PACES

Making migration and migration policy decisions amidst societal transformations

Assumptions in migration policy: State-of-the-Art of Research on Migrant Behaviour and Policy Effects

Literature review for the PACES project

Niels Ike
Leiden University

Merel van Assem
Leiden University

PACES Project, Task 3.2, February 2024

Suggested citation
Ike N., van Assem M. (2024). Assumptions in Migration Policy: State-of-the-Art of Research on Migrant Behaviour and Policy Effects. Literature review for the PACES project. Leiden, University of Leiden.

PACES (Making migration and migration policy decisions amidst societal transformation) is a 40-month research project (2023-2026) that examines decisions to stay and migrate over time and space, researches the politics of knowledge in migration policy and seeks to use its insights to inform future migration policies and governance. PACES is carried out by a consortium of 14 partners in Europe, Africa and the USA.

Contact for PACES project
Simona Vezzoli
International Institute of Social Studies, Erasmus University Rotterdam
Kortenaerkade 12
2518 AX, The Hague, The Netherlands
Website: www.iss.nl/paces

Authors
Niels Ike, nielsike@hotmail.com, Merel van Assem, merelva@gmail.com. This state-of-the-art report was conducted as part the PACES project, Task 3.2, under supervision of Katharina Natter, Senior Assistant Professor at Leiden University.

The views presented are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the views of the institutions with which they are affiliated.

History of change

Version	Date	Changes	Authors
1	February 2024		Niels Ike, Merel van Assem

This project has received funding under the European Union's Horizon Europe research and innovation programme, grant agreement N 101094279.

The contents of the document are the sole responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union. The European Union and the granting authority are not responsible for any use that may be made of the information it contains.

PACES REPORT

Assumptions in migration policy

State-of-the-Art of Research on Migrant Behaviour and Policy Effects

Introduction

Migration is subject to constant change resulting from economic, social and political developments across the globe. Although overall migration levels remain relatively stable over the decades, the directions and volumes of migratory movements continuously varies. Given the political salience of migration in European and global policy agendas, policymakers try to adapt to these broader developments by designing policies in order to shape migrant behaviour according to national interests. In doing so, policymakers rely on their assumptions about how the world works, as well as available knowledge on migrant behaviour and past policy effects – at least to some extent (Natter, 2024). Indeed, despite widespread and repeated calls for evidence-based policies, the policy area of migration is pervaded by myths, fictions and misperceptions of what works and what should be done in order to shape global migration (De Haas, 2023).

This report is part of the PACES project which investigates how migration policymakers take into account migrant decision-making in their policy choices. To get a better understanding of the key assumptions of policymakers addressed by the literature as well as the scientific evidence available, we conducted a comprehensive literature review on migrant behaviour and policy effects in three specific migration-policy areas. These were chosen to capture different levels of politicisation, migrant groups targeted and ministerial responsibilities in order to understand variations in knowledge-policy dynamics in the field of migration.

The first policy area we analyse pertains to counter-smuggling policies targeting irregular migrants. We specifically focus on two policy tools: information campaigns and human smuggling penalties. The second area focuses on the reception of asylum seekers in the region of origin (neighbouring countries in the same region as the country of origin), in particular those policies aimed at stimulating asylum seekers to stay in their regions (and preventing them from coming to Europe) and refugee resettlement policies. The third and last policy area concerns the attraction and retention of essential workers – a combination of knowledge migrants and shortage labour migrants.

For each of the policy areas, we ask: What are the main claims that the literature tries to confirm or counter? What do we know about how these migrant groups take their decisions to migrate, how, and where to? And what do we know about the effects of past migration policies across these three policy areas? For each assumption identified, we present the available evidence and discuss to what extent the assumption matches the existing (academic) evidence.

For this exercise, it is important to distinguish between two levels of assumptions. The first level pertains to those assumptions made by policymakers and underpinning migration policies, which are then analysed and debunked or confirmed in the literature. The second level concerns those assumptions being made in the literature itself, i.e. potential biases within the literature. In this report, we focus on the first level of assumptions: potential assumptions of policymakers underlying certain policies. Although it was not the primary goal of this literature review to reflect on biases in the literature, we will also briefly do so in the conclusion.

In what follows, we provide the state-of-the-art literature for each policy area, discussing first counter-smuggling policies, then policies around asylum reception in the region and finally policies targeting essential workers. Subsequently, this state-of-the-art will form the baseline for the empirical analysis conducted within PACES, which will investigate policy changes in the designated policy areas across three countries (Austria, Netherlands, Italy) since the early 2000s. More particularly, our empirical analysis aims to identify the dominant assumptions underpinning policy changes, as well as the role of knowledge in policy making, with a particular focus on identifying variations over time, across countries or across policy areas

Part 1. Countering human smugglers and irregular migration

Over the past decades, countries in the Global North have developed and implemented a wide range of measures and policies to reduce irregular migration. Some policies are aimed at preventing migrant arrivals at their borders in the first place, others address the irregular migration journey itself, and yet others aim to increase the return of irregular migrants. The implementation of these policies have stretched far beyond the borders of the countries that introduced them; a process which is commonly understood as "externalisation" (Bialasiewicz, 2012; Boswell, 2003; Marino et al., 2023; Van Dessel, 2021). The extraterritorial implementation of migration policies was further amplified and expanded in the context of the 2015 'crisis' at the EU's external borders.

Next to more traditional forms of migration control – i.e. stricter immigration policies, higher penalties for irregular migrants and smugglers, the building of physical border walls, increased policing and surveillance of borders, etc. – information campaigns targeting prospective migrants in their home countries have become a popular policy tool. Although information campaigns encompass a wide range of target audiences and project-specific objectives, there is one overarching objective they all have in common: reducing irregular migration. Most information campaigns accordingly focus on the dangers and risks involved in human smuggling and irregular migration, and try to discourage potential migrants from trying to reach Europe.

Despite repeated calls for "evidence-based" policies, information campaigns are widely implemented without much evidence that they are achieving their declared aims. Indeed, there are few publicly available and independent evaluations of implemented information campaigns (Browne, 2015; McAdam, 2023); statistics on irregular migration are difficult to obtain (McAdam, 2023); and causality between information campaigns and reduced irregular arrivals is difficult to establish (Browne, 2015; Cham & Trauner, 2023; Schans & Optekamp, 2016; Tjaden, et al., 2018). In this first part of the report, we identify and clarify the assumptions underpinning counter-smuggling policies targeted at irregular migrants. More specifically, we looked at two particular policy tools: information campaigns and penalties for both irregular migration and human smuggling1. In what follows, we will outline the six core assumptions that, according to the academic literature, structure policymaking in this field.

Assumption 1: Migrants lack adequate and objective information about the dangers and risks of irregular migration.

A first dominant assumption underpinning the introduction and expansion of information campaigns that is discussed in the literature is the premise that migrants rely on human smugglers because of the absence of adequate and objective information about the dangers of such migration journeys. Providing information about the risks and dangers involved in human smuggling would, accordingly, dissuade them from embarking on such journeys and as a result irregular migration would be reduced (Heller, 2014; Nieuwenhuys & Pécoud, 2007). **The implicit portrayal of migrants as irrational actors making decisions against their own interest underpins and justifies the use of information campaigns.** In what follows, we first discuss research on the sources through which prospective migrants acquire information and then on the ways in which they deal and engage with this information.

Much academic research has focused on how potential migrants collect information through various sources, thereby demonstrating that decisions to migrate are not made in a vacuum. Information is often acquired through socially close connections, showing how deeply information is embedded in local communities and local social structures (Alpes &

1 It is important to distinguish between human smuggling and trafficking. Although often conflated in policy-discourse, the two issues are fundamentally different and have different legal frameworks. Whereas human trafficking pertains to situations where participation is characterised by force and violence, human smuggling is about voluntary participation; a mutual transaction. Migrants actively decide to use smugglers in order to cross a border otherwise dangerous to cross. Migration through smuggling is often even regarded as an emancipating exercise by migrants (Músaro, 2019; Pécoud & Nieuwenhuys, 2007). In this report, we exclusively focus on human smuggling.

Sørensen, 2015; Carling & Hernandez Carretero, 2012; Heller, 2014; Nieuwenhuys & Pécoud, 2007; Van Bemmel, 2020). Besides personal contacts in local networks, migrants gain information through mass media and social media, against which information campaigns have to compete (Van Bemmel, 2020). **Instead of a lack of knowledge, prospective migrants thus have to navigate a wide range of sources and actively engage with potentially contradictory or competing information provided to them.**

As they acquire information on the risks of the migration journey through various sources, migrants adopt various strategies to deal with such information. This depends not so much on the objectivity or alleged neutrality of information, but rather on a migrant's subjective interpretation of this information (Nieuwenhuys & Pécoud, 2007). **Importantly, migrants' level of trust in the source of information has a great influence on whether they rely on it to inform their behaviour.** Prospective migrants tend to have the most trust in information given to them by sources that are socially close (Carling & Hernandez Carretero, 2012; Van Bemmel, 2020). By contrast, information given in awareness raising campaigns is often received with suspicion, as migrants are well aware of the underlying objectives and the political motivation behind these campaigns (Carling & Hernandez Carretero, 2012; Van Bemmel, 2020). Accordingly, information provided by international organisations or government institutions is sometimes dismissed, discredited or avoided at all (Alpes & Sørensen, 2015; Carling & Hernandez Carretero, 2012).

In short, migrants' relationship with information on irregular migration and the use of smugglers is not one of ignorance and lack. Rather, they actively and carefully engage with a wide range of information sources and showcase various strategies to interpret and deal with this information.

Assumption 2: The provision of adequate and objective information about the risks and dangers of irregular migration will convince potential migrants to stay put.

The second assumption pertains to the idea that negative messaging – i.e. providing information on the horrific conditions during the irregular migration journey and after arrival in the country of destination – will persuade potential migrants to stay in their home countries (Schans & Optekamp, 2016). **This idea of persuasion through fear appeal messages assumes that the status-quo – staying put, not migrating – is peaceful, nice and comfortable. In other words, staying put is assumed to be the risk-averse option, as opposed to the high-risk decision to migrate irregularly. However, this idea ignores – or at least underestimates – the severity of the risks of staying at home.** In this section, we will sketch a broader picture of migrant decision-making by focusing on factors other than risk assessment; that is, economic and political factors in the country of origin. Importantly, the information given in this section applies to both prospective migrants considering to migrate, as well as those who have already attempted to migrate.

Indeed, aspirational migrants consider themselves to be at risk already in their countries of origin; the status-quo is precisely the risky situation they want to escape (Alpes & Sørensen, 2015; Browne, 2015; Van Bemmel, 2020). In fact, migrants often consider themselves to be well familiar with risks and vulnerability in life more generally (Carling & Hernandez-Carretero, 2012). Also, migrants have often experienced years of violence and conflict at home and hence are less threatened by negative messaging on the dangers of irregular migration. Exposure to violence and near-death experiences has painfully become part of the normal frame of mind of some migrants (Hagen-Zanker & Mallet, 2016). In this context, migration - despite its risks - is often considered to be a reasonable choice for escaping a life of economic hardship and stagnation, or even political oppression and violence in view of potential opportunities abroad (Carling & Hernandez Carretero, 2012; Nieuwenhuys & Pécoud, 2007).

Furthermore, it is important to note that most **migrants take information about the risks of migration seriously and believe the information to be credible, but nonetheless decide to embark on irregular journeys** (Van Bemmel, 2020). Van Bemmel (2020) shows how even migrants who experienced the dangers and risks of irregular migration first-hand decide to try it again. Carling & Hernandez Carretero (2012) also demonstrate how information on risk is accepted as credible information at a group-level, but dismissed at the personal level. For example, when information campaigns present statistics evidencing that 5% of all irregular migrants die during their journey, migrants interpret this as a 95% chance to successfully migrate (McAdam, 2023).

In summary, the second assumption underpinning information campaigns pertains to the idea that objective information about the dangers of irregular migration will deter aspirational migrants from embarking on such journeys. However, this assumption underestimates – or ignores – the severity of the situation at home; staying at home is considered to be risky as well. Moreover, risk information does not appear to be effective as migrants interpret information in order to support their decision, and in accordance with their worldviews.

Assumption 3: The decision to migrate is mainly taken on the basis of risk-assessment.

In the previous assumption we saw how migrants make the decision to embark on irregular migration journeys despite being aware of the dangers and risks involved. This is because risk assessment is only one of the factors influencing the decision to migrate, often not the most important and decisive one. In addition to ignoring that staying is sometimes the more risky life choice compared to migrating, **policies also generally ignore more immaterial, socio-cultural migration drivers, such as hope, belief and honour, which have been evidenced by the literature.**

Indeed, some studies seek to explain irregular migration from the social and cultural context from which migrants depart, sometimes referred to as "migration culture" (McAdam, 2023). In their analysis of Senegalese boat migration (i.e. "pirogue migration"), Carling & Hernandez Carretero (2012, p. 407) demonstrate how high-risk migration is a highly gendered phenomenon and closely linked to achieving higher social status, notions of masculinity, pride, honour, and responsibility. Migration is regarded as a "rite the passage", an inherent part of coming of age for young men. Accordingly, high-risk migration is not so much seen as an irrational and dangerous choice, but rather as a meaningful, reasonable and justifiable step in the lives of young Senegalese men (Carling & Hernandez Carretero, 2012). Even a "failed" attempt would be a justifiable outcome. These cultural norms that normalise and arguably even stimulate migration appear to be very resistant to external influence such as negative messaging in information campaigns (Hagen-Zanker & Mallett, 2016).

Another strand of literature focuses on the role of "hope" in migrant decision-making (Hernandez Carretero, 2017; Kleist, 2017). **Hope often plays a far greater and fundamental role in the decision to migrate than is often assumed by policymakers.** Indeed, the concept of hope does not lend itself to be targeted or addressed by policies and is therefore often overlooked or ignored. In reality, however, hope plays a decisive role in situations of extreme uncertainty like irregular migration. Hernandez-Carretero (2017) argues that individuals may be willing to accept a certain degree of uncertainty and take their chances when they are hopeful it will yield positive change eventually. In the absence of hope, by contrast, they may prefer to minimise uncertainty. When we translate this to the concrete context of irregular migration, it suggests that migrants are willing to accept uncertainty and risk when seeking fortune through migration, yet they are more reluctant to do so in the case of returning to their countries of origin (Hernandez Carretero, 2017). One could argue that information campaigns are precisely meant to eliminate this sense of hope among (prospective) migrants. Kleist (2017), however, shows how this rationale is built upon a misperception of hope as a highly individual and naïve optimism. Instead, she contends, hope is ubiquitous throughout all layers of social life in Africa and operates rather in a social and collective way (Kleist, 2017).

Lastly, religion plays a key role in empowering migrants and equipping them with the necessary trust and courage in a successful migration trajectory (Carling & Hernandez Carretero, 2012; Van Bemmel, 2020). First, religious beliefs affect migrants' assessment of the magnitude of the risks of migration. Second, faith in god provides spiritual protection from adverse outcomes like involuntary return and death. Third, religion undermines the very notion of risk-taking because of a strong and deterministic faith in a divine destiny, i.e. the result of the migration journey is believed to be God's will (Carling & Hernandez-Carretero, 2012).

In summary, high-risk migration is not considered an irrational step, but rather a justifiable and courageous step in the lives of especially young men, as well as a life strategy in line with people's hope and religious beliefs, factors that are often side-lined in policymaking.

Assumption 4: Human smugglers are big, transnational networks of organised crime.

Whereas the first three assumptions pertained to the provision of information targeting potential migrants, this assumption concerns the "supply side" of irregular migration: the activity of human smugglers. Policy discourse surrounding human

smugglers has shifted towards increased criminalisation since the 1990s (Van Liempt & Sersli, 2012). Accordingly, policies implemented by countries of destination have increasingly focussed on networks of human smugglers as a means to counter irregular migration. These policies are often based on the assumption that smugglers are part of large transnational, mafia-like networks of organised crime engaged in various criminal activities. In this section, we will show how scientific evidence contrasts this assumption of the "evil criminals" and paints a very different picture of how human smugglers operate in practice, advocating for a socially embedded understanding of human smuggling (Van Liempt & Sersli, 2012).

Rather than the image of human smugglers operating in large transnational, centralised criminal networks, empirical research shows that they are characterised by a horizontal structure, ad-hoc linkages and deep embeddedness in local communities (Campana, 2020; Fallone, 2021; Van Liempt & Sersli, 2012). In fact, networks of human smugglers often consist of loosely connected, independent actors carrying out individual and specific activities within the larger smuggling process (Fallone, 2021).

A related implicit assumption concerns the close relation between human smuggling and other forms of criminal activities. Empirical evidence – however limited and fragmented – shows that **human smugglers are typically not engaged in other criminal activities** (Campana, 2020). Instead, they resemble more closely legitimate small business owners than large networks of seasoned criminals. In some cases, migrants even speak about their smugglers in a positive way, as "helpers" (Van Liempt & Sersli, 2012). Indeed, smugglers can also be familiar people, like friends of friends and in very few cases even family members. The relationship between smuggler and migrant is thus not necessarily a hostile and exploitative one.

This socially embedded understanding of human smuggling has significant policy implications. Indeed, the horizontal structure and ad-hoc nature of migrant smuggling results in an extremely adaptable and dynamic market that constantly manages to work around policies (Fallone, 2021). Human smugglers are able to continuously adapt their methods and routes in response to EU border controls (Hagen-Zanker & Mallett, 2016). In fact, the strongly localised nature of human smugglers might in itself be a result of intensified and increased policing and surveillance. The policies that are designed to dismantle networks of human smugglers lead to the invention and expansion of new methods and routes, as the dominant policy approach seems to force smugglers to professionalise their methods and remain localised in order to survive (Campana, 2020; Fallone, 2021; Triandafyllidou, 2018). In other words, **the policies aimed at dismantling smuggling networks in fact reinforce their localised and decentralised nature, herewith rendering them even more difficult to counter in the first place.**

In this section, we saw how counter-smuggling policies are often aimed at the 'wrong enemy'. Rather than the highly centralised, hierarchical networks of organised crime they are often perceived to be, human smugglers are loosely organised and deeply embedded in local communities. The policies aimed to fight them often incentivise smugglers to reconsider and reinvent their methods and routes, thereby proving themselves to be highly resistant to counter-smuggling policies. Counter-smuggling policies thus require a fundamentally different approach, less focused on centralised networks of organised crime, towards a focus on opening legal pathways and eliminating the deeper causes of irregular migration. In the next assumption, we will elaborate on the misperception that human smuggling itself is the cause of irregular migration.

Assumption 5: Human smuggling causes irregular migration.

Counter-smuggling policies – both penalties and information campaigns – are designed with the overarching objective of reducing irregular migration. These policies follow a certain logic of causality that can be captured in the following phrase: no smugglers, no migrants. Although there is obviously a relationship between irregular migration and smuggling, the causality of this relationship is all but evident.

First of all, as research shows, **smuggling is not the main source of irregular migration; most irregular migrants enter Europe legally and then become "irregular" by overstaying their visas** (De Haas, 2013). Consequently, policies aimed at reducing irregular migration should rather focus on identifying irregular migrants within a country's borders (i.e. at workplaces etc.) rather than at the border (Hansen & Pettersson, 2022). However, across Europe**, powerful economic interests tend to work against a more thorough enforcement of labour and migration laws at workplaces.**

Second, the common policy response to irregular migration and human smuggling – expanding border controls and their enforcement – is generally counter-productive, as policies are based on the assumption that the existence of human smugglers forms the cause of irregular migration (Alpes & Sørensen, 2015). However, as De Haas (2013) aptly formulated: "Smuggling is a reaction to border controls, not the cause of migration". **Counter-smuggling policies thus effectively create the very conditions for smugglers to thrive.** Specifically, increased border controls deflect migration routes towards more risky and dangerous routes, which push migrants into situations in which they need to rely on smugglers who have more experience with certain routes. The demand for the service of smuggling – the facilitation of cross-border movements – thus increases in a context of increasingly securitised borders (Andersson, 2016; Campana, 2020; Massey, Durand & Pren, 2016).

Moreover, tougher penalties on human smuggling do not only target smugglers and migrants themselves, they also significantly affect the activity of civil society actors (CSA's) in the field of migration (Carrera, Allsopp & Vosyliūtė, 2018). **Counter-smuggling policies focusing exclusively on security, punishment and enforcement have the side-effect of disciplining and criminalising CSA's providing humanitarian assistance.** Especially CSA's engaged in search and rescue activities at sea are targeted under the banner of counter-smuggling, and those organisations increasingly refrain from their activities. However, they play a crucial role in safeguarding the fundamental human rights of migrants and asylum seekers (Carrera, Allsopp & Vosyliūtė, 2018).

Against this background, Fallone (2021) has formulated guidelines for developing more efficient and effective counter-smuggling policies. Following from the analysis presented above, the opening of accessible and affordable legal channels for migration is the most important policy-recommendation to eliminate the phenomenon of human smuggling. Migration will continue to happen, whether legal or illegal, regardless of the policies being in place (Hagen-Zanker & Mallett, 2016). Accordingly, the legalisation of migration would take away the incentive for migrants to make use of human smugglers. The introduction of stricter penalties for smugglers and information campaigns are thus doomed to fail when the underlying reasons for the smuggling market's existence – the lack of legal migration possibilities – are not addressed (Fallone, 2021; Massey, Durand & Pren, 2016).

Assumption 6: Everyone should be informed that crossing borders irregularly is a risk and will be sanctioned.

A final assumption underpinning information campaigns and penalties for migrant smugglers is that all irregular border crossings are a criminal offence that people need to be informed about. Most dangerously, this assumption leads to **the systematic conflation of migrants on the one hand, and refugees and asylum seekers on the other** (Musarò, 2019). Whereas refugees have an official legal status of protection, migrants do not necessarily have such a status. Asylum seekers, in turn, are people who seek protection, but they are not yet granted the legal status of refugee. Crucially, seeking asylum and applying for legal protection is a fundamental human right that European countries have subscribed to in the European Convention on Human Rights (art. 2, 3, 15), even if this involves an irregular border crossing.

Studies show that information campaigns are not only targeting potential migrants, but are also being implemented in refugee camps and in countries at war and regions of conflict (Majidi, 2023; Oeppen, 2016). Information campaigns thus target people for whom it is unclear whether they are eligible for legal protection, before they even reach the border. Majidi (2023) analyses two specific information campaigns in Afghanistan and Ethiopia, two countries that suffer from political violence and civil wars. The information campaign studied in Ethiopia was implemented in a refugee camp and thus concerns a target audience that is fundamentally entitled to the status of refugee. **Trying to discourage and prevent potential refugees from seeking protection even before they move, then, poses serious questions to the ethics of information campaigns and is in strong violation of international human rights standards** (Majidi, 2023; Nieuwenhuys & Pécoud, 2016).

Part 2. Receiving asylum seekers in regions of origin

The second part of the report explores the state-of-the-art around asylum reception in the region and resettlement programs. These are two of the three durable solutions for displacement highlighted by the UNHCR (Long, 2010), the third – voluntary repatriation – is not discussed here. Also not discussed is the issue of external asylum processing, which is often mentioned together with asylum in the region because policies tend to address both simultaneously (see for example: Betts, 2004; de Vries, 2007; Schuster, 2005), but concerns a different strand of policy. The large body of literature surrounding asylum reception in the region and resettlement reveals six main assumptions in policymaking. The assumptions generally relate to the aim of reducing incoming migration to wealthier countries, and more specifically Europe or the EU – also referred to as Western or donor countries. Central in both asylum reception in the region and resettlement is the tension between humanitarianism and international responsibility on the one hand, and national concerns, security and pragmatism on the other.

Assumption 1: Development initiatives reduce (forced) migration from origin and third countries.

The discussion around asylum reception in the region is part of a larger debate surrounding the effectiveness of development initiatives directed at reducing migration. Often described as a 'root causes approach', the main assumption underpinning this policy tool is to support development in origin countries in order to reduce factors in these countries that drive people to migrate (Clemens & Postel, 2018; De Haas, 2007; Fine, 2019). However, as research shows, **the assumed link between development and decreasing migration is at best weak** (Clemens & Postel, 2018; Nyberg–Sørensen et al., 2002), **if not** negative (De Haas, 2007; Gerschutz-Bell, 2022). This is because migration is a result not only of people's life aspirations but also of their capabilities to migrate. As countries and communities develop, people gain access to more money, networks and knowledge, which ultimately makes it easier for them to finance and organise their migration. This also explains why most migrants do not come from the poorest, least developed regions of the world, but from middle-income countries such as Mexico, Morocco, Albania or the Philippines. As the root causes approach is aimed at economic development for the poorest, **development projects might thus inadvertently lead to more, rather than less migration from these communities.**

Policies focussing on asylum reception in the region often contain a development aid element that builds on this erroneous assumption that development in third countries will reduce onward movement of refugees to donor countries. Indeed, the effect of aid to third countries on the number of asylum claims in donor countries is uncertain. Clemens and Postel (2018) suggest that donor countries could instead direct their attention at mitigating the consequences of incoming migrants and refugees in third countries, for instance through initiatives improving the overall living conditions in the region (de Vries, 2007). However, this type of **aid might in fact have the unintended effect of attracting migrants to the third countries in question** (Nyberg–Sørensen et al., 2002).

The migration-development literature also shows that, due to misconceptions about drivers of migration, development projects or aid are often not directed at demographic groups or sectors where migration is most acute (Clemens & Postel, 2018; Gerschutz-Bell, 2022). This is exacerbated in the context of forced migration: **Development aid is focussed on economic development and thus unlikely to shape refugees' migration decision-making, which is fundamentally a response to conflict and violence rather than economic insecurity.** Aid aimed at conflict prevention, strengthening of the rule of law, improving human rights, and enhancing governance quality could potentially reduce refugees' onward migration aspirations (Fine, 2019). However, in contrast to the quick effects of economic aid, programs in the category of political development have a more gradual effect (Gamso & Yuldashev, 2018).

In sum, the assumed connection between development and migration is uncertain, if not negative, and especially difficult to predict in complex cases of forced migration. Similarly, development initiatives in third countries might not have the desired effect of stopping onward journeys to donor countries and might instead have the unintended consequence of attracting more migration to third countries in the region.

Assumption 2: Asylum reception in the region enhances the safety of migrants by minimising refugee movements beyond the region.

The promotion of asylum reception in the region aims to reduce the number of refugees entering the EU by establishing mechanisms that remove the necessity for people in need of protection to come to Europe. The assumption here is not only

that this would reduce costs for European countries, but also that it would protect asylum seekers from undertaking the dangerous route across the Mediterranean (Schuster, 2005). This assumption is two-fold, as it assumes that it is possible to discourage migration to Europe by encouraging asylum in the region, and it assumes that asylum reception in the region is a safe option for migrants.

First, reception in the region policies are based on the assumption that countries in the region are willing to keep their borders open to asylum seekers and to discourage onward movement to Europe (Hathaway, 2019). These expectations rely on the participation of – mostly African – host countries, which are often not willing to take on the role of a host country (Betts & Milner, 2007). Furthermore, the literature shows that efforts aimed at deterring migration through enhanced security and border control – needed to retain migrants in the region – can in fact increase the flow of immigrants (Gamso & Yuldashev, 2018), negatively affect development programs, and increase illegal attempts of migration (Fine, 2019). Therefore, **the effectiveness of encouraging asylum in the region is uncertain from a practical perspective.**

Second, reception in the region policies are seen to promote migrants' safety based on the assumption that migrants have reached safety after the first migratory movement, while secondary movements – from third to donor countries – are driven by other motivations, for example economic drivers. However, **research shows that both primary and secondary movements are in fact driven by concerns for safety** (Zimmermann, 2009). Accordingly, discouraging onward movement to Europe is debatable from an ethical perspective regarding migrant safety.

Asylum reception in the region is promoted to decrease secondary movements to Europe and thus the number of refugees undertaking dangerous routes. **However, the cooperation of and safety in host countries in the region is not guaranteed and securitisation of borders might come at the expense of the safety of migrants.**

Assumption 3: Asylum reception in the region improves chances of return and integration.

Aside from eliminating the need to come to Europe in order to get protection, asylum reception in the region is promoted based on the assumption that it would facilitate return to countries of origin and increase chances of refugee integration due to cultural and functional compatibility (Schuster, 2005). In some cases, legal protection and integration in regions of origin can provide possibilities of circular or even return migration, making local integration viable and beneficial for both refugees and host communities, thereby increasing support for assisting refugees (Jacobsen & Landau, 2001).

Yet, such local integration and the possibility to return should not be taken for granted. Research shows that local integration of refugees in the region depends strongly on the host country and its attitude towards specific groups of refugees. Importantly, **many of the countries in the region – often developing countries – have followed the lead of Western and specifically European countries by adopting a more reluctant position towards the local integration of refugees, characterised by the securitization of asylum seekers** (Jacobsen & Landau, 2001). In particular, they have developed strategies according to – assumed – security issues, often resulting in the increasing confinement of refugees in camps or designated areas (Jacobsen & Landau, 2001; Jansen, 2008; Steputat, 2004). This strategy of encampment frames refugees as a security issue and a threat to the local economy and its resources. Moreover, the unsubstantiated prospect of return depicts the protection of refugees as temporary, while in many examples the situation in the country of origin would not allow for return. Furthermore, refugees are often left in limbo, unable to attain legal protection, get education or cultivate future prospects (R. Hansen, 1990; Hathaway, 2019; Jacobsen & Landau, 2001). The lack of assistance and support from regional host countries often leads to self-settlement of refugees, which can at times increase security risks and resentment among the host community. The assumption that reception in the region can be a preferred substitute for protection in Europe should therefore be met with caution (Betts & Milner, 2007).

Furthermore, **the assumption that asylum seekers easily integrate in the region is built on simplistic and homogenising views on cultural proximity within 'the region of origin'.** Indeed, the Eurocentric narrative around asylum in the region suggests that regions such as 'North Africa', 'the Horn of Africa' or 'the Middle East' are culturally or ethnically homogeneous and would therefore lead to eased integration of regional migrants. This 'rhetoric of commonality' (Collyer, 2016 p.606), of course, disregards the historically-grown cultural differences, varied state-building experiences and diverse ethnic composition of these regions (Gazzotti et al., 2023). Furthermore, much of the research on integration focuses on European host countries, and thus the cultural and social integration in the region of origin is assumed rather than substantiated by research. Literature on the topic of return migration of asylum seekers touches upon topics such as difficulties with re-integration (Carr, 2014) or, similar to the topic of integration, focus on (forced) return out of Europe (Scalettaris & Gubert, 2019). **The idea of increased chance of integration and return migration due to geographical and cultural proximity, seems therefore, based on assumptions rather than empirical evidence.**

In sum, asylum reception in the region is supported with the idea of easier integration and the possibility of return. However, the prospect of return cannot always be achieved due to the situation in the country of origin and can leave asylum seekers in limbo. Furthermore, integration should not be presumed automatically successful in regions of origin, as European countries are not alone in the securitisation of asylum seekers, and cultural similarities and integration in the region are oversimplified.

Assumption 4: Refugees are seen as a resource in third countries, but as a burden in donor countries.

A fourth assumption that seems to underpin the promotion of asylum reception in the region is that incoming refugees can be a source for development in third countries - an assumption that clashes with the dominant perception of refugees as an economic burden in donor countries (Nyberg–Sørensen et al., 2002). Migrants and refugees are depicted as a resource for third countries in two ways: geopolitically and economically. First, geopolitically, it is argued that hosting refugees can attract humanitarian assistance through the services provided by NGOs and generate credibility in the international community (Jacobsen & Landau, 2001; Pearlman, 2021). Second, economically, refugees are suggested to bring economic assets and human capital (Jacobsen, 2002).

The argument of refugees as a resource is brought forward by donor countries to motivate asylum reception in the region. At the same time, these same donor countries tend to highlight the need to protect their own economies from the arrival of asylum seekers. These contradictory arguments about the economic benefit of refugees for developing economies and the economic burden for developed economies is not underpinned by research – quite the contrary: Empirical evidence on the cost and benefits of hosting refugees has shown that the economic contribution of refugees is highly dependent on the structure of the local economy. On average, **in countries classified as high-income and upper-middle-income, refugees have a positive effect on the economy, whilst in lower-income and lower-middle-income countries the effect of refugees through the labour force is negative** (Kouni, 2018). Furthermore, research shows that in poorer host countries, refugees can contribute to the country's development only when their economic autonomy is improved (Hathaway, 2019; Pearlman, 2021). For instance, research conducted in Tanzania (Maystadt, 2012) shows that when given access to land and labour, refugees can increase pro-poor development, income diversification among the poor, and agricultural productivity. Similarly, research in developed economies – in this case Australia – points to a net contribution of refugees between five to twenty years after arrival and shows the importance of economic autonomy, as refugees are disproportionately dependent on social security when there are systemic barriers to economic contributions. (Parsons, 2013). **The question of refugees as an economic burden or resource is, therefore, dependent on the economic context and immigration policies in the host country, not geography.**

In sum, while refugees are portrayed as a resource for third countries' developing economies – stressing the human capital, humanitarian aid, and international credibility brought by hosting refugees – donor countries view the arrival of refugees in their own countries as a threat rather than an addition to their economies. However, evidence shows that the economic contributions of refugees to host countries depend largely on the country's economic structure and immigration policies, both in developing and developed economic contexts.

Assumption 5: International legal responsibility can be offloaded through resettlement and development initiatives supporting reception in the region.

Currently, the countries that host the most refugees worldwide are low or middle-income countries, leading to an inverse correlation between available economic resources and protection responsibility (Hathaway, 2019). Policies advocating for **refugee reception in the region are often suggested as a way to redress this imbalance and resolve the tension between donor states' international responsibility for refugee protection and dominant national interests that seek to limit asylum migration.** As the literature shows, this builds on the assumption that donor countries can live up to or even pay off their legal responsibilities through development initiatives or 'co-development' (Gerschutz-Bell, 2022, p.176; Ruhs, 2019), while retaining asylum seekers in the region (Steputat, 2004). Resettlement programs, more extensively discussed in the next assumption, are based on a similar claim to resolve state responsibility (Hashimoto, 2018). Both strategies of responsibility distribution assume that the responsibility of refugee protection does not necessarily have to be accomplished within the boundaries of a country or the EU (Betts, 2004).

By outsourcing the responsibility, countries can avoid the economic, social and political costs associated with the physical presence of asylum seekers in a given country (Betts & Milner, 2007), resolving the political tensions associated with

the arrival of refugees and the member states' commitment to international legal instruments. The assumption is that, through asylum reception in the region of origin, asylum seekers' protection needs can be met while leaving the responsibility in the hands of host countries supported by partnerships with donor countries (de Vries, 2007).

However, as previously discussed, **reception in the region assumes smooth international cooperation and the willingness of third countries to host refugees as substitution for protection in donor countries (Betts & Milner, 2007), an assumption that ignores the complexity of global migration diplomacy, as well as the thorny national sovereignty issues refugee protection raises for third countries.** Indeed, it is important to keep in mind that reception in the region initiatives, or humanitarian aid, are a resource for third counties (Pearlman, 2021), and that deals around migrant hosting do not happen in a vacuum (Betts & Milner, 2007), meaning that other interests between the host and donor countries are possibly at stake. For example, when the outsourcing of refugee reception to third countries is 'successful' (such as the Rwanda-UK, Italy-Libya or EU-Turkey deals), these kinds of arrangements often involve countries that are characterised by human rights issues or limited political stability. Migration issues have become a determining factor in diplomacy, in the sense that countries can use their position in global migration systems – as sending, transit or host countries – as a bargaining strategy or political soft power (Adamson & Tsourapas, 2019). Adamson and Greenhill (2023) recognise the same phenomenon, described as migration deal-making or transactional forced migration. With this pragmatic approach to migration issues, donor countries exchange a significant amount of resources for a promise of hosting asylum seekers or accepting returnees that are deemed 'unwanted' (p.708).

To sum up, while asylum reception in the region could be a way of constructing equal but differentiated responsibility, resolve social political issues in donor countries, and increase the protection capacity in third countries, research shows that it is built on assumptions that are difficult to maintain, ranging from ethical objections such as protection substitution and cooperation with controversial regimes to practical limitations of effectiveness and organisation of such responsibility shifting.

Assumption 6: Resettlement is a way of reducing refugee movements to Europe while providing protection for the ones most in need.

This last assumption relates to refugee resettlement programs, which have gained traction in the European debate due to UNHCR's pressure for implementing durable solutions to displacement, the decreasing number of asylum admission in the US (Ahad et al., 2020; Ruhs, 2019), and a wish to minimise the number of asylum claims and spontaneous arrivals in Europe (De Boer & Zieck, 2020; Hatton, 2017). The idea is that resettlement programs could replace asylum procedures with a global refugee system that would allow for all states to contribute to refugee protection through a common but differentiated responsibility (Hathaway, 2019; Hatton, 2017) and herewith resolve the tension between international commitments to humanitarian principles and national interests of security and integration (Brekke et al., 2021). The core assumption is that resettlement would reduce spontaneous asylum applications and thus the number of people that attempt to cross the Mediterranean, while protecting the most vulnerable (Hatton, 2017). In doing so, a more equitable distribution of responsibility across countries could be established (De Boer & Zieck, 2020).

While this policy tool stresses the combined goal of both decreasing the number of spontaneous arrivals and protecting the ones most in need, these two goals are not necessarily successful at the same time. The number of arrivals can decrease, without the protection of the most vulnerable, and vice versa, the most vulnerable can be protected without the number of arrivals decreasing.

Indeed, research paints a different picture of the outcomes of resettlement programs regarding both of these elements, i.e. protection of the vulnerable and the reduction of spontaneous arrivals. Regarding the first element, the literature points to a **gap between the declared goal to protect the most vulnerable and the process of selecting refugees for resettlement, which favours refugees with higher social capital, skills or integration potential.** First of all, the selection process does not only consider criteria to assess the vulnerability and need of refugees, but also considerations like their prospect of integration, or even possible economic contributions to the host country (van Selm, 2004). For example, resettlement and integration success is measured through employment, knowledge of the language of the host country and income, while factors such as health (physical and mental), social ties and life satisfaction are often overlooked (Campion, 2018). Second, the psychological and sociocultural stress caused by resettlement should not be underestimated (A. Hansen, 2019), and affects the level of active or passive attitudes of those applying for resettlement. Research shows that more passive refugees are generally older, more traumatised and have spent more time in transit centres or the country of origin (Peisker & Tilbury, 2003). **Resettlement selection processes thus favour more assertive and career driven refugees, losing**

sight over the objective of protecting the most vulnerable. This generates an environment in which incentives to cheat and negotiate vulnerability increase and where resettlement is something to be actively achieved rather than to be extended to the genuinely vulnerable (Jansen, 2008). In response, it has been suggested that refugees should be interviewed at the time of arrival in a camp to minimise their chances to actively pursue resettlement – for example through coaching from those previously resettled. However, this demands an extensive organisational cooperation between national and international players (Martin, 2004), and has shown to increase anxiety and tension among refugees (Jansen, 2008).

The second element – the idea that resettlement programs can reduce the number of spontaneous arrivals and dangerous attempts to reach Europe, thereby suggesting solutions to resolve issues related to public support in host countries (Hatton, 2017; van Selm, 2004) – is also investigated in the literature. The possible reduction of spontaneous arrival is more often discussed from the perspective of states and host countries than from the perspective of (resettled) refugees. Indeed, states have used resettlement to justify limits on asylum claims in their territory and to set criteria for admission (Fisher, 2018). However, Van Selm (2004) argues that this strategic approach to resettlement from states is problematic as it is based on the assumption of a link between opportunities for resettlement and changes in the number of asylum applications in Europe. **While the logic that resettlement prevents spontaneous arrival can make sense at the individual level, it does not translate to group-level asylum movements at large** (van Selm, 2004). Yet, even at the individual level, there is little empirical evidence that resettlement would reduce spontaneous asylum requests or onward movement to Europe. One study in Kenya has even shown that the prospect of resettlement can decrease incentives to return or locally integrate, instead inspiring onward movement through resettlement programs. In this sense, refugee camps in the region can become transit centres where the objective of temporary protection becomes blurred as even those who can return opt for the chance of resettlement (Jansen, 2008).

To conclude, the literature shows that, against the dominant assumption, resettlement programs do not reduce spontaneous asylum arrivals in Europe and do not provide protection to the most vulnerable because selection criteria tend to select on refugee's skills and integration capacity and not on their vulnerability.

Part 3. Attracting essential workers

Next to dealing with questions of migrant smuggling and asylum protection, European countries have become increasingly concerned with compensating the decline of the national workforce by continuing to be an appealing destination for high-skilled migrants, especially in the context of increasing competition due to new opportunities emerging in developing countries (Cerna & Czaika, 2016; Papademetriou & Hooper, 2019). In contrast to the other two policy areas, where ethical or ideological considerations dominate the debate, a country's essential worker policy is dependent on labour market actors, institutional factors, considerations of the national work force (Cerna, 2014), and the preferences of incoming migrants. Only when the policy choices are combined with more politically salient topics – such as integration –the discussion can become more contentious (Kolbe, 2021). This last part of the report explores these policies developed to attract and retain essential workers.

For the purpose of this report, 'essential workers' is understood as encompassing both high-skilled migrants (also called knowledge migrants), as well as shortage labour migrants, as both are deemed essential in the economy of destination countries. The concept of high-skilled migration itself is debated in the literature and amongst policymakers (Parsons et al., 2020), as it can include migrants with certain diploma's, job offers or skills. Shortage labour migrants includes, but is not limited to, workers in sectors with (seasonally or structurally) more vacancies than available workers, e.g. health care, tourism, construction or agriculture. In contrast to the other two policy areas, policies directed at essential workers pursue the goal of attracting rather than discouraging (a selected group of) migrants. Moreover, the attraction and retention of essential workers is generally less contested and politicised than policies on migrant smuggling and refugee reception, since essential workers are commonly perceived to make significant contributions to the national economy. Partially as a result of this lower politicisation, the academic literature on this policy area is focussed less on debunking dominant policy assumptions and more on evaluating the pro's and con's of different policy options, leading to a more nuanced but also less politically contentious insights.

Assumption 1: Labour migrants choose their destination on the basis of immigration policy in the destination country.

In the policy area of essential workers there is an **overarching assumption that (prospective) migrants make rational decisions on whether to migrate and where to on the basis of destination countries' immigration policies.** Unsurprisingly, in many countries this has led to an assumption that migrant decisions can be shaped through policy. To what extent and how policies matter for migrant decision-making is, however, contested in the literature. There are broadly two positions in this debate.

On the one hand, **authors have shown how certain policy measures like preferential tax schemes, mild integration requirements or pathways to permanent residency have succeeded in attracting more essential workers,** thus arguing in favour of public policies shaping migrant behaviour (Ozcurumez & Yetkin Aker, 2016; Sanchez-Montijano et al., 2018; Timm et al., 2022). For instance, Timm et al. (2022) show how the tax-incentive reform for high-skilled migrants in the Netherlands has attracted significantly more migrants above the income threshold. Within a range of 10% above the newly introduced threshold, immigration doubled (Timm et al., 2022). In another study, Ozcurumez & Yetkin Aker (2016) show how high-skilled Turkish migrants take the restrictiveness of migration and citizenship rights – for example the ability to obtain permanent residency or dual citizenship – into consideration when they choose one country over another. The study nuances the effect of policies as such by stressing other factors like social, cultural, political context and the presence of social networks in the destination country that are of influence in migrant decision making. While the opportunity of family reunification is often suggested to be influential in decision making, research has shown that reuniting in Europe – rather than back home or not at all – is often the case for merely the most integrated migrants, rather than all migrants (Baizán, et al., 2014).

On the other hand, **authors emphasise the structural character of migration movements to argue that migration policies have limited effects on migrant decision-making** (Aksakal & Reslow, 2019; Doomernik et al., 2009; Toma & Villares-Varela, 2019; Skeldon, 2018). Instead of public policies, these authors point to the broader economic, cultural and social factors that shape the mobility of essential workers. Toma & Villares-Varela (2019) show that high-skilled migrants are often not even aware of the policies in place in the country of destination. Research has, furthermore, shown that for highly qualified migrants, it is the professional opportunities and the quality of life at the destination that makes a country appealing (Papademetriou & Hooper, 2019). Other factors that skilled migrants consider include the prestige of the institution or company, levels of cultural tolerance, and the quality of the education system for their children (Ozcurumez & Yetkin Aker, 2016; Toma & Villares-Varela, 2019).

While the 'immigration package' (Papademetriou & Hooper, 2019, p.23) – the variables that can be adjusted through immigration policy, especially opportunities for family reunification, permanent residency and tax policy – can to some extent influence migrant decision making, this literature shows that **many key drivers of migration decision-making by essential workers – such as quality of life, work culture, education systems language and cultural factors – are far beyond the reach of immigration policies.**

Assumption 2: Market-driven policy is effective in filling gaps in the labour market and increasing the skill-level of the migrant population in a destination country.

One of the broad policy choices countries have when developing their approach towards essential workers is between demand- and supply-driven policy frameworks (Emilsson, 2016), i.e. between employer- and migrant-driven policy systems (Facchini & Lodigiani, 2014). Since most countries adopt a combination of both systems (Czaika & Parsons, 2017; Emilsson, 2016), it is difficult – and possibly undesirable – to strictly categorise a country in either one or the other. Each policy framework is based on arguments and assumptions about the best way to achieve specific goals – in the case of supply/migrant-driven systems to increase the skill level of the labour force, in the case of demand/employer-driven systems to close gaps in the labour market (Emilsson, 2016). However, **both policy frameworks are based on an overarching – neoliberal – assumption of the power of the market and market forces (Papademetriou & Hooper, 2019) to find talent unobtainable in the country (Doran et al., 2014), and fill gaps in the labour market.** Empirical evidence has shown that the choice for demand or supply-driven policy tools does indeed affect the composition and dynamics of labour migration, but not only in expected ways.

As research has shown, the success of filling gaps in the labour market and/or increasing the skill-level of the migrant population in a country through market-driven policies seems to depend on national contexts (Cerna & Czaika, 2016; Papademetriou & Hooper, 2019). For example, demand- or employer-driven policies are suggested to ensure that employers can obtain necessary skills unobtainable within the country (Doran et al., 2014). But, in countries that are less effective in

attracting international students, or have a language not widely spoken internationally, demand-driven systems can leave workers in largely unregulated private sectors with little access to social safety or unions (Emilsson, 2016). Furthermore, these systems have shown to edge out national workers by filling spots with cheap labour – rather than unobtainable skills sets (Doran et al., 2014). In short, **demand-driven systems are more effective in filling labour market needs in national contexts or sectors where language is not a barrier for international workers or where private sectors are regulated to prevent wage-dumping.**

Supply- or migrant-driven policies have proven to be more effective in increasing the skill-level of destination countries (Facchini & Lodigiani, 2014). An example of migrant-driven policy are point-based systems, proven to be appealing to high-skilled migrants (Czaika & Parsons, 2017) and to policymakers – due to their objective, clear, and adaptable criteria (Facchini & Lodigiani, 2014). However, through the selection of migrants based on skills the issue of wasted human capital arises. Because of strict conditions in accessing the sectors they are educated in, the skills of these migrants are often under-utilised (Cameron, et al., 2019; Janicki & Ledwith, 2022), especially in the case of female migrants (Elo, et al., 2020). In short, **supply-driven policies might be more effective in increasing the skill-level, but fail to effectively mobilise these skills in the country's workforce.**

In this sense the literature shows a gap between the expectations of the use of market mechanisms in policy design, and the outcomes in different contexts. In line with the previous assumption, **migrants are motivated by factors beyond the principles derived from the market.** As discussed, a country's language can influence policy effects, but migrant decision-making might be more affected by policy tools outside of the market-driven logic. In the case of high-skilled workers, the recognition of diplomas and the fairness of the system play a role in favouring one country over the other. In the case of shortage labour workers, a visa can be a stronger motivator than a certain job (Emilsson, 2016), stressing the effectiveness of permanent residency opportunities (Czaika & Parsons, 2017).

In sum, **using principles derived from market mechanisms to shape policy tends to oversimplify processes that drive migration.** The country's language, international education, and residency prospects all have their part in shaping migrant decision-making. At the same time access to cheap labour can determine employer decision-making, leading to precarious situations for international workers. This shows the complexity of migratory processes that goes beyond economic logics of supply and demand.

Assumption 3: Migrants are more likely to come – and stay – in context of mild integration requirements and easy access to permanent residency.

As we saw in foregoing assumptions, one of the core goals pursued by policies in this area is to establish a favourable climate for essential workers. Instead of deterring and keeping out migrants, this policy area aims to attract and retain migrants with specific skills. The previous assumption focused on those policies aimed at attracting essential workers. However, policymakers become increasingly aware that migrants' post-entry rights and living conditions are crucial for retaining essential workers. This third assumption, then, pertains to post-entry policies – specifically the exemption from integration requirements and the access to permanent residency.

A commonly adopted policy to retain essential workers in the country of destination is exempting them from integration requirements and providing possibilities for permanent settlement (Hercog, 2008; Toma & Villares-Varela, 2019). The assumption is that essential workers are more likely to stay if the (bureaucratic) effort for staying is minimised. However, research shows that such policies can have the unintended outcome of making migrants leave and instigating circular forms of migration, thus not retaining them (Aksakal & Reslow, 2019; Toma & Villares-Varela, 2019). Aksakal & Reslow empirically demonstrate how the exemption from strict integration requirements for high-skilled migrants in fact leads to a lack of social connectedness with the host country, i.e. "the integration vacuum" (2019, p. 12). High-skilled migrants express feelings of loneliness and social isolation, they experience difficulties with bureaucratic procedures and institutions, and their partners experience difficulties in entering the labour market (Ibid.). **The "freedom" from integration requirements thus paradoxically increases the likelihood that essential workers leave the country.**

Another common policy to retain essential workers is to provide easier access to permanent settlement. However, Toma & Villares-Varela (2019) show how **access to post-entry rights has contradictory and divergent consequences, as it affects both workers' aspirations to stay in the country of destination and their capabilities to move on.** On the one hand, eased access to permanent residency facilitates long-term settlement and professional mobility within the country of destination, herewith making it more attractive to stay. Indeed, research has shown that restrictive access to permanent residency generally tends to make migrants move to countries with more generous post-entry rights. At the same time,

however, generous provisions of and access to permanent residency also facilitate circular forms of migration, allowing workers to leave and engage in transnational mobility, since it always leaves the door open to come back. Indeed, migrants generally tend to stay in one country until they have obtained permanent residency or citizenship before they decide to return to their home countries or move elsewhere. This can also lead to a counter-intuitive implication of restrictive post-entry rights, as migrants might decide to stay put until they access permanent residency, leading to a temporary phase of involuntary immobility (Toma & Villares-Varela, 2019).

In sum, integration policies and post-entry rights are mobilised in order to retain knowledge migrants. Counterintuitively, generous integration policies do not necessarily succeed in retaining high-skilled migrants, as they can lead to social isolation and lacking embeddedness in the country. Similarly, post-entry rights have divergent consequences, as they can both motivate settlement and facilitate onward migratory movements.

Assumption 4: Essential workers are more likely to integrate smoothly into destination countries compared to other migrant groups.

The previous assumption underpinning low integration requirements for essential workers is also built on another, more implicit assumption that essential workers integrate more easily and smoothly into the host society than other categories of migrants like asylum seekers and irregular migrants, who are subjected to stricter integration requirements. Interestingly, this assumption is not explicitly reported upon and studied in the literature, but rather emerges implicitly through the vast body of literature on asylum seekers' and irregular migrants' perceived inability to integrate.

The literature on why certain categories of migrants are assumed to integrate more smoothly than others revolves around processes of categorising migrants, racialisation, racism, anti-Muslim racism, and islamophobia (Bonjour, 2013; Bonjour & Duyvendak, 2017; Bracke, 2011; Mügge & Van der Haar, 2015). Discussions focus on the "desirability" of certain groups of migrants (along racialised lines), and the undesirability of other groups of migrants. Whereas essential workers are generally perceived to contribute to 'the national economy', asylum seekers and irregular migrants are often portrayed as security threats (see Receiving asylum seekers in regions of origin: Assumption 4). This fundamental distinction impacts **the (un)desirability of certain categories of migrants, which in turn shapes the integration requirements imposed upon them.** Whether a group is problematised and targeted as "in need of integration" depends on a variety of factors, most notably their cultural background (Mügge & Van der Haar, 2015, p.77). Arguably, however, someone's perceived contribution to the economy is another factor influencing whether someone is targeted for integration requirements or not.

In short, these assumptions about which categories of migrants are desirable in host countries shape policymakers' decisions about whom to exempt from integration requirements. As discussed in the previous assumptions, this maintains a system in which migrants struggle to connect to their host country, ultimately showing the difficulties of integration regardless of background or skill-level.

Conclusions

This report set out to review the state-of-the-art literature on policy effects and migrant behaviour across three migration policy areas: counter-smuggling policies; refugee reception in the region; and policies targeting essential workers. **Our goal was to identify, through a review of the literature, which policy assumptions stand at the centre of academic research on these three policy areas and what evidence there is that supports or contrasts these assumptions.** In doing so, we have made a distinction between two levels of assumptions: those of policymakers and those made in the literature itself. The main focus has been on the former, but this conclusion will also provide some insights on the latter.

The literature discussed in **Part 1** has shown how information campaigns often miss the mark by underestimating the information already available to (prospective) migrants, socio-cultural factors of religion, hope and honour, as well as the economic and security risks of staying at home. The assumption that smuggling is in the hands of organised crime networks and that dismantling these networks of human smugglers will decrease irregular arrivals clashes with a large body of literature showcasing that these counter-smuggling policies create the very conditions in which smugglers are needed. Existing approaches to counter migrant smuggling thus fail to address the underlying reasons for the market's existence: the structural lack of legal pathways for migration. Finally, information campaigns and tougher penalties on human smuggling systematically fail to recognise the (legal) difference between migrants and refugees and the complex – human and not only

transactional – relationship between migrants and smugglers. The relationship between the migrant and smuggler is far more complicated than is often assumed, as smuggled migrants often engage with smugglers in a voluntary manner.

The literature discussed in **Part 2** shows that the debate around asylum in the region and resettlement is dominated by donor countries' considerations of how to balance international humanitarian responsibility and national interest. In this balancing act, policy contradictions arise. First, the connection between development – including development in third countries – and migration is complex, possibly negative, and especially difficult to predict and control in relation to forced migration. Second, asylum reception in the region is promoted under the assumption that this would decrease hazardous journeys to Europe and increase migrant safety. However, the effectiveness and desirability of reception in the region from the perspective of migrants' safety are questionable. Third, while donor countries promote refugees' integration in third countries as a resource for their economies, the option of mobilising refugees as a labour force in their own countries is often perceived as undesirable. Fourth, policies on reception in the region are anchored in an expectation that integration in the region is easier for both refugees and host communities due to cultural and geographic proximity. However, this is not necessarily the case, often leaving refugees in a limbo. Lastly, resettlement promises a combination of protection for the most vulnerable and a decrease of spontaneous arrivals in donor countries. However, resettlement selection procedures often prefer refugees with high integration potential and skills, and have not proven to decrease spontaneous arrivals. In light of these contradictions, one might ask if resettlement and the promotion of asylum in the region can be seen as a way of paying off responsibility, selecting rather than protecting refugees.

The literature on essential worker policies discussed in **Part 3** differed from that in the other parts in two notable ways: First, it focuses on attracting, rather than deterring migrants. Second, it is a much less politicised area, which leads to an academic literature that is much less focussed on debunking policymakers' assumptions and therefore yields more nuanced insights about the advantages and downsides of specific policy tools. The literature shows that the effectiveness of policy systems is highly context- and country-dependent, emphasising the need for case by case examination in both attraction and retention of these migrants. First, whether policy can shape essential workers' migratory decision making is up for debate. Tax and residency policies have shown to shape decision making to some extent, but at the same time, factors such as quality of life, career prospects, language and culture play a key role in the choice for a destination and are beyond the realm of immigration policies. Second, the attraction of migrants is left to the market by using basic economic assumptions of supply and demand. While demand- and employer-driven systems promise a way to fill the gaps in the labour market and attract skills otherwise unattainable for employees, evidence shows that it can instead leave shortage labour migrants in insecure positions. Third, research insights on how integration policy and post-entry rights shape decision-making of essential workers also yield contradictory outcomes, as the same policies can both inspire permanent settlement and circular migration. Lastly, this policy area seems to be shaped by the assumption of easier integration of high-skilled migrants in contrast to other groups of migrants.

Beyond these policy area-specific insights, the report yields **three main cross-cutting findings.** First, reflecting on the nature of the literature reviewed in this report, we have found that **different methodological approaches dominated studies across the three policy areas.** Research on counter-smuggling policies and reception in the region was dominated by qualitative and ethnographic methods, while quantitative, economic approaches were used to research and support policy in the area of essential workers. This is interesting insofar as it shapes how different groups of migrants are studied, what is considered 'relevant data' and the 'right way' of studying a phenomenon.

Second, **across all three policy areas, the literature evidences the dehumanisation of migrants.** However, the way in which this dehumanisation plays out differs between asylum seekers and irregular migrants on the one hand, who are portrayed as irrational or uninformed actors that constitute a burden to the host society that should be minimised, and essential workers on the other, who are reduced to their calculated migratory decision and the benefit they bring to the destination country. Indeed, irregular migrants and asylum seekers are dehumanised in the clearest sense of the word. They are assumed to have limited knowledge, in general and about the journey they are (potentially) undertaking; they are supposed to be resettled and moved around, disregarding their life aspirations beyond their wish to migrate; and they are reduced to a legal framework, especially upon entering Europe. The neglect of considerations such as hope and aspirations is an example of this type of dehumanisation. In the case of essential workers, migrants are dehumanised by a focus on their economic contributions to the receiving countries and their supposed rational behaviour. This dehumanisation is furthermore exemplified by the use of economic language of supply and demand in the literature on this policy area, treating migrants not as humans with agency and aspirations but as workers to be moved in/out of the country depending on economic needs.

Third, an opportunity to enjoy **mutual benefits on both ends of migration is lost due to artificial differentiation in types of migrants.** As discussed in Part 3, many of the donor countries are aiming to attract essential workers in response to their diminishing workforce, and as discussed in Part 2 the potential of refugees as an addition to the economy is seen when it comes to asylum reception in third countries. The topics discussed in Part 2 and Part 3 are rarely tied together. While great attention is paid to the skill-level and economic benefits of essential workers, the skill-level of asylum seekers and irregular migrants is either not considered or simply presumed to be low. Through this artificial differentiation and dehumanisation, countries with a demand for a workforce actively engage in both the attraction and the discouragement of migrants. This is also reflected in the use of language throughout the literature. While the terms irregular migrant, refugee, asylum seeker and forced migrant all hold different social and legal statuses and rights, they are used interchangeably when discussing dynamics in regions of origin, while there is terminological differentiation in articles about Europe. For example, 'refugees' as a resource for the economy in third countries turn into 'asylum seekers' or even 'irregular migrants' with a limited legal position in Europe.

Ultimately, what we found striking is that across the three policy areas, there seemed to be quite **different dynamics of academic knowledge production at play, depending at least in part on the politicisation of the migrant group at stake**: While there seemed to be an academic consensus around the main policy effects in the areas of smuggling and asylum reception, and a common understanding on what the main (erroneous) policy assumptions are, there was less agreement within the literature around essential workers on what policy measures and what core assumptions drive policymaking in this area. Within PACES, it is exactly these diverse constellations between policy and academia that we are going to investigate in more detail, which will hopefully contribute to a better understanding of knowledge production and knowledge use within the area of migration.

Bibliography

Adamson, F.B., Greenhill, K.M. (2023). Deal-making, diplomacy and transactional forced migration. International Affairs, 99(2), 707–725.

Adamson, F.B., Tsourapas, G. (2019). Migration Diplomacy in World Politics. International Studies Perspectives,20(2), 113–128.

Ahad, A., Le Coz, C., & Beirens, H. (2020). Using evidence to improve refugee resettlement: A monitoring and evaluation road map. Migration Policy Institute Europe.

Aksakal, M. & Reslow, N. (2019). (Un)intended Consequences in High-Skilled Migrants. Integration and Inequalities: A comparison of Policy in Germany and the Netherlands, Bielefeld: COMCAD (Working Papers - Center on Migration, Citizenship and Development; 166)

Alpes, J., & Sørensen, N. (2015). Migration risk campaigns are based on wrong assumptions. DIIS Policy Brief May 2015. Copenhagen: Danish Institute for International Studies.

Andersson, R. (2016). Europe's failed 'fight' against irregular migration: ethnographic notes on a counterproductive industry. Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, 42(7), 1055-1075.

Angeloni, S., & Spano, F. M. (2018). Asylum seekers in Europe: Issues and solutions. Journal of International Migration and Integration, 19, 473–495.

Baizán, P., Beauchemin, C., & González-Ferrer, A. (2014). An origin and destination perspective on family reunification: The case of Senegalese couples. European Journal of Population, 30(1), 65-87.

Betts, A. (2004). The international relations of the" new" extraterritorial approaches to refugee protection: Explaining the policy initiatives of the UK government and UNHCR. Refuge, 22, 58.

Betts, A., & Milner, J. (2007). The externalisation of EU asylum policy: The position of African states. Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS)

Bialasiewicz, L. (2012). Off-shoring and Out-sourcing the Borders of EUrope: Libya and EU Border Work in the Mediterranean. Geopolitics, 17(4), 843-866.

Bonjour, S. (2013). "Governing Diversity: Dutch Political Parties' Preferences on the Role of the State in Civic Integration Policies." Citizenship Studies 17 (6–7): 837–851.

Bonjour, S. & Duyvendak, J.W. (2017). The "migrant with poor prospects": racialized intersections of class and culture in Dutch civic integration debates. Ethnic & Racial studies: 1-19.

Boswell C. (2003). The 'external dimension' of EU immigration and asylum policy. International affairs, 79(3):619-638.

Bracke, S. (2011). Subjects of debate: Secular and sexual exceptionalism, and Muslim women in the Netherlands. Feminist Review, 98(1), 28–46.

Brekke, J.-P., Paasche, E., Espegren, A., & Sandvik, K. B. (2021). Selection Criteria in Refugee Resettlement. Balancing vulnerability and future integration in eight resettlement countries. Rapport–Institutt for Samfunnsforskning.

Browne, E. (2015). Impact of communication campaigns to deter irregular migration (GSDRC Helpdesk Research Report 1248). Birmingham, UK: GSDRC, University of Birmingham.

Campana, P. (2020). Human smuggling: Structure and mechanisms. Crime and Justice, 49(1), 471-519.

Campion, E. D. (2018). The career adaptive refugee: Exploring the structural and personal barriers to refugee resettlement. Journal of Vocational Behavior 105, 6–16.

Carling, J. & Hernandez Carretero, M. (2012). Beyond 'kamikaze migrants': Risk taking in West African boat migration to Europe. Human Organization 71(4): 407–416.

Carr, H. (2014). Returning 'home': experiences of reintegration for asylum seekers and refugees. The British Journal of Social Work, 140-156.

Carrera, S., Allsopp, J., & Vosyliūtė, L. (2018). Policing the mobility society: the effects of EU anti-migrant smuggling policies on humanitarianism. International journal of migration and border studies, 4(3), 236-276.

Cerna, L. (2014). Attracting high-skilled immigrants: Policies in comparative perspective. International Migration, 52(3), 69–84.

Cerna, L., & Czaika, M. (2016). European policies to attract talent: The crisis and highly skilled migration policy changes. In High-skill migration and recession: Gendered perspectives (pp. 22–43). Springer.

Cham, O. N., & Trauner, F. (2023). Migration information campaigns: How to analyse their impact? International Migration, 1-11.

Clemens, M. A., & Postel, H. M. (2018). Deterring emigration with foreign aid: An overview of evidence from low-income countries. Population and Development Review, 44(4), 667.

Collyer, M. (2016). Geopolitics as a migration governance strategy: European Union bilateral relations with Southern Mediterranean countries. Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, 42(4), 606–624.

Czaika, M., & Parsons, C. R. (2017). The gravity of high-skilled migration policies. Demography, 54(2), 603–630.

De Boer, T., & Zieck, M. (2020). The legal abyss of discretion in the resettlement of refugees: Cherry-picking and the lack of due process in the EU. International Journal of Refugee Law, 32(1), 54–85.

De Haas, H. (2007). Turning the tide? Why development will not stop migration. Development and Change, 38(5), 819–841.

De Haas, H. (2013). Smuggling is a reaction to border controls, not the cause of migration. Retrieved on https://heindehaas.blogspot.com/2013/10/smuggling-is-reaction-to-border.html?m=1

De Haas, H. (2023). How Migration Really Works: The Facts about the Most Divisive Issue in Politics. New York: Basic Books.

de Vries, K. (2007). An Assessment of Protection in Regions of Origin in Relation to European Asylum Law. Eur. J. Migration & L., 9, 83.

Doomernik, J. M. J., Koslowski, R. and Thränhardt, D. (2009) The battle for the brains. Why immigration policy is not enough to attract the highly skilled. [Brussels Forum Paper Series]. Washington D.C.: The German Marshall Fund of the United States.

Doran, K., Gelber, A., & Isen, A. (2014). The Effect of High-Skilled Immigration on Patenting and Employment: Evidence from H-1B Visa Lotteries. National Bureau of Economic Research.

Emilsson, H. (2016). Recruitment to occupations with a surplus of workers: The unexpected outcomes of Swedish Demand-Driven Labour Migration Policy. International Migration, 54(2), 5–17.

Facchini, G., & Lodigiani, E. (2014). Attracting skilled immigrants: An overview of recent policy developments in advanced countries. National Institute Economic Review, 229, R3–R21.

Fallone, A. (2021). Social Capital and Transnational Human Smuggling: What is the Impact of Counter-Smuggling Policies? [Analytical Report]. Vienna: ICMPD.

Fine, S. (2019). False moves: Migration and development aid. Policy Brief, ECFR, Brussels

Fisher, B. L. (2018). Doors to safety: Exit west, refugee resettlement, and the right to asylum. Mich. L. Rev., 117, 1119.

Gamso, J., & Yuldashev, F. (2018). Targeted foreign aid and international migration: Is development-promotion an effective immigration policy? International Studies Quarterly, 62(4), 809–820.

Gazzotti, L., Mouthaan, M., Natter, K. (2023) Embracing complexity in 'Southern' migration governance. Territory, Politics and Governance, 11(4), 625-637.

Gerschutz-Bell, J. M. (2022). Root Causes of Migration, Development, and US Aid to Northern Triangle States. Journal on Migration and Human Security, 10(3), 173–189.

Hagen-Zanker, J. & Mallett, R. (2016). Journeys to Europe: The role of policy in migrant decision-making. [ODI insights]. London: Overseas Development Institute.

Hansen, A. (2019). Involuntary migration and resettlement: The problems and responses of dislocated people. Routledge.

Hansen, F., & Pettersson, J. (2022). Contradictory migration management? Differentiated security approaches to visa overstay and irregular border crossings in the European Union. European Security, 31(1), 117-134.

Hansen, R. (1990). Refugee self-settlement versus settlement on government schemes: The long-term consequences for security, integration and economic development of Angolan refugees (1966-1989) in Zambia. Discussion Paper-United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, 17.

Hashimoto, N. (2018). Refugee Resettlement as an Alternative to Asylum. Refugee Survey Quarterly, 37(2), 162–186.

Hathaway, J. C. (2019). Assigning Protection: Can Refugee Rights and State Preferences be Reconciled?

Hatton, T. J. (2017). Refugees and asylum seekers, the crisis in Europe and the future of policy. Economic Policy, 32(91), 447–496.

Heller, C. (2014). Perception management–Deterring potential migrants through information campaigns. Global Media and Communication, 10(3), 303-318.

Hercog, M. (2008) The Role of the State in Attracting Highly-skilled Migrants: The Case of the Netherlands. EIPAScope, 2008 (3). pp. 1-6.

Hernández-Carretero, María (2017) Hope and Uncertainty in Senegalese Migration to Spain: Taking Chances on Emigration but not Upon Return. In N. Kleist & D. Thorsen (eds.) Hope and Uncertainty in Contemporary African Migration (113–133). Abingdon: Routledge.

Jacobsen, K. (2002). Can refugees benefit the state? Refugee resources and African statebuilding. The Journal of Modern

African Studies, 40(4), 577–596.
Jacobsen, K., & Landau, L. (2001). New Issues in Refugee Research. The Forgotten Solution: Local Integration; UNHCR: Nairobi, Kenya.
Jansen, B. J. (2008). Between vulnerability and assertiveness: Negotiating resettlement in Kakuma refugee camp, Kenya. African Affairs, 107(429), 569–587.
Kleist, N. (2017). Introduction: Studying Hope and Uncertainty in African Migration. In N. Kleist & D. Thorsen (eds.) Hope and Uncertainty in Contemporary African Migration (1-20). Abingdon: Routledge.
Kolbe, M. (2021). When politics trumps economics: Contrasting high-skilled immigration policymaking in Germany and Austria. International Migration Review, 55(1), 31–57.
Kouni, M. (2018). Impact of refugee population on development: A comparative analysis for the case of host economies. Review of Economic Perspectives, 18(1), 77.
Long, K. (2010). Home alone? A review of the relationship between repatriation, mobility and durable solutions for refugees. UNCHR/PDES Evaluation Report, PDES/2010/02.
Majidi, N. (2023). Deterring Migration in Times of Crises: The Ethics of Behavioral Change in Migration Information Campaigns. American Behavioral Scientist, 00(0), 1-22.
Marino, R., Schapendonk, J., & Lietaert, I. (2023). The moral economy of voice within IOM's awareness-raising industry: Gambian returnees and Migrants as Messengers. Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, 1-16.
Martin, D. A. (2004). A New Era for US Refugee Resettlement. Colum. Hum. Rts. L. Rev., 36, 299.
Massey, D. S., Pren, K. A., & Durand, J. (2016). Why border enforcement backfired. American journal of sociology, 121(5), 1557-1600.
Maystadt, J. F. (2012). Poverty reduction in a refugee-hosting economy. A natural experiment. International Association of Agricultural Economists (IAAE)
McAdam, M. (2023). To what extent and how should individuals and communities other than migrants be targeted by awareness raising campaigns as an effective strand of EU migrant smuggling prevention policy? [PROGRESS Policy Brief]. London: Chatham House.
Mügge, L., & Van der Haar, M. (2016). Who is an immigrant and who requires integration? Categorizing in European policies. In B. Garcés-Mascareñas, R. Penninx (eds.) Integration processes and policies in Europe: contexts, levels and actors, 77-90.
Musarò, P. (2019). Aware Migrants: The role of information campaigns in the management of migration. European Journal of Communication, 34(6), 629-640.
Natter, K. (2024). Researching the politics of knowledge in migration policy [PACES Working Paper 2].
Nieuwenhuys, C., & Pécoud, A. (2007). Human trafficking, information campaigns, and strategies of migration control. American Behavioral Scientist, 50(12), 1674-1695.
Nyberg–Sørensen, N., Hear, N. V., & Engberg–Pedersen, P. (2002). The migration–development nexus evidence and policy options state–of–the–art overview. International Migration, 40(5), 3–47.
Oeppen, C. (2016). 'Leaving Afghanistan! Are you sure?'European efforts to deter potential migrants through information campaigns. Human Geography, 9(2), 57-68.
Ozcurumez, S., & Yetkin Aker, D. (2016). What Moves the Highly Skilled and Why? Comparing Turkish Nationals in Canada and Germany. International Migration, 54(3), 61–72.
Papademetriou, D. G., & Hooper, K. (2019). Competing approaches to selecting economic immigrants: Points-based vs. Demand-driven systems. Migration Policy Institute.
Parsons, R. (2013). Assessing the economic contribution of refugees in Australia. Brisbane: Multicultural Development Association
Parsons, C. R., Rojon, S., Rose, L., & Samanani, F. (2020). High skilled migration through the lens of policy. Migration Studies, 8(3), 279–306.
Pearlman, W. (2021). Reluctant Reception: Refugees, Migration and Governance in the Middle East and North Africa. By Kelsey P. Norman. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2020. 259p. Perspectives on Politics, 19(4), 1351–1352.
Peisker, V. C., & Tilbury, F. (2003). "Active" and "passive" resettlement: The influence of support services and refugees' own resources on resettlement style. International Migration, 41(5), 61–91.
Ruhs, M. (2019). Can Labor Immigration Work for Refugees? Current History, 118(804), 22–28. JSTOR.
Sanchez-Montijano, E., Kaya, A., & Sökmen, M. J. (2018). Highly Skilled Migration between the EU and Turkey: Drivers and Scenarios. FEUTURE Online Paper, 21.

Scalettaris, G., & Gubert, F. (2019). Return schemes from European countries: assessing the challenges. International Migration, 57(4), 91-104.

Schans, D. & Optekamp, C. (2016). Raising awareness, changing behavior? Combatting irregular migration through information campaigns. Den Haag: WODC.

Schuster, L. (2005). The realities of a new asylum paradigm. Oxford, UK: University of Oxford, Centre on Migration, Policy and Society (COMPAS)

Skeldon, R. (2018). High-skilled migration and the limits of migration policies. High-skilled migration: Drivers and policies, 48-64.

Steputat, F. (2004). Refugees, security and development: Current experience and strategies of protection and assistance in the 'region of origin' (Issue 2004: 11). DIIS Working paper.

Timm, L., Giuliodori, M., & Muller, P. (2022). Tax incentives for high skilled migrants: evidence from a preferential tax scheme in the Netherlands. Discussion Paper Series: IZA.

Tjaden, J., Morgenstern, S., & Laczko, F. (2018). Evaluating the impact of information campaigns in the field of migration. Central Mediterranean route thematic report series.

Toma, S., & Villares-Varela, M. (2019). The role of migration policies in the attraction and retention of international talent: The case of Indian researchers. Sociology, 53(1), 52-68.

Triandafyllidou, A. (2018). Migrant smuggling: Novel insights and implications for migration control policies. The ANNALS of the American academy of political and social science, 676(1), 212-221.

Van Bemmel, S. (2020). The perception of risk among unauthorized migrants in Ghana. Journal of Risk Research, 23(1), 47-61.

Van Dessel, J. (2021) Externalization through 'awareness-raising': the border spectacle of EU migration information campaigns in Niger. Territory, Politics, Governance, 1–21.

Van Liempt, I. & Sersli, S. (2012). State Responses and Migrant Experiences with Human Smuggling: A Reality Check. Antipode 45(4), 1029-1046.

van Selm, J. (2004). The Strategic Use of Resettlement. Refuge: Canada's Journal on Refugees, 22(1), 39–48. JSTOR.

Zimmermann, S. E. (2009). Irregular secondary movements to Europe: Seeking asylum beyond refuge. Journal of Refugee Studies, 22(1), 74–96.