

Amir Akiva Segal is a Post-Doc Fellow of the Minerva Stiftung at the Freie Universität Berlin, Institute of Sociology, researching diaspora relations and transnational migration. His research interests include transnational migration, Jewish migration, civil society philanthropy, and political poetry. Completed his Doctoral studies at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem on the topic of transnational migrant employment in Israel, focusing on North American Jewish migrants. Published four Poetry books and a novel, and a book about Israeli political poetry. Married to Anya and father of three. Contact: sglamir@gmail.com.

Ashwathi Sharma is an research scholar at the Srishti Manipal Institute of Art, Design and Technology, Manipal Academy of Higher Education, Manipal, India. Contact: ashwathi.sharma@manipal.edu.

Sergiu A. Ursa is a master's student of Social Research Design at Universitatea Babeș-Bolyai. Contact: sergiu.ursa@stud.ubbcluj.ro.

University of Oradea
Faculty of History, International Relations, Political Science and Communication Sciences
Department of Political Science and Communication Sciences

invite you to contribute to the **Special Issue** of the
Journal of Identity and Migration Studies
on the occassion of the anniversary of
30 YEARS OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ORADEA: POLITICS, COMMUNICATION AND DEMOCRATIC CHANGE

Established in the context of Romania's democratic transition after 1989, the Political Science specialization at the University of Oradea has accompanied three decades of political, institutional and societal transformation. Throughout this period, the Department has contributed to the development of academic reflection on democracy, European integration, public communication, governance and civic participation, while training generations of professionals active in public administration, politics, media and civil society.

To mark this anniversary, the Department of Political Science and Communication Sciences invites contributions for a *Special Issue* of the *Journal of Identity and Migration Studies*:

1. New Research Agendas in Political Science.
2. The Academic as a Public and Civic Actor.
3. Political Institutions, Governance and Community Engagement.
4. Political Leadership, Communication and Legitimacy.
5. The Reconfiguration of the European and International Public Sphere.

Marking three decades of Political Science at the University of Oradea, the *Special Issue* also invites critical reflections on the evolution of democracy, public life and Political Science in Central and Eastern Europe after 1989.

Important information:

- All submissions must be written in English.
- Articles will undergo a double-blind peer-review process.
- The recommended length of the manuscript is between 6,000 and 8,000 words, including references.
- Authors are requested to follow the journal's submission and formatting guidelines available at: https://jims.uoradea.ro/index.php/guidelines-for-authors

- Each submission must include the author's full name, institutional affiliation, e-mail address, and a short biographical note (maximum 100 words).
- Deadline for submission: **30 August 2026**.
- Manuscripts should be submitted to: jims@uoradea.ro; journal.identity.migration@gmail.com.

GUIDELINES FOR AUTHORS

Manuscripts will be accepted with the understanding that their content is unpublished previously. If any part of an article or essay has already been published, or is to be published elsewhere, the author must inform the Journal at the time of submission. Please find below the standard requirements that have to be fulfilled so that your material can be accepted for publication in JIMS:

- The ideal length of an article (written in English) is from 4 000 to 8 000 words, including a 200-word abstract in English, keywords, and a very brief autobiographical note or resume of the author(s)
- The number of bibliographic references should be within reasonable limits
- The inclusion of tables, charts or figures is welcome in support of the scientific argumentation
- All articles should be presented in Microsoft Office Word format, Times New Roman, 12, at 1.5 lines, and will be sent to the e-mail address jims@uoradea.ro and a copy mentioning "Manuscript Submission: [TITLE OF ARTICLE]"
- Book reviews are welcomed to be published in JIMS, but no longer than 2000 words
- Contributions are welcomed at any time of the year and will be considered for the next issues
- The editors reserve the right to edit the articles or to modify/eliminate some fragments, observing the original sense.
- The extensive use of a too technical language or mathematic formulae should be avoided
- Footnotes (no endnotes);
- References and bibliography (Chicago Style of Citation).

For more details please visit the Guidelines for Authors page on the website of JIMS at: https://jims.uoradea.ro/index.php/guidelines-for-authors


JIMS