

FAMILIES AND MIGRATION

Examining the Human Meaning
of Migration

Edited by Sampson Lee Blair
and Josip Obradović

CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVES
IN FAMILY RESEARCH

VOLUME 33

FAMILIES AND MIGRATION

CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVES IN FAMILY RESEARCH

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CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVES IN FAMILY
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FAMILIES AND MIGRATION: EXAMINING THE HUMAN MEANING OF MIGRATION

EDITED BY

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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ABOUT THE EDITORS

Sampson Lee Blair is a Family Sociologist and Demographer at The State University of New York (Buffalo). He received his BS and MS degrees from Virginia Tech, and his PhD from Penn State. Much of his research focuses upon parent–child relationships, with particular emphasis on child and adolescent development. He received the Fulbright Scholar Award from the US Department of State, wherein he conducted research on parental involvement and children’s educational attainment in the Philippines. He has examined a wide variety of relationship dynamics within families. He has published 27 books, in addition to numerous journal articles and book chapters, has presented over 150 research papers at conferences in the United States and abroad, and has served as keynote speaker on numerous occasions. His recent research has focused upon marriage and fertility patterns in China. In 2022, he published *Mate Selection in China: Causes and Consequences in the Search for a Spouse* (with Timothy J. Madigan and Fang Fang). He has served as Chair of the Children and Youth research section of the American Sociological Association, as Senior Editor of *Sociological Inquiry*, Guest Editor of *Sociological Studies of Children and Youth*, and on the editorial boards of *Asian Women*, *Family Sciences*, *Journal of Applied Youth Studies*, *Journal of Divorce and Remarriage*, *Journal of Family Issues*, *Marriage and Family Review*, *Social Justice Research*, *Sociological Inquiry*, *International Journal of Criminology and Sociology*, and *Sociological Viewpoints*. He also serves on the international advisory board of *Tambara*, at Ateneo de Davao University, in the Philippines. In 2023, he was re-elected as Vice President (North America) of the Research Committee on Youth (RC34), in the International Sociological Association. Since 2011, he has served as the Editor of *Contemporary Perspectives in Family Research*. He is a recipient of the SUNY Chancellor’s Award for Excellence in Teaching. Abroad, he has served as a Visiting Professor at the University of Santo Tomas (Manila) and Xavier University (Ateneo de Cagayan), in the Philippines. In China, he has been a Visiting Professor at East China Normal University (华东师范大学), Qingdao University (青岛大学), Shanghai International Studies University (上海外国语大学), and Shanghai University of Finance and Economics (上海财经大学). In 2020, he was initiated into the NCFR Legacy Circle of the National Council on Family Relations. In 2021, he received the Distinguished Career Service Award from the American Sociological Association’s research section on Children and Youth.

Josip Obradović was born and completed primary and secondary school in Zagreb, Croatia. He graduated in Psychology from the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Zagreb. He received his Doctorate in Sociology from the same faculty. Not long after graduation, he was employed as an Assistant Professor

in the Department of Sociology of the Faculty of Philosophy. He soon received a scholarship from the Ford Foundation and spent six months at Michigan University, Ann Arbor, and six months at the University of California, Berkeley. On his return, he was promoted to Associate Professor. For years, he taught a number of subjects in Sociology and Social Psychology and became a tenured full professor. In addition to the Faculty of Philosophy in Zagreb, he taught as a visiting professor at several universities in the United States and Canada. Among others, at New York University and the University of Georgia, USA, the University of Calgary, Canada, and a Fulbright Professor at Colorado College Colorado, USA. He taught a total of over 20 undergraduate and graduate courses in Croatian or English. He held over 30 invited lectures outside Croatia at universities in the United States, Canada, and Great Britain. He was a scholar at Pittsburgh University, USA, Birninhgen University, and Warwick University, Great Britain. In addition to domestic professional associations, he was or still is a member of some professional associations such as the American Psychological Association, American Sociological Association and National Council Family Relations of America. For years, the subject of his interest was Organizational Psychology and Sociology, but 25 years ago, he changed his professional interest. Since then, his professional interest has been marriage and family because in his opinion, marriage and the family are experiencing the biggest changes with significant social consequences today. He published several books and about 100 scientific theoretical and research papers in Croatian and English language.

ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS

Paul Agoe completed his PhD at the Faculty of Sociology, Bielefeld University in 2024. His thesis, titled “The Significance of ‘Traditional’ Clothing and Dress to Children of Ghanaian Immigrants in Germany,” explored the sense second generations make of clothing related to their parents’ place(s) of origin. Against the background of being socialized into a different sociocultural environment, unlike their parents before migrating, the study found that the importance the target population of the study attach to these material objects is in diverse ways. “Traditional” African clothing are also sources of knowledge, conceptualized as *materialization of knowledge*. He also holds MA degrees in Migration and Intercultural Relations (EMMIR, University of Oldenburg) and Migration Studies (University of Ghana). He has professional work experience in migration social work practice and has taught courses in this field as well as on second-generation immigrants, migration and development, and West African migrations. His research interests are in making meaning of material objects (clothing and dress) in the context of migration, African migrations to Germany, transnational migration, second-generation immigrants, and migration and development.

Kenanile Olivia Marie-France Bigba is a second-year Educational Psychology graduate student at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, specializing in Developmental and Learning Sciences. They earned their Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from the same institution. Their research focuses on mental health education, equitable access to services, lifespan development, school-based interventions, and social justice advocacy for marginalized populations. The author is particularly interested in the intersections of mental health, education, and family dynamics.

Renata Carone is a Political Scientist with expertise in Public Policy. She has worked as a Researcher at the Centre for Research and Studies in Sociology of the University Institute of Lisbon and at the Centre for Research on Participation, Social Movements and Collective Action of the University of Campinas. She conducted interviews and developed fieldwork regarding the Brazilian, Ukrainian, and Chinese communities in Portugal, under a national project funded by the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, whose main goal was to understand the social integration of these young migrants and also to analyze migrant integration policies in Portugal. She also worked on analyzing immigration policy in Portugal and statistical data as part of the project “Aspire – Decision making of aspiring (re)migrants to and within the EU: the case of labour market-leading

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Genese Clark, PhD, is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Public and Allied Health and Center for Urban Health Equity at Morgan State University in Baltimore, Maryland. Positioned within the social and structural determinants of health framework, she explores culturally specific strengths among marginalized populations related to psychosocial health and well-being in family and community contexts to minimize and heal from trauma. She focuses primarily on African American family networks, consisting of biological, legal, and social ties. She created the Family Strength Wheel, a visual metric that has been shared around the world, which helps individuals leverage their family strengths to overcome challenging situations and improve family functioning. She is a member of the Racial and Ethnic Diversity in Families Section of the National Council on Family Relations (NCFR) and serves as an NCFR Student and New Professionals Representative.

Olga Cojocar is an Anthropologist with expertise in migration studies and ethnographic research. Currently, she is a Postdoctoral Researcher at CIES-Centre for Research and Studies in Sociology at ISCTE – University Institute of Lisbon, working on the project AspirE, “Decision making of aspiring (re)migrants to/ within the EU: The case of labour market-leading migrations from Asia,” funded by the European Commission, within HORIZON Europe. Over the past years, she has been affiliated with the Centre of Migration Research at the University of Warsaw where she has completed her PhD on migrant temporalities with a case study on Moldovan domestic workers in Italy. Her Doctoral research has been conducted under Marie Skłodowska-Curie ITN as part of “Transnational Migration, Citizenship and the Circulation of Rights and Responsibilities” (TRANSMIC) project coordinated by University of Maastricht. She has held research fellowships at the New Europe College in Bucharest, at the University of Oxford’s Centre on Migration, Policy and Society (COMPAS), and at European University Institute in Florence. Her research engages with issues of time and space in mobility processes, exploring how temporalities shape and are shaped by the lived experiences of migrants.

Sofia Gaspar (PhD in Sociology) is Research Assistant at CIES-ISCTE, Lisbon University Institute, Portugal. She has coordinated several projects on binational couples, transnational families, and Chinese migrants, and she has vastly published on this field. Her recent publications include the volumes *The Presence of China and the Chinese Diaspora in Portugal and Portuguese-Speaking Territories* (2021, Brill) and *Southeast Asian Migration: People on the Move in Search of Work, Refuge and Belonging* (2015, Sussex Academic Press). She has also published several papers in peer-reviewed journals about these topics (*International Migration; Population, Space and Place; Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies; Journal of Chinese Overseas; Diaspora, Indigenous and Minority Education; Global Networks; Portuguese Journal of Social Science*). Since January 2023, she

is the local coordinator of the project AspirE, “Decision making of aspiring (re) migrants to/within the EU: The case of labour market-leading migrations from Asia,” on the scope of HORIZON-CL2-2022-TRANSFORMATIONS-01. She is Member of the Organizing Committee of the Thematic Section *Migrations, Ethnicity and Racism* of the Portuguese Sociological Association (APS), and she is organizing the workshops *Meetings on Chinese Studies* and *Seminar of Cultural Diversity in Contemporary Families*, both at CIES-ISCTE. She is a member of several international networks: CHERN – China in Europe Research Network (COST Action), CERPE – China Europe Platform on Migration, PRIMOB – Privileged Mobilities: Local Impacts, Belonging and Citizenship (IMISCOE), DIVCULT – Superdiversity, Migration and Cultural Change (IMISCOE) and Lifestyle Migration Hub. Her current research is focused on the privileged migrations, investment mobilities, social integration of immigrants’ descendants, particularly on the Chinese community in Portugal and Europe.

Anusha Kassin currently resides on Treaty 7 Region in Southern Alberta and Métis Nation of Alberta (Districts 5 and 6), and she works on the traditional, ancestral, unceded territories of the Musqueam people. She graduated from the Counselling Psychology Program at McGill University and completed her Predoctoral Internship in Professional Psychology at the University of California, Irvine Counselling Center. Upon graduating, she held a Visiting Assistant Professor position in the Counselling Psychology Program at The University of British Columbia (2009–2013). She was then an Assistant and Associate Professor in Educational Studies in Counselling Psychology at the University of Calgary (2014–2019). For the past five years, she has been on faculty in the School and Applied Child Psychology Program at The University of British Columbia where she is an Associate Professor with a High Impact Position in Child and Youth Mental Health. Her scholarly interests are informed by her own bicultural identity and presently include two major foci. First, she is studying immigration experiences across different groups (i.e., youth, women, 2SLGBTQ+ peoples). Second, she is researching teaching and learning, investigating cultural and social justice responsiveness in psychology training. She is a Fellow of the Canadian Psychological Association, and she was recently the Lead Editor of a textbook titled *Diversity and Social Justice in Counseling, Psychology, and Psychotherapy: A Case Study Approach*.

Magdalena Leszko is an Assistant Professor of Psychology at Moravian University in Bethlehem, USA, and at University of Szczecin in Poland. After receiving a Fulbright scholarship, she came to the United States and earned her PhD in Gerontology from the University of Kansas and completed Postdoctoral training at Northwestern University. Currently, her research is centered on creating and evaluating low-cost interventions that can be implemented to support caregivers and individuals with Alzheimer’s disease or related dementias. By focusing on early detection and support, she aims to translate research findings into practical programs that alleviate caregiver burden and improve quality of life. Her personal experiences as a Polish immigrant have deeply informed her research, particularly

in understanding the unique challenges faced by immigrant caregivers navigating cultural and linguistic barriers while caring for a family member with Alzheimer's disease.

Lisa Mansfeld is a Researcher at the University of Duisburg-Essen. In her research, she employs quantitative methods and focuses on the intersection of migration, family, and labor markets, with a particular focus on international migration from (and back to) highly industrialized welfare states. She is a member of the German Emigration and Remigration Panel Study (GERPS) team, which assembles longitudinal data on recent German migrants. GERPS provides a unique database for studying the consequences of migration. Furthermore, she is an associate member of the Research Training Group “Cross- Border Labour Markets: Transnational Market Makers, Infrastructures, Institutions” (RTG 2951). Her research got published in various peer-reviewed edited volumes and journals such as *Population, Space and Place*. She studied Economics in Tübingen (Germany), Guanajuato (Mexico), and Adelaide (Australia). Since 2019, she works as a Researcher at the Chair of Social Stratification Research at the Institute of Sociology at the University of Duisburg-Essen (Germany). In 2024, she completed her cumulative dissertation titled “Migration and the Family: Essays on Internationally Mobile Germans.” Her dissertation, awarded summa cum laude, was guided by two major research questions: (1) How does migration affect family patterns? And (2) How do these family patterns – and other social relations – shape the consequences of migration with respect to other life domains? Next to this focus on the family–migration nexus, her research focuses on the intersection of mobility (including international migration) and the labor market, including questions with respect to commuting, working from home, job characteristics, and others.

Uliana Proskunina is a Ukrainian researcher and works as a Research Associate and Lecturer at the Chair of Adult Education at the Friedrich Schiller University of Jena in Germany. She started her scientific path with a research interest in social inequalities in the labor market and adult education participation, and continues it in life course studies. The research activities at the chair enrich her profile with the studies of female entrepreneurship and lifelong learning. With the support of the District Office of Altenburger Land, she hopes to contribute to migration studies and family sociology with research on Ukrainian refugees in Germany. She is proud to be a part of “Contemporary Perspectives in Family Research” and thanks the editors for their support. The chapter is an incentive to thank her family at home and the workplace in Germany, and its inalienable part, her father, who is on the front line of East Ukraine, dedicating his life to peace in the world. Her current research is a tiny tribute to all the families separated by the war, those who keep together despite distance, and those who will never unite because of death.

Amy E. Risley is the Stanley J. Buckman Professor of International Studies at Rhodes College, where she teaches courses on Latin American politics,

comparative politics, and gender and politics. Her primary areas of research are human rights and civil society advocacy. Her current work focuses on US migration policy and the rights of immigrant children and families. Two recent articles, published in *International Journal of Children's Rights and Social Justice*, analyze the forcible family separations policy that the Trump administration enacted at the USA–Mexico border. Her latest book, *The Youngest Citizens* (Routledge), traces the evolution of children's rights in Latin America since the 1990s. A previous book, *Civil Society Organizations, Advocacy, and Policy Making in Latin American Democracies: Pathways to Participation* (Palgrave Macmillan), investigates civil society's contributions to policymaking in Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay. She has published other studies of activism, social movements, and gender-based violence in several journals and edited volumes.

Yunqi Wang, MS, is a Doctoral candidate in the Department of Child, Youth, and Family Studies at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Her research focuses on adolescent mental health and well-being, mental health equity, youth technology and social media use, and family dynamics of underserved populations across socio-cultural contexts.

Yan Ruth Xia, PhD and Certified Family Life Educator, is a Professor in the Department of Child, Youth, and Family Studies at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. She has been researching to better understand adolescents in Chinese and Asian American families. Specifically, her research has focused on the parent–child relationship, communication, parenting, and adolescent mental health indicators such as positive self-image, distress, and depression. Nearly 30 years of experience studying Chinese and Asian American families helped her develop a culturally sensitive and responsive approach. She is a member of American Chinese Professors in Social Sciences and a member of the Board of Directors and Asian American Focus Group of the National Council on Family Relations (NCFR) and once served as Chair of the NCFR International Section. She is a founding member of the Association of Chinese Helping Professionals and Psychologists-International and was elected Vice President of Science.

Rahat Zaidi is an award-winning Werklund Research Professor at the University of Calgary. She is also the recipient of the Mobility Chair in Bilingual Studies at the Official Language and Bilingual Institute at the University of Ottawa. As a Sorbonne-educated French-speaking scholar, she brings a diverse set of professional, personal experiences, and academic qualifications that span several regions (South Asia, Europe, both Francophone and Anglophone Canada). She studies the intimate connection between language, culture, and identity and uses her scholarship to underscore the untapped power within diversity to advance social justice, equity, and inclusion in immigrant and transcultural contexts. The acute need for her work is evidenced by Canada's multilingual, multi-ethnic classroom demographic, which, in part, has been precipitated by global crises that continue to impact refugee communities. Her research has created opportunities to better understand how literacy and language learning can be made

more inclusive for minority students and their families. Her efforts have led to recommendations for province-wide initiatives to support refugee and immigrant families navigating the education system. Her latest literary contributions include *Transcultural Pedagogies for Multilingual Classrooms: Responding to Changing Realities in Theory & Practice & Literacy Lives in Transcultural Times*. Her innovative work and her commitment to community have been recognized by the City of Calgary, the Alberta Teachers' Association, and by the American Education Researchers Association.

Michelle Zak is currently in her third year of the Master of Science in Counselling Psychology Program at the University of Calgary, located on the traditional territories of the peoples of Treaty 7 Region in Southern Alberta and the Northwest Métis Homeland – Region 3. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from Athabasca University and a Bachelor of Education from the University of Calgary. Her manuscript-based thesis, supervised by Dr Shelly Russell-Mayhew, examines the well-being and adjustment experiences of culturally diverse pre-service teachers, contributing to the development of inclusive educational practices. She has held diverse roles, including Classroom Teacher, Workshop Facilitator with the Immigrant Education Society, Mental Health Coordinator with the Calgary Board of Education, and an Educator in a healthcare setting. She continues to broaden her knowledge through social justice-oriented research exploring child language brokering, comprehensive school health, culturally responsive pedagogy, and multicultural counseling interventions. Her dedication to professional growth is evident in her contributions to the fields of counseling psychology and education, having co-authored two peer-reviewed manuscripts and contributing to two book chapters. As a second-generation Filipino immigrant, her lived experiences deeply inform her scholarly work. She is committed to promoting emotional wellness and cultural responsiveness in educational contexts while addressing the systemic challenges faced by individuals from marginalized communities.

FOREWORD

Migration has been a fundamental part of human history, as we have moved from location to location for a wide variety of reasons. Within pastoral societies, groups often move in order to ensure fresh water and vegetation for their herds of animals. In horticultural societies, tilled land typically produces smaller crop yields with each growing season, making it necessary to move to another location. These types of migration, for the most part, involve relatively short distances and are done for the purpose of maintaining subsistence. Families within such migrations usually move as complete groups, and family members commonly agree with the justifications for the move. In modern societies, though, migration has a much more complicated set of factors which precede it, and the impact of migration upon both individuals and families is decidedly more complicated.

Over the past century, the availability and speed of transportation has improved in dramatic ways, making it increasingly simple for migration across and between continents. Whereas patterns of migration from past centuries largely involved movement within singular regions and countries, contemporary migrants often make the “leap” from one country to another and frequently move into cultures which are starkly different from those of their native lands. Understandably, the acculturation and assimilation processes which most migrants face can be made substantially more challenging by such moves. Certainly, it is possible to examine migration from a wide variety of perspectives. Economists often address the financial aspects of migration, and how it may affect one’s earning opportunities. Political scientists may investigate the dimensions of rights, freedoms, and government regulations which lead some to consider migration from their native land, as well as in their choice of desired residence, elsewhere. While these are certainly important issues surrounding migration, there remains a need to address the most fundamental aspect of migration – the human meaning of it. To pack up one’s entire life and move is difficult enough. However, to be in a situation where one must uproot one’s family, as well, and move elsewhere, will undoubtedly involve challenges which go far beyond those seen by others.

The decision to migrate is often beyond the control of families. In many instances, the political, social, and economic circumstances of their native lands may put their very lives at risk. Recent history has seen millions around the globe being forced to move due to war, famine, economic collapse, and natural disasters. Those who move as a result of forces beyond their control are undoubtedly going to experience a sense of frustration, hopelessness, and abject despair. The meaning of migration for such individuals and their families will be complex, and will likely affect not only those who moved but future members of the family for multiple generations. For many, migration is viewed as a challenge, to be sure, but one which they can overcome by closely guarding their native identity. Immigrants in

a new land often find themselves surrounded by an entirely new culture, where the languages, norms, and religions bear little resemblance to their native culture. It is within families, then, that migrants maintain their cultural identity, as parents will often try their best to not only retain their native culture but also pass it on to their children.

In this volume of *Contemporary Perspectives in Family Research*, we offer a collection of studies which provide considerable insight into the meaning of migration, and how such meanings are conveyed within families. The volume begins with the most tragic of human endeavors, war. The brutal invasion of Ukraine by Russia has resulted in tremendous loss of life and also has forced millions to flee their own country. In “Ukrainian Refugees in Altenburger Land: A Case Study of Integration Perspectives in an East German Municipality,” Uliana Proskunina examines the integration of Ukrainian refugees in Germany. The issue of the integration of Ukrainian refugees is the topic of this chapter. The study involved qualitative interviews of refugees, along with the professional domicile workers who take care of their successful integration. The important results of the study are that they show that there are two groups of refugees who differ from each other. The first group consists of individuals whose integration is only possible with the help provided, and the second group consists of independent individuals who rely on their characteristics. The study describes in detail the characteristics of individuals that distinguish them from each other.

As previously noted, migration is complicated, and in order to understand it in a more comprehensive manner, there exists a need to provide a proper theoretical foundation to its study. In “Assessing the Family–Migration Nexus: A Theoretical Framework for Studying the Consequences of Migration,” Lisa Mansfeld attempts to do precisely that. She presents an overview of different theoretical approaches to the scientific study of the relationship between migration and the family, listing different approaches or models, and integrating them. The thrust is that only the integration of the models can be a good basis or starting point for a scientific explanation of migration and, in particular, the relationship between migration and the family. She devotes considerable effort to the explanation and criticism of different empirical methods used in the study of migration, stating all the advantages and disadvantages of each method.

In “Making Meaning of ‘Traditional’ Clothing and Dress Across Generations,” Paul Agoe presents and explains the results of two qualitative studies on migrants from Ghana who have settled in Germany. The focus of this chapter is on similarities and differences between generations in dressing or intergenerational transmission. When it comes to African migrants, he emphasizes that they are proud of their traditional value system and try to keep it in different ways, including clothing. The results of the research show that, as expected, it is the family, or more precisely the influence of the family, that determines the retention or change of several aspects of behavior, among others, the type of clothing. The general conclusion of this chapter is that the family, through the socialization of the individual, has a primary influence on maintaining a traditional form of behavior.

In “(Im)mobility Aspirations and Imagined Pathways of Young Migrant Descendants in Portugal,” Sofia Gaspar, Olga Cojocaru, and Renata Carone

posit that the topic of motivation and aspirations of adult children of migrants has been treated very poorly, thus far. The authors interviewed 79 young Brazilians, Chinese, and Ukrainians whose parents migrated to Portugal. The researchers propose that youth migration is a fluid process with many oscillations, and a number of factors influence the final decision. The qualitative study results show that there are at least two groups. The first includes individuals who decided to stay in Portugal either because of closeness with family and/or because they adopted the existing value system in Portugal and formed an identity in that sense. The second group is made up of individuals who are looking for new opportunities for advancement and believe that they can find it better in another country, including in some cases the country from which their parents emigrated. Overall, the authors provide a fascinating and pioneering work in this insufficiently researched area.

In “Canadian Settlement and School Integration From the Perspective of a Bangladeshi Family: An Arts-Based Engagement Ethnography,” Michelle Zak, Dr Anusha Kassan, and Dr Rahat Zaidi present the results of their research about the experience, perceptions, and reactions of families and migrants from Bangladesh in Canada. As a method, they applied qualitative methodology arts-based engagement ethnography. Their research results clearly show that there are many problems with successful integration. Children are a special problem in successfully integrating into the Canadian education system. With a series of illustrative examples, the authors very vividly and clearly show how migrant children experience the process of integration. This chapter is especially important because a large number of migrants came to Canada in the last decade, who, in about 20 years, will represent a large percentage of the population.

In “Transnational Families in North America: Migration Trends, Policy Implications, and Well-being,” Genese Clark, Yunqi Wang, Yan Ruth Xia, and Kenanile Olivia Marie-France Bigba analyze the position and problems faced by members of transnational families separately in Canada, Mexico, and the United States. The authors present many problems and frustrations of members of such families. They especially analyze the position of women and mothers and all the problems they face and have to solve. At the end of this chapter, the authors present a series of proposals that they believe would improve the position of transnational families. Their study addresses a very important, perhaps even acute, topic.

In “Caregiving Across Borders: The Experiences of Polish Immigrants Caring for Individuals with Alzheimer’s Disease,” Magdalena Leszko analyzes the results obtained by interviewing 32 Polish caregivers who live in the United States and take care of their parents who live in Poland. The obtained results show that caregivers experience a number of problems and frustrations. They cannot often travel to Poland and hesitate to put sick parents into institutional care. If this occurs, and they put their parents in an institution, they are often under stress for the first three years. Putting parents in an institution is the most difficult time for caregivers, as they often experience loneliness and depression, which can be quite intense. It is even recommended that such caregivers examine themselves to see if they show depressive symptoms. The results of her study display, in a very blunt manner, the depth of meanings associated with migration.

In “A ‘Moral Imperative’: Family Reunification Efforts Under the Biden Administration,” Amy E. Risley examines the complicated political and policy issues surrounding immigration. The Interagency Task Force on the Reunification of Families, created under President Biden, was intended to provide a more humane and “moral” means for immigrants to enter the United States. The separation of children from their families, under the previous administration, was a cruel and sadistic policy. Various nongovernmental organizations applauded the efforts to remedy this atrocity, and to return children to their families, yet the seemingly obvious need to show compassion toward children and their families by reuniting them was often caught in the political quagmire. Sadly, the political ambitions of some government leaders often tread heavily upon the human rights of children and families.


Collectively, the studies included in this volume provide tremendous insight and understanding into the human meaning of migration. Their works not only advance our knowledge about migration but will also serve to encourage future researchers to continue these important efforts. We offer our most sincere gratitude to the authors, the peer reviewers, and the wonderful staff at Emerald Publishing. Thank you, one and all.

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CHAPTER 1

UKRAINIAN REFUGEES IN ALTENBURGER LAND: A CASE STUDY OF INTEGRATION PERSPECTIVES IN AN EAST GERMAN MUNICIPALITY

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ABSTRACT

Over one million Ukrainian refugees have arrived in Germany since February 2022. Their integration perspectives are favorable due to their qualification profiles and reported German course participation rates. Nevertheless, diverse estimations exist regarding their intention to stay in Germany for a long term. The predominance of women with minor children provides additional perspectives in this regard. Scholars indicate the necessity of research on the communal level, as localities are responsible for realizing the federal asylum policies. We perform a case study of the integration conditions of Ukrainian refugees in Altenburger Land, which is an example of a rural area in East Germany. For this purpose, we performed 24 semi-structured interviews with Ukrainian refugees and experts working with them. The individual experiences, motivations, and decision-making processes are analyzed concerning the perception of this target group by experts with the help of structured content analysis. A feminized perspective on forced migration is applied to analyze specific challenges regarding the socio-demographic characteristics of Ukrainian refugees.

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We indicate three groups of Ukrainian refugees regarding their perspectives on integration that the experts share. The first is people with an estimated high probability of integrating into the host society by relying on help. The second group is refugees, who define integration success as dependent on one's commitment. The third group is respondents with a low estimation of their integration potential. We argue for the predominance of factors settled in the country of origin by the migration decision compared to those settled in the host country.

Keywords: Ukrainian refugees; East Germany; employment motivation; integration perspective; feminized perspective on migration; gender; structuring content analysis

INTRODUCTION

The refugee movement from Ukraine since February 2022 is regarded as the most significant migration wave since the Second World War in Europe (Andrews et al., 2023). Germany is the main target country, accommodating over one million Ukrainian refugees since February 2022 (Brücker et al., 2023a, 2023b; Ünsal & von Oswald, 2022). It is a major transformative challenge for German society. Due to the profound share of qualified professionals who have already completed German language courses, their integration potential is high. Nevertheless, the intentions to stay in Germany are diverse and generalized as a middle term combined with varying employment motivations (Brücker et al., 2023a, 2023b; Ünsal & von Oswald, 2022).

As men between the ages of 18 and 60 are not allowed to leave Ukraine, over half of Ukrainian refugees are women who arrived with minor children. With this, the extensive incorporation of the *feminized perspective on forced migration* as female-dominated displacement is essential. The safety of children is one of the main reasons for leaving Ukraine. Children become the main factor in structuring the adaptation strategies. Traditionally, female responsibility for childcare implies their crucial role in the integration of children and, among other things, the formation of cultural identity. The research on female refugees is embedded in traumatic experiences such as war itself with the loss of a comfortable life and fulfilling career, forced single motherhood, separation from partner and family, violence, loneliness, fear for the future, and so on (Andrews et al., 2023; Boll et al., 2023; Krauss & Sonnabend, 2001; Thakur, 2023).

This study took place as a part of the Bernhard August von Lindenau Fellowship Program in Altenburger Land with the aim of practical engagement of scientists in shaping the social transfer processes in the region. Regarding the absolute number of Ukrainian refugees, their relation to the total population size, and the fundamentally low share of foreign citizens in Altenburger Land before 2022 (Thuringian State Statistical Office, 2023), the current wave presents a significant challenge for the locality in comparison to other localities in the federal state. Besides, it is a predominantly rural area in East Germany with an expected reduced acceptance of the migration population due to the path-dependent lack

of experience with diversity combined with the involuntariness of refugee allocation (Czymara & Schmidt-Catran, 2017; Glorius, 2017). The area generally faces a shortage of qualified workforce, typical for East Germany, due to the out-migration to West Germany (Brunow & Jost, 2023). Like many other German communities at the beginning of March 2022, as described by Boll and colleagues, Altenburger Land created a local crisis unit as an institutional exchange environment to coordinate local reaction to the first consequences of the war. Its primary structures originate from a similar experience in 2015–2016. Its orientation evolves with the situation of Ukrainians in the community and aligns with its national challenges. Having started from the immediate response by providing accommodation and living expenses, the current strategic tasks of the unit include labor market integration, especially recognition of qualifications and availability of adequate employment for the skilled workers, language courses, ambulant medicine, schooling, kindergartens, and leisure activities. Generally, the experts recognize the importance of a combination of formal, non-formal, and informal offers for the integration work, supported by the current state of research (Boll et al., 2023; Brücker et al., 2023a, 2023b).

The current study aims to gain a multi-perspective view of the target group of Ukrainian refugees regarding their intention to stay in the analyzed locality and respective employment perspectives. Special attention is given to the feminized view of forced migration. Based on 24 interviews with experts and refugees from Ukraine, the project examines the individual strengths, resources, concerns, decision-making processes, and needs of the latter; analyzes the regional offer of German language courses; and constructs an inter-relational perspective of the challenges of local labor market integration. We pay special attention to reconstructing the reciprocal perception of existing structures by refugees and organizations working with them to enable a multi-perspective approach through the triangulation of findings.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

We understand individual migration decisions as constellations of push and pull factors instead of their dichotomy (Han, 2016; Kreienbrink, 2020; Öztürk, 2014). Although the ongoing war in Ukraine and its consequences are assigned to the earlier group, making refugee experience fundamentally involuntary, German economic and political stability, broad education and employment opportunities, and availability of social networks profoundly influence the choice of the place of residence (Brücker, 2022; Brücker et al., 2016). A similar contradiction between the degree of free will and obligation applies to the definition of integration. In contrast, the criteria for its success remain a subject of broad discussion. Labor market integration remains its vital element (Koopmann, 2022). We define adequate integration support through the *capabilities approach* that aims to establish conditions allowing people to achieve their individual objectives. With this, the agency becomes a capability of decision-making within the personally defined line of action within structural conditions that support this active

position. Therefore, refugees are no passive victims of external dependencies nor completely self-responsible actors independently shaping their careers. The latter is subject to agency limits, including obstacles beyond their control primarily caused by institutional factors (Sen, 1999). The prerequisites for successful integration for refugees are less favorable in comparison to other migrants due to the lack of preparation through language learning, networking, and getting comprehensive system knowledge. Further challenges include a higher degree of uncertainty regarding the legal framework of their stay, influencing potential investments in human and social capital, psychological stress, and traumatic experiences. At the same time, more supportive legal conditions with direct access to social services, education, and employment exist for refugees from Ukraine in comparison to other groups of asylum seekers (Boll et al., 2023).

Following Bešić et al. (2022), we apply a relational perspective on labor market integration, understanding it as an interplay between institutional, organizational, and individual levels. Integration is a dynamic process of gaining access to the labor market and sustainable employment. *The institutional level* includes asylum labor market policies and legislation for skill recognition. The German priorities in this regard are validating available qualifications and language learning (Bushanska et al., 2022; Lehweß-Litzmann & Söhn, 2022). Although we operate upon the common federal legislative framework, we include its local implications, such as policy changes, funding, and bureaucratic procedures. *The individual level* consists of the challenges of lacking language skills, social and career capital, limited access to professional and social networks, and mental health. For the staff, it implies engagement issues and varying levels of availability, knowledge, and expectations (Bešić et al., 2022). This level strengthens the understanding of integration as individual performance and an active societal negation process (Farrokhzad et al., 2022). Our primary purpose is to study the factors necessary for organizations to offer targeted support for refugees. *The organizational level* includes programs and measures supporting refugees, the experiences regarding those from both providers' and users' perspectives, organizational structures, and collaborations. The focus is on the variety of adult education forms. We precisely address the dimensions of their strategic design and implementation. Supporting refugees with different skill levels and unknown expectations is our conceptual priority on this level. We encounter language difficulties, differences in the education systems of origin and host countries, a necessity to acquire various new teaching and learning methods for both sides, and the absence of documents for skill assessment and recognition (Bešić et al., 2022).

Additionally, we establish an educationally relevant dimension of integration. Integration and language courses, theme-oriented target group offers for migrants, and cultural (e.g., painting, music, dancing, etc.) or political classes play a central role in this dimension. They perform a bridging function toward the regular adult education offer. On this basis, three process levels of integration are established. Process Level I includes *individual biographical conditions and learning prerequisites*. These are accommodations, opportunities to get acquainted with people, and offers to establish relations. This level also covers educational background, existing qualifications, employment experience, and

lifestyle. Formal prerequisites (e.g., residence permit), individual experiences, and motivations constitute this integration level. Process Level II covers *professionalization and qualification*. It regulates access to initial, professional, vocational, and post-compulsory education concerning employment opportunities. Process Level III constitutes *individual access to cultural learning*. Its major components are understanding and communication, advanced language competence, systematic cultural knowledge, independent and creative reflection, and regulation of one's life situation. The primary learning dimensions on all three levels are the variety of learning forms and working practices, cultural knowledge and standards, and interpretative patterns (Robak, 2018).

Unless they have arrived directly to friends or relatives, Ukrainian refugees are generally met in the arrival center of Berlin. They receive prior accommodation, special protection, and medical help if needed. Afterward, they are allocated to other federal states, where they register their residence with the right to apply for individual accommodation, social transfers, integration courses, school, and employment (The Governing Mayor of Berlin – Senate Chancellery, 2022). Participation in an integration and German language course is compulsory upon arrival at the permanent residence. The Federal Labour Office guides individual labor market allocation through regular meetings according to the professional background and aspirations. Active individual commitment to the latter is the prerequisite for receiving social transfers. Although translators and volunteers often accompany these processes, their availability remains limited and is subject to indefinite waiting time. Therefore, refugees frequently remain individually responsible for managing their situation in Germany. Despite the general simplification of this process for Ukrainian refugees in comparison to other asylum seekers in Germany, scholars indicate the variety of its general problems, such as language barrier, availability of accommodation, medicine, language courses, schooling and childcare, work overload by the organizations working with refugees, recognition and transferability of qualifications, and issues of intercultural communication (Andrews et al., 2023; Boll et al., 2023).

Regarding the number of challenges in addition to the problems of the “normal” refugee experience, women with children are regarded as the most vulnerable group of forced migrants. They are less likely to work and more likely to engage in precarious employment relations than men in the same state, which is further dependent on childcare availability. Besides, due to the possible difficulties of children's adaptation combined with inadequate German language proficiency and traumatic experiences, these women are challenged to solve them in straightforward contact with kindergartens and schools. For the latter, it is a major professional challenge, with success highly dependent on the personal commitment of employees (Boll et al., 2023; Farrokhzad et al., 2022). Female refugees report significantly higher psychological distress and symptoms of depression and anxiety than male ones (Buchcik et al., 2023). Their experiences generally take place under the shadow of self-doubt, low self-esteem, shame, frustration, and humiliation within the traumatic past, radically new present, and uncertain future. They are placed under the long-term challenge of regaining independence, autonomy, and normality (Thakur, 2023).

The problems of earlier refugee waves, mainly arrived as family groups, are only partially applicable to the current situation. The constellation of refugee groups is different, as the demographic, socioeconomic, and cultural characteristics of Ukrainians exhibit higher proximity to the German population (Dollmann et al., 2022). Besides, women with children are generally met with higher solidarity by the natives. Therefore, they are more engaged with the offers of the receiving communities (e.g., leisure activities, sports, art and language courses, counseling, etc.), supporting their social adaptation (Andrews et al., 2023). In the existing discourse on refugees, women are primarily portrayed as vulnerable and needing protection. As a result, they are often overlooked as independent actors. This results in a lack of systematic consideration of their specific needs within the European refugee system and the necessity of a gendered analysis of their experiences embedded in agency and resilience (Menjívar et al., 2019). The realization of gender relations is context dependent and driven by contemporary life conditions; therefore, specific research on their changes under the refugee experience of Ukrainians in Germany is needed. Regarding the diversity of female forced migrants as the target group, it is impossible to articulate practices specifically common to women in this case (Krause, 2022). However, the barriers to education and labor market participation remain gender specific (Farrokhzad et al., 2022). German language acquisition plays a decisive role in the labor market integration of all refugees, independently of their gender (Boll et al., 2023). Nevertheless, its success depends on the learners' personal and psychological situation (Berg et al., 2018).

Brücker et al. (2023) provide a comprehensive quantitative overview of the situation of Ukrainian refugees in Germany. One-third of them (29%) expressed an intention to stay in Germany permanently, another 31% until the end of the war, and 23% of the respondents its indefiniteness. The authors indicate its significant association with familial situations, with a higher probability that single refugees will be placed in the first category. This intention is also related to the current and expected living circumstances and level of social integration in Germany. The latter include education aspirations, communication with locals, type of current accommodation, and German language proficiency. As the latter was generally estimated as low by the time of arrival and is reported to improve, primary importance is assigned to participation in language courses by 75% of respondents. Higher language competence is associated with an increased probability of gainful employment, generally reported by 18% of Ukrainian refugees. Individual labor market integration is shaped by a substantial gender gap, the influence of familial situations such as the presence of minor children and a partner in the household, length of stay in Germany, educational background, and employment experience. Daycare is secured for 58% of children between the ages of three and six on the national average, positively influencing parental employment and language course participation.

The mixed-method research of Boll et al. (2023) characterizes the perspective of Ukrainians on staying as complex for estimation. They define two groups of refugees on this basis. The first one expresses a definite intention of a long-term

stay in Germany, hoping to maintain the continuity of their education and employment biographies. The other group members perceive their stay as temporary and express an open perspective on its duration, mainly dependent on the development of the war. With the help of qualitative methodology, the variety of staying intentions as determinants of individual strategies regarding integration, learning, and employment aspirations by Ukrainian refugees in Germany have been developed. Scholars differentiate the following six types of life strategies. *Passive waiting for a return to Ukraine* takes place mainly by women with minor children whose partners remained in Ukraine. *Motivated expectation of return to Ukraine* is typical for people with prior international experience, active life positions, and strong social and professional networks in Ukraine who exploit available self-development opportunities to make the most use of time in Germany. The strategy of *searching for oneself and one's place* describes people with a generally unclear perspective who use the war as a chance for a possible reorientation. They have no definite reasons to stay in Ukraine, such as family or property, but staying in Germany is one of the potential alternatives, along with the consideration of resettlement to another country. Respondents with no clear plans are characterized as being “on the crossroads.” They often experienced a significant material loss in Ukraine but before the war never considered migrating. The “ready to try it in Germany” strategy is typical for people with profound prerequisites to stay in Germany, such as language skills, social networks, transferable professions, international employment experience, etc. People who express *a convinced wish to remain in Germany* often do not possess these components but met the migration intention independently of the war as a biographical transition or lack the place in Ukraine to return. These orientations are highly dependent on subjective estimation of the duration of the war, which is highly dynamic. Generally, refugees admit to various conditional scenarios and plan several possible futures (Giesing et al., 2022). Table 1.1 provides an overview of these strategies concerning their readiness for integration into German society.

Table 1.1. Typology of Life Strategies of Ukrainian Refugees in Germany.

Type	Distinct Characteristics	Willingness for Integration
Passive waiting for a return to Ukraine	Women with minor children whose partner remained in Ukraine	Low
Motivated expectation of return to Ukraine	Prior international experience, active life positions, strong networks in Ukraine	Middle
“Searching for oneself and one’s place”	War as a chance for possible reorientation	High
“On the crossroads”	Significant material loss in Ukraine due to the war but no prior migration intention	Middle
“Ready to try it in Germany”	Profound prerequisites to stay in Germany	Very high
A convinced wish to remain in Germany	Migration as a biographical transition	Very high

Source: Giesing et al. (2022).

Triangulation of refugees' and experts' perspectives is a methodological standard for identifying the potential integration challenges (Brücker et al., 2016; Grüttner et al., 2018) as well as accessing the variety of meanings that orient actors as a fundamental characteristic of qualitative research (Lichterman, 2021). We contribute to this research need, as most studies in the field are based on the single perspective of refugees. Empirical research on a communal level gains particular importance due to the crucial role of local authorities in supporting integration processes by providing access to accommodation, employment, and education. It is an effective way to study the realization of federal legislative practices directly, and significant research need is indicated in this regard (Boll et al., 2023). From the perspective of refugees, communities are responsible for all relevant fields of their daily lives, making the integration in the locality of residence fundamental for the general understanding of this process in the host society (Menke, 2020). In particular, successful labor market integration is dependent on the regional constellation of economic conditions and public institutions (Rüb & Werner, 2008).

We contribute to this gap by performing a case study within one administrative district of Altenburger Land to ensure the triangulation of findings by refugees and experts within the same local context. Despite the limitation of theoretical generalization only, it is the most effective way to compare views on the same situation and reciprocally validate the statements.

METHODOLOGY

The study consists of two subsamples. The first subsample includes 12 employees and volunteers from organizations working with refugees, such as social and employment services and counseling, adult education centers, and shared accommodations selected on a convenience principle considering the variety of their functional fields and organizational forms. Gender distribution in the subsample is balanced, with six male and female persons based on self-identification. The recruitment took place through publicly available contact data and multipliers.

The second subsample includes 12 Ukrainian refugees who have arrived in Germany since February 24, 2022, based on personal statements, with the following socio-demographic characteristics. We interviewed eight female persons between the ages of 25 and 49 with a minimum of completed upper secondary education or higher and four male persons between the ages of 16 and 24 with a minimum of completed lower secondary education or higher. Six females have children between the ages of 2 and 16. Interviewing male respondents provides a significant contribution to studying Ukrainian refugees, as with few exceptions, men between 18 and 60 are not allowed to leave the country. Our study participants were residing in the localities in East and South Ukraine, occupied by Russia in 2022. They left their hometowns toward the middle of Russia and arrived in Germany via Baltic countries or Belarus, as no restrictions apply for Ukrainians leaving other countries. Socio-demographic characteristics mark the quotations of respective respondents in the following way: "gender, age, place