Article

# Nouns as essential migration signifiers for improving migrant mental health through social services supporting problem-focused or emotion-focused coping

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**Abstract:** Migrate as a verb represents a process where providing social services to migrants reduces their instability and discomfort with providers inclined to pity or fear migrants. Consequently, migrants learn to form negative views of themselves, decreasing their mental health. Considering migrate as a verb neglects the noun to whom or to which the migrant is heading—a person, place, thing, event, or idea. Viewing migration as noun-dependent, the migrant is potentially identifiable as self-directing their migration and seeking aid. This study examines examples of the five types of nouns migrants may conceptualize to guide their migration in a narrative review of Google Scholar search results of "[noun-type] to which [whom] migrants head in their migration" for each noun type regarding the four relevant highest returned post-2020 reports. Examining migrant mental health considers a 2023 systematic review regarding place. The purpose is to investigate the social services applicable to migrants if ultimately self-directing (or not) regarding coping theory, contrasting problem-focused with emotion-focused coping. Viewing such migration nouns as essential migration signifiers encourages migrants' favorable identification. In recognizing the intended self-direction of the migrant, their mental health is improved and is supportable through relevant and appropriately available social services.

**Keywords:** migrate; social services; migrants; mental health; nouns; self-direction; narrative review; coping

## 1. Introduction

Migration is defined as the change of residence from one geographic location to another (Andresen et al., 2012, p. 11). A 2021 publication on migration notes that migration studies currently are at an impasse—and have been so for several decades—remaining surprisingly under-theorized as a field of social inquiry (De Haas, 2021). This same publication goes on to state that although there has been significant empirical research on migration, systematic theorizing on migration has been lacking, focusing on the lives, identities, and experiences of migrants. The theories supporting this empirical research are grounded in mobility (De Sherbinin et al., 2022), exchange economics (Farashah and Blomquist, 2022), and various migration processes (Schapendonk et al., 2020). As representations of functionalist and historical-structural theories that see society as a system comparable to a living organism (De Haas, 2021), migration becomes a consequence and an intrinsic part of broader social change (O'Reilly, 2022). Although the author of this 2021 publication presents a new systematic theory regarding migration focused on a structure related to positive and negative liberty and agency concerning perceived aspirations and capabilities through

geographical opportunities, the crux of this theory remains mobility—the movement from one place to another under uncertainty.

The constant with the previous migration research considered at an impasse is that all view migration as a verb. Verbs are words that identify actions, indicating that the sentence subject acts or, conversely, that an action is being performed on the subject (King, 1967). As a verb, the semantic focus of "migrate" is the movement itself from one geographic location, through a transition period, to another geographic position. In this respect, there is little difference between older theories regarding migration and the one newly proposed in 2021. However, there need not be an equation of migration with being a verb. The conceptualization of migration can be as a noun where those who migrate do so based on a personally identified value.

Nouns name stable properties corresponding to cognitively and culturally significant entity categories (Acquaviva, 2024). They are investigable in several ways, including their division into grammatical categories (Craig, 1986) and using a cognitive-functional approach (Heyvaert, 2003). These methods are relevant to linguists and cognitive scientists but do not offer insight into studying nouns in representing values. In this regard, examining the semantic properties of nouns holds promise, as these properties involve the meanings of the nouns (Ye, 2017). Furthermore, the relevance of the semantic properties of nouns to morphology is a current area of research in linguistics (Acquaviva, 2024), characterizing the semantic properties of nouns as worthy of academic consideration. The semantic division is as follows: common nouns represent sensible collections—persons, places, or things (Chatzikyriakidis and Luo, 2017), while abstract nouns are vague and lack a spatio-temporal identity—events and ideas (Husić, 2020).

The investigation of nouns has been regarding Langacker's cognitive grammar, which recognizes objects as conceptually autonomous and interactions as conceptually dependent—placing the priority of nouns over verbs (Langacker, 1999, p. 14). More specifically, nouns in cognitive grammar designate a set of interconnected entities in some domain (Langacker, 1999, p. 15). Cognitive is an approach to grammar that contrasts with generative—arising in the 1970s in reaction to formal approaches to language—holding that cognition underlies the mental processes responsible for language comprehension and production (Sellami-Sellami, 2022). It is a theory following Chomsky's account and description of university grammar (Chomsky, 2015). Cognitive and generative theories of grammar differ in assumptions, objectives, and methodologies. In setting the goals of grammatical theory, they view the relationship between language, thought, and the world from different perspectives, seeking to establish, describe, or explain contrasting aspects (Sellami-Sellami, 2022). Cognitive Grammar views meaning as residing in conceptualization (Giovanelli, 2022). Grammatical meaning creates conceptual value (Langacker, 2000). From this perspective, the rational role of an innate theory of mind relates the significance of the mind in migration beyond empirical responses to migrants being driven (Sellami-Sellami, 2022).

There is recognition that migration theories depend on driver theories leading to the initiation and perpetuation of migration flows (Schewel, 2020). From the perspective of those who study the drivers of migration, the relevant questions are apparent. What are the spatio-temporal factors that drive migration? How do they

influence (trigger or hinder) migration decision-making? Why do these drivers affect some people more than others to realize migration (Czaika and Reinprecht, 2022)? In a 2022 article reviewing and analyzing recent trends in international migration, the authors argue there are various reasons for people to migrate—all are from the perspective of an unacceptable condition in the home country, driving the migrant to the possibility of a more acceptable life in another (Kwilinski et al., 2022). Yet, rather than researchers realizing this view of migration depends on conceptualizing migration as a verb, the comparison in the aspirations-capabilities framework has been only between mobility and immobility (De Haas, 2021). As such, in these theories, there has been no identification of the problem in the impasse of migration theory as the inability to see the relevance of nouns as essential migration signifiers, which people internally decide to achieve based on what they value rather than being driven by external forces.

Push-pull theories of migration (Urbański, 2022) might appear to be noun-related regarding the attraction to the new location (the pull). However, pull factors for these theories (such as better healthcare facilities, religious tolerance, and freedom from persecution) are forces directing the migrant, rather than the migrant heading to a new location because of self-directed choice. In this regard, migration remains verb-dependent in such theories—labeled by their proponents as "driver theories" (Van Hear et al., 2018), clarifying their focus on the verb.

Another theory of migration, first introduced in 1992 (Lauria-Perricelli, 1992), is transnationalism. Content analysis of the 50 most cited articles on this theory published in 2022 (Tedeschi et al., 2022) concludes that, in transnationalism, it is practices (representing verbs) that modify a migrant's sense of belonging to the nouns places, citizenship, nationality, aspirations, imagination, and decisions in everyday life. It is these practices that influence migrant identity. The content noted in this study of the academic literature on migration regarding transnationalism is associated with globalization, cosmopolitanism, multiculturalism, diaspora, post-migration studies, and internationalism. Though there is no clear definition of transnationalism, the interest is the inner process of migrant character development. As such, although transnationalism aims towards nouns associated with migration, the focus, as with other migration theories, is the causal verb processes.

The conclusion that nouns can be what self-directed migrants migrate towards corresponds with the agent theory of nouns that recognizes noun meaning is not necessarily imported from verbs but can develop directly in the semantic structure of nouns (Huyghe and Wauquier, 2020). In this regard, agent nouns can be functional, occasional, or behavioral and depend on the occupational status, particular event, and tendency to act in a certain way of the migrant (Huyghe and Wauquier, 2020).

Social services provided to migrants connect with vulnerability, occupying a central role in migration theory (Gilodi et al., 2024). Viewing migration as a verb, what makes migrants vulnerable is the change they undergo in migrating, the uncertainty it creates, and the dependence on social services to help the migrant overcome this change (Siddiqui et al., 2021). As such, all migrants have identical basic needs, including food, water, shelter, and sanitation (Abbas et al., 2018). These are the necessities that are the concentration of social services when viewing migrants as vulnerable yet healthy, where health is the ability to adaptively self-manage regarding

social, physical, and emotional challenges (De Vries et al., 2021). When ill health is also present, the necessities of migrants expand, yet migrants are less likely to utilize the health services available (Potocky and Naseh, 2020, p. 33). In this regard, given that the services offered are those necessary for the continuation of life—ones taken for granted by residents of the place to which people migrate—migrants are pitied for their situation by residents, and donations to their cause are as a result of this pity (Lantos et al., 2020). Simultaneously, migrants are not trusted (Borrelli, 2022) to be satisfied with handouts and are viewed as likely to resort to anti-social activity (Parmar, 2020) to retain necessities. Specific social, economic, and political hierarchies and policies are recognized to produce and pattern poor health in migrants (Carruth et al., 2021). These outcomes are a result of conceptualizing migration as a verb.

There are current limitations to the research on migrant mental health as the focus is trauma theory and acculturation theory. Trauma theory has as its emphasis pre-existing traumatic conditions (Li and Anderson, 2016), interpersonal violence among migrants (Tummala-Narra, 2014), and the negative effects of systemic oppression creating the need for migration (Chavez-Dueñas et al., 2019). What it does not consider is the role of the perception of social service providers considering migrants as pitiful or to be feared as motivating poor mental health in migrants. In contrast, acculturation theory acknowledges that social systems influence these processes. However, most studies focus on individual behaviors, psychological mechanisms, or interpersonal/intergroup processes in isolation from social conditions (Szabó, 2022). A recent review of three acculturation theories—statistical positivism, psychoanalysis, and the theory of sociocultural models—finds that acculturation mechanisms lack advancement, producing a limited ability to help migrants (Chirkov, 2024). The author of this review offers the theory of sociocultural models to improve upon these quantitative and qualitative models by highlighting the mechanisms that generate the observable manifestations of acculturation (stress, frustration, hope, engagement, successes and failures, and many others) experienced by migrants. However, this new theory depends on investigating the "processes, forces, and powers" that guide migrations. As such, this theory remains directed to considering "migrate" as a verb.

In considering the most recent evidence concerning the mental health of migrants, the view is unanimous that there is a high prevalence of mental health disorders compared with native counterparts, mainly attributable to depression, anxiety, or post-traumatic stress disorder (Duveau et al., 2023; Martin and Sashidharan, 2023; Peñuela-O'Brien et al., 2023), with much that goes undiagnosed (Pouraghajan et al., 2023). These results are reliable, although there remains a lack of clarity over who is a migrant (Tsegay, 2023). Yet, studies devoted to the mental health of migrants focus on the process of migration, beginning with pre-migration (Andisha and Lueger-Schuster, 2024; Lange et al., 2024), the migration itself (Carroll et al., 2023; Ojurongbe, 2023), and post-migration (Andisha and Lueger-Schuster, 2024; Gottvall et al., 2023; Nowak et al., 2023). As such, migrate is considered a verb. What is uninvestigated is the mental health of migrants with the examination of migration as a noun. Of the five types of nouns, only one report appraises the mental health of migrants—a 2023 scoping review of the effect of place on their mental health (Ermansons et al., 2023). Regarding the search conducted for this 2023 scoping review, nine returns of the 34

studies published since 2020 identify migration to a place regarding the mental health of migrants, making these results relevant to considering the mental health of migrants.

Regarding migration as a noun, this different perspective necessitates rethinking the social services required for migrants. The migrant directed by a personally valued noun is potentially identifiable as a self-directed instigator in their journey, where self-directed means they display confidence, commitment, readiness, and understanding and are not demoralized in monitoring the situation (De Vries et al., 2021). In this case, the social services they require are specific to the type of noun that has defined their reason for migration. In this way, migrants are neither pitiful nor a cause of suspicion because their needs are not primarily basic. Instead, their needs are related to achieving their goal of migration concerning the type of noun that is the focus of their self-direction. As such, required social services by those migrating to a person will differ from those needed by migrants to a place, a thing, an event, or an idea—and all of them will vary from the basic needs thought relevant for all migrants when migration is a verb. This change in perspective depends on considering the role of migrant values (Dennison, 2020), as their values define these migration-directing nouns.

This study examines the different types of nouns people migrate towards based on their values. The hypothesis is that it is meaningful to consider "migrate" regarding nouns rather than as a verb and that doing so provides ways to improve the mental health of migrants through a change in the type of social services offered to them. This undertaking is novel because research regarding nouns observes that although linguists widely hold nouns and verbs as the two major word classes of all human languages, there is little attention to the semantics of nouns in contrast to verbs (Ye, 2017). This examination will test if considering migration as a noun necessarily results in the self-direction of migrants, although it may be their initial intention. By investigating examples of the categories of nouns that migrants value and considering, in particular, how place affects their mental health, the purpose is to realize the type of social services that this way of examining migration demands. Doing so is intended to change the narrative regarding migrants from those to be pitied and feared (resulting from a focus on migration as a verb) to portrayals of self-directed individuals with a purpose in their migration based on the nouns they value. This type of portrayal is a new narrative that requires social services outside the basic needs standardized as essential for all migrants. The conclusion is that by reconceptualizing migration from a verb to a noun and providing appropriate social services according to those nouns, there is an enhanced ability of migrants to adjust to their new surroundings, resulting in less likelihood that their health will suffer from the migration and that society will view their migration negatively.

Based on the following analysis, the finding is that not all nouns identified with migration result in self-direction and that mental health is dependent on the place to which the migrant migrates. The requirement then is for social services based on different types of coping, where coping is an action-oriented and intra-psychic effort to help the individual manage environmental and internal demands and conflicts that result from stress that taxes or exceeds personal resources (Bhagat et al., 2020). The Discussion section considers relevant social services for migrants through one coping theory (Lazarus, 1998)—those related to self-directed migrants depend on problem-focused coping. In contrast, migrants who may start as self-directed concerning their

values, as represented by nouns, but become other-directed through migration require social services related to emotion-focused coping. Both forms of coping are identified as maintaining mental health in migrants, differing from the decreased mental health of migrants in appraising migration as a verb.

## 2. Materials and methods

Two methods will be employed. The first is a narrative review regarding identifying examples of the five types of nouns. The second regards the analysis of the mental health of migrants from an investigation of a table found in (Ermansons et al., 2023).

### 2.1. Narrative review

The method is to identify the first four relevant returned examples of publications regarding the semantic property of noun categories concerning migrants through a narrative review. A narrative review investigates the development of a principle or concept, following the narrative thread—consolidating previous work—by providing a summation while highlighting omissions or gaps and achieving new insights from identifying previously unknown or nonobvious connections, thus developing original conceptions (Chaney, 2021). As such, the purpose is not to conduct either a scoping review or a systematic review and meta-analysis following Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines. Scoping reviews investigate the full extent of publications on a topic (Munn et al., 2022). A scoping review is unnecessary and undesirable for identifying the first returned publications to test a hypothesis. Systematic reviews answer narrow clinical questions in the PICO (population, intervention, comparison, and outcome) format (Smith and Duncan, 2022). As the intent of this examination is to collate examples of the various ways of reconsidering migration as a noun in contrast to a verb, the aim is not to offer a direct guide for clinical decision-making, the delivery of care, or migrant policy development on a narrow question (Munn et al., 2018); a systematic review and meta-analysis in testing the hypothesis is inappropriate. Selection bias is a relevant consideration for a systematic review and meta-analysis (Lu et al., 2022). As a narrative review of the four first-returned, relevant publications to act as examples, selection bias is not a concern.

Narrative reviews are often framed as non-systematic, implying that there is a hierarchy of evidence placing narrative reviews below other review forms (Greenhalgh et al., 2018). However, narrative reviews concentrate on a broad question with a yet-to-be-known boundary, while systematic reviews focus on a narrow question in a specific context (Sukhera, 2022). Unlike a PRISMA-guided systematic review, a narrative review can include a wide variety of studies and provide an overall summary, such that their flexibility, rigor, and practicality make them highly useful to medical educators and researchers (Sukhera, 2022). Other advantages of narrative reviews include the ability of the results to present controversies, highlight little-researched areas, present various implications for clinical practice and research, and promote speculation on new treatments and interventions (Agarwal et al., 2023).

Locating the relevant publications returned in priority requires searching with a crawler-based search engine that returns the greatest number of results in order from

a substantial database. Crawlers traverse webpages while maintaining the log of visits to all web links (Deshmukh and Vishwakarma, 2021). Lacking support for Boolean search functionality, Google Scholar is deemed a supplementary database (Gusenbauer and Haddaway, 2020). Yet, it is recognized as the most comprehensive database (Martín-Martín et al., 2018) and is most used by scholars (Gusenbauer, 2019). Furthermore, its robust keyword relevancy and continuous improvement in its search algorithm maintain its position as the most popular search engine (Deshmukh and Vishwakarma, 2021). For these reasons, Google Scholar is selected as the search engine to return the first four publications on each type of noun related to migrants. As this search is to produce examples for a narrative review rather than identify all relevant articles for a PRISMA-style review, there is no need to search another database. The most pertinent and searched reports are those returned first by Google Scholar concerning a topic as a crawler-based search engine (Falagas et al., 2008; Gusenbauer, 2019); however, the same returns may not be reproducible with different searches (Gusenbauer and Haddaway, 2020). As such, noting the date of each Google Scholar search is imperative for referencing every search (Gusenbauer and Haddaway, 2020).

A division into five types of nouns, three common ones—persons, places, and things—and two abstract ones—events and ideas (Acquaviva, 2024), categorizes the materials of this semantic analysis of nouns relevant to migrants. For each, a limited review of Google Scholar identifies those post-2020 publications regarding the following statement "[noun-type] to which [whom] migrants head in their migration", necessitating five different searches. Excluded are those articles that do not include the noun type, migration, or do not relate to the migration as directed to the noun type. Also excluded are chapters in books published before 2020 but republished after that date. In deciding to use the first four relevant references returned, this is neither a systematic review (Parums, 2021) nor a scoping review (Peters et al., 2020). The articles selected meet the inclusion and exclusion criteria and appear first in the Google Scholar search. As Google Scholar is a crawler-based search engine (Falagas et al., 2008; Gusenbauer, 2019), the results are the most relevant and the most searched concerning the topic. However, their selection is in each case because of their relevancy and first appearance. There was no exclusion of relevant returns.

The limited review provides a narrative regarding the most cited examples of each type of noun that return in the various Google Scholar searches. In emphasizing the most highly returned work regarding each noun, this process follows the narrative review method (Nguena Nguefack et al., 2020) to reveal the dominant narratives of the returns. In this regard, identifying the most relevant titles, a summary of the report findings emphasizes the type of noun under investigation for a particular search. Narrative reviews are appropriate and valuable in exploring various trajectory modeling approaches in epidemiological research (Nguena Nguefack et al., 2020) and human-centered design approaches to healthcare that strive to support innovative, effective, and person-centered solutions (Göttgens and Oertelt-Prigione, 2021). As the aim of reconceptualizing migration as a noun rather than a verb is to identify a way to promote improved mental health in migrants, the relevance of the narrative review method to studies of better healthcare decisions is significant.

## 2.2. Mental health of migrants

The mental health of migrants, when "migrate" is considered a noun, is investigated regarding the one scoping review on the mental health of migrants regarding place. The method involves extracting the relevant information from the sixth table of this scoping review (Ermansons et al., 2023). That table has the following headings: Source, Description, Setting, Study Design, Sample, Place Definition/Location, Place Characteristics or Measures, Primary Mental Health Outcomes, and Key Findings. The method here reconfigures the relevant information considering the importance of place to the mental health of the migrant by country, environment, mental health issue, and key findings.

## 3. Results

The results are those concerning the narrative review and those regarding an investigation of the scoping review on migrant mental health regarding place.

## 3.1. Narrative review

Five subsections divide the results into sequential Google Scholar searches of the five different types of nouns. Consideration is given to the four relevant reports returned first for each search. **Table 1** presents the results. The searches were conducted at different times—sometimes on different dates. The date of each search is highlighted in the various subsections, as Google Scholar is inconsistent with returns over subsequent searches.

**Table 1.** The five types of nouns and the various interpretations of those nouns in each of the four relevant reports returned, plus their citation number for the google scholar searches conducted.

| Noun | Report 1 [Cit. #] | Report 2 [Cit. #] | Report 3 [Cit. #] | Report 4 [Cit. #] |
|------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Person | Family (Kofman et al., 2022) | Older self (Belloni, 2020) | Tolerated self (Dahinden et al., 2021) | Parents as youths (King and Kuschminder, 2022) |
| Place | In place (Crawley and Jones, 2021) | Ghetto (Hanhörster and Wessendorf, 2020) | Unsettled (Schwarz, 2020) | Rural (Riethmuller et al., 2021) |
| Thing | Citizenship (Steiner, 2023) | Internet (Bock et al., 2020) | Self-employment (Kone et al., 2021) | Privilege (Scuzzarello, 2020) |
| Event | Grandchild birth (Thomas and Dommermuth, 2020) | Marriage (Van Den Berg et al., 2021) | Granting asylum (Schammann et al., 2021) | Policy change (Andrejuk, 2023) |
| Idea | The good life [2] | Being heard (Western, 2020) | Better job and pay (Della Puppa et al., 2021) | Aid by others (Gilodi et al., 2024) |

### 3.1.1. People

The 16 September 2024 search of persons to whom migrants head in their migration returned "about 17,300" reports. However, the first five pages of returns produced few relevant studies. Most related to the people migrating rather than the persons to whom the migrant was heading. Another type of return was people from the home country forcing the migration of the migrant—equally irrelevant for this study. A third type of return excluded from this study is regarding families migrating together. As indicated in **Table 2**, from the list of ten returns per page, the first relevant return, "Family Migration" (Kofman et al., 2022), appears near the top of page two, a

chapter in the book *Introduction to Migration Studies* (Scholten, 2022). Next, at the bottom of page three, is the article "Family project or individual choice? Exploring agency in young Eritreans' migration" (Belloni, 2020). The third relevant return is on page five—"Knowledge production, reflexivity, and the use of categories in migration studies: Tackling challenges in the field" (Dahinden et al., 2021)—as is the final return (a book chapter) included, "Introduction: Definitions, typologies, and theories of return migration" (King and Kuschminder, 2022).

**Table 2.** Relevant details of the four top returns of relevant publications regarding migrate as a noun concerning people to whom the migrant heads listed in order of return for a search conducted on 16 September 2024 of google scholar.

| Title of Result from Google Scholar Search [Cit. #] | Year | Type | Method | Where Returned |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Family Migration (Kofman et al., 2022) | 2022 | Book Chapter | Qualitative/Quantitative | Top, Page 2 |
| Family Project or Individual Choice? Exploring Agency in Young Eritreans' Migration (Belloni, 2020) | 2020 | Article | Ethnography | Bottom, Page 3 |
| Knowledge Production, Reflexivity, and the Use of Categories in Migration Studies: Tackling Challenges in the Field (Dahinden et al., 2021) | 2021 | Article | Qualitative | Middle, Page 5 |
| Introduction: Definitions, Typologies, and Theories of Return Migration (King and Kuschminder, 2022) | 2022 | Book Chapter | Qualitative/Quantitative | Middle, Page 5 |

The book *Introduction to Migration Studies* (Scholten, 2022), providing the chapter for the first return, was published in 2022 and offers current information on people to whom migrants are heading in their migration. The relevant chapter regarding people is "Family Migration" (Kofman et al., 2022). This chapter examines various and numerous qualitative and quantitative studies. Significantly, migrant females working in domestic, informal, and formal caregiving functions are often the sponsors of their husbands, children, and parents (Kofman et al., 2022, p. 139). As such, these secondary migrants are traveling to their wives, mothers, or children. In this situation, the type of social services that migrants seek are the means to keep in touch with their sponsor during the migration through information communication technology (ICT). Providing the most stable and reliable access to loved ones is the preferred social service in this type of migration (De Vries et al., 2021, p. 141). Another invaluable social service in this situation is offering information and support to both the sponsor and the migrant in the case of separation (Kofman et al., 2022, p. 142). Various services might include, but are not limited to, information on government policies, immigration status, settlement, healthcare services, and education. However, despite diversity in this area, there is little research (Scholten, 2022, p. 160). It is also relevant that all family members be treated equally in this type of migration, as parents and other kin often are marginalized from the nuclear family; this is more so as there are growing restrictions on parents as migrants (Kofman et al., 2022, p. 143). In 2017, family migration remained the largest source of permanent migration in Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries, ahead of labor and humanitarian migrations (Scholten, 2022, p. 286).

The 2020 publication "Family project or individual choice? Exploring agency in young Eritreans' migration" (Belloni, 2020) presents a different understanding of the

person the migrant is moving towards, resulting from multi-site ethnography research. In this case, it is considered a rite of passage for young people to find themselves by being unaccompanied minor migrants. In this regard, the person they move towards is an older and wiser version of themselves. Even though unaccompanied, the authors of this publication consider migration a family project, as the idea of the young person migrating is fully supported by the family for the child to reach adulthood successfully. As the child arrives at the destination as a minor, this poses a problem for those societies that view children as incapable of this responsibility—with the admitting countries only willing to offer basic needs to children (Sanfelici et al., 2021) rather than the complex needs that would come from considering them responsible for their actions. Yet, a more adequate response to these unaccompanied minors looking for their independence is needed as the number of unaccompanied minors is increasing (Corona Maioli et al., 2021).

"Knowledge production, reflexivity, and the use of categories in migration studies: Tackling challenges in the field" (Dahinden et al., 2021) is a 2021 publication expanding the view of migration to a more tolerant conceptualization of their parents for mixed-race children in Switzerland. This qualitative study finds the purpose is to have themselves and their parents accepted as people rather than a combination of racial characteristics. Such migration aims for the migrant to feel like an international citizen where the identity of their parents and their mixed race is not an issue. In this sense, the child is leaving the bigoted conception of their parents and themselves to one that is tolerant so that the parents and the child can be viewed more positively by the child in the new location. Consequently, this is a second-order understanding of migrating to a person since the person is their new conceptualization. This view is similar to queer migration in finding a "home" where the migrant can become themselves (Fortier, 2020). The social services these migrants seek encourage belonging and the opportunity to participate as members of the new environment.

Finally, a 2022 book chapter, "Introduction: definitions, typologies, and theories of return migration" (King and Kuschminder, 2022), considers various qualitative and quantitative studies regarding the children of immigrants returning to their ancestral homes. The people they return to may be relatives who were left behind. However, in some sense, these children are looking to find their parents as youths. This migration is a "return" even though the home country of their parents was never where these children lived. The authors state that this type of migration by adult children has been flourishing in recent years. The types of social services that these migrants are seeking are specific to the area where their parents grew up. As, in some sense, the services they seek are those from a past era provided to their parents when they lived in the area, the authors state that post-return outcomes often do not live up to expectations, resulting in disillusionment. Whether this outcome is inevitable or a result of undifferentiated services offered to them as migrants is the question. Those returnees who find the stable institutional environment their parents pictured for them are more likely to remain and engage in entrepreneurship (Gruenhagen, 2021).

### 3.1.2. Places

In considering "places to where migrants head in their migration" as the 18 September 2024 Google Scholar search, the returns were very different than regarding the search of people (see **Table 3**). In this case, there was no need to look further at the 17,000 results than the first four returns of the search. Each of these returns was relevant to examining how migrants embark on their travels because of considerations regarding place. The first return is "Beyond here and there: (Re)conceptualising migrant journeys and the 'in-between'" (Crawley and Jones, 2021). The second is "The role of arrival areas for migrant integration and resource access" (Hanhörster and Wessendorf, 2020). The third is "Migrants moving through mobility regimes: The trajectory approach as a tool to reveal migratory processes" (Schwarz, 2020). The final return is "Going rural: qualitative perspectives on the role of place attachment in young people's intentions to return to the country" (Riethmuller et al., 2021).

**Table 3.** Relevant details of the four top returns of relevant publications regarding migrate as a noun concerning the place to which the migrant heads listed in order of return for a search conducted on 18 September 2024 of google scholar.

| Title of Result from Google Scholar Search [Cit. #] | Year | Type | Method | Where Returned |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Beyond Here and There: (Re)Conceptualizing Migrant Journeys and the 'In-Between' (Crawley and Jones, 2021) | 2020 | Article | Ethnography | 1st Return, Page 1 |
| The Role of Arrival Areas for Migrant Integration and Resource Access (Hanhörster and Wessendorf, 2020) | 2020 | Article | Qualitative/Quantitative | 2nd Return, Page 1 |
| Migrants Moving Through Mobility Regimes: The Trajectory Approach as a Tool to Reveal Migratory Processes (Schwarz, 2020) | 2021 | Article | Qualitative | 3rd Return, Page 1 |
| Going Rural: Qualitative Perspectives on the Role of Place Attachment in Young People's Intentions to Return to the Country (Riethmuller et al., 2021) | 2021 | Article | Qualitative | 4th Return, Page 1 |

The 2020 work, "Beyond here and there: (Re)conceptualising migrant journeys and the 'in-between'" (Crawley and Jones, 2021), advises that rather than considering places on the migration route as 'In-between', a reevaluation of them should be as 'in place'. Based on ethnographic research, the reason is that migrants in transit make lives for themselves at the stops along the way in these journeys, and recognizing these stops as the destination themselves reconceptualizes the social services considered meaningful for the migrants. Rather than offering ways and means to leave the stop, the direction of social services should be to help migrants in their self-direction to construct meaningful lives where they find themselves. Migrant decisions about whether or not to move on concern the lives lived, the relationships formed, and the opportunities that arise in these stopover places. If there has been a positive outcome in at least some regard, there is less likelihood that the place to which the migrant is heading is anywhere other than the location where they find themselves. In staying put, studies signify new social contacts met while traveling as those who become the most trusted sources of information and support (Snel et al., 2021).

"The role of arrival areas for migrant integration and resource access" (Hanhörster and Wessendorf, 2020) is another 2020 article with a similar message to the first. It argues that for migrants who journey to a place with a defined social ghetto for migrants, social services too frequently focus on encouraging the upward mobility

of the migrant outside the concentrated area for newcomers. Through an assessment of qualitative and quantitative data, this article presents that by understanding the dynamics of these urban arrival areas regarding their infrastructures and specific role in resource provisions for newcomers, the role of policymaking and urban planning can be more attuned to increasingly complex and mobile urban societies. As such, the focus of the social services should be enhancing the life migrants lead as members of the ghetto in which they dwell. That migrants might choose to remain in these close quarters results from those who come in large numbers preferring to segregate in enclaves where they can lead a familiar lifestyle with people who can support it (Zaban, 2022).

The third article, "Migrants moving through mobility regimes: The trajectory approach as a tool to reveal migratory processes" (Schwarz, 2020), is a qualitative study published in 2021. Unlike the other two articles that consider the migrant preference as staying put where they land, this article stresses that, once the migrant arrives at their intended destination, the migration does not end. This study demonstrates that after they cross a border, migrants tend to migrate for short distances within their new destination. By investigating the most fitting location to settle within the border, social services to these migrants cannot stop at issues regarding border safety. Instead, these social services must consider how to aid these short-term travelers inside the country's borders to find the particular destination they seek. The author of this third article found these conditions in investigating both refugees and unauthorized migrants. In such situations, the migrant learns quickly how to adapt their personal narrative into the host country's legal language to effectively express the role expected of them in these circumstances, demonstrating migrant agency (Safouane et al., 2020). In providing social services, it is advised to take these recapitulations at face value and provide migrants with what they seek.

"Going rural: qualitative perspectives on the role of place attachment in young people's intentions to return to the country" (Riethmuller et al., 2021) is the final qualitative article regarding migrants heading to a place for consideration. This 2021 article differentiates that migrants who move to an urban area are less tied to place than those who choose to return to the rural areas from which they came. The consideration is that young rural dwellers move to the city for people and jobs. However, these migrants hope to return to their rural roots to raise their children. The reason appears to be specific cherished memories tied to the place of their original homes. Social services should provide ongoing information about activities in the rural area, including any incentive programs to return to the rural area, to encourage and facilitate this move to the country after an original migration to the city for non-place-related reasons. In this regard, by recognizing rural/urban connectivity, improvements can be made to social services, emphasizing the bi-directional nature of rural/urban relationships (Cattaneo et al., 2022).

### 3.1.3. Things

An 18 September 2024 Google Scholar search of "things to which migrants head in their migration" produced "about 16,600 returns". Similar to the returns regarding people, the relevant articles generally were not the ones initially returned (see **Table 4**). Most earlier returns focused on the term migrate as a verb regarding the drivers of

migration rather than specifying to what thing the migrant was traveling. Other reports are concerned with what pushed the migrants to leave. Both considerations exclude them. These two types of returns were the majority. That said, the first relevant return is on the first page of returns as the third entry. The significant chapter in *International Migration and Citizenship Today* is Chapter 8, "Citizenship, Nationalism, and National Identity" (Steiner, 2023). Although this chapter returned on the first page of the search, the following relevant return did not appear until the first entry of page five—"Displaced and dismayed: how ICTs are helping refugees and migrants, and how we can do better" (Bock et al., 2020). Unexpectedly, all the relevant returns to follow are from page five of the search. The return immediately following the previous one is on page five—"Self-employment and reason for migration: Are those who migrate for asylum different from other migrants?" (Kone et al., 2021). The final relevant study is the last return on page five of the search—"Practicing privilege. How settling in Thailand enables older Western migrants to enact privilege over local people" (Scuzzarello, 2020).

**Table 4.** Relevant details of the four top returns of relevant publications regarding migrate as a noun concerning things to which the migrant heads listed in order of return for a search conducted on 18 September 2024 of google scholar.

| Title of Result from Google Scholar Search [Cit. #] | Year | Type | Method | Where Returned |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Citizenship, Nationalism, and National Identity" (Steiner, 2023) | 2023 | Book Chapter | Historical/Quantitative | 3rd Return, Page 1 |
| Displaced and Dismayed: How ICTs Are Helping Refugees and Migrants, and How We Can Do Better (Bock et al., 2020) | 2020 | Article | Quantitative | 1st Return Page 5 |
| Self-Employment and Reason for Migration: Are Those Who Migrate for Asylum Different from Other Migrants? (Bock et al., 2020) | 2021 | Article | Quantitative | 2nd Return, Page 5 |
| Practicing Privilege. How Settling in Thailand Enables Older Western Migrants to Enact Privilege Over Local People (Scuzzarello, 2020) | 2020 | Article | Qualitative | Last Return, Page 5 |

In the 2023 book chapter "Citizenship, nationalism, and national identity" (Steiner, 2023)—a historical assessment including quantitative data, the thing to which migrants are heading is citizenship in their destination country. Yet, as stated by the author, there is no single definition of citizenship. The author notes this lack of a singular definition as a contributing factor to the controversy surrounding citizenship in representing a relationship between the individual and the country regarding the rights and duties of each. There are five different things the author lists concerning what migrants consider citizenship. In summary, these are a sense of identity, being able to work with others who are different from them, a desire to participate in the political process of the country, a willingness to exercise restraint regarding personal choices, and an understanding of justice regarding fair distribution of resources. With citizenship equitable to any of these things, or more than one, the types of social services that would aid migrants in gaining citizenship would differ depending on which of these options is attractive to the migrant. As such, providers of social services helping migrants who endeavor to become citizens must be cognizant of the understanding of citizenship held by the migrant. In seeking what the migrant values regarding citizenship, this understanding is knowable by these providers (De Koning et al., 2024).

"Displaced and dismayed: how ICTs are helping refugees and migrants, and how we can do better" (Bock et al., 2020), a quantitative study published in 2020, presents internet connectivity as the thing migrants may head towards, citing the rise in migrant interconnectivity as exponential. The paper notes that migrants now consider connectivity essential and will walk miles to get free Wi-Fi. What is particularly valuable regarding this report is that once accepting the desire for interconnectivity as a thing leading to migration, it examines each of the various types of internet services that help migrants survive and thrive while aiming to support what it is that migrants might value. As such, the results of this report are significant when interpreting migration as a noun rather than a verb from considering aspects of three relevant information and communication technologies for their successful deployment to migrants. The first is providing consistent, sustainable funding to the social service offered. The second is matching the online social services to the scale of their intended niche. Lastly, providing necessary cultural attributes and making relevant changes require the involvement of the end users. The requisite of internet connectivity has been argued as essential for improvement in quality of life—representing a defining feature of marginalized groups (Reddick et al., 2020).

According to the 2021 paper "Self-employment and reason for migration: Are those who migrate for asylum different from other migrants?" (Kone et al., 2021), the opportunity to be self-employed is something people aim for with migration. Based on quantitative research, this article suggests that migrants are 6% more likely to be self-employed than those native to the UK, the region that is the focus of this study. However, such self-employment does not arise automatically. The results demonstrate that, in the UK, migrants generally take twelve years to achieve a greater likelihood of self-employment than native-born residents and that twenty years is the optimal point for expecting greater self-employment of migrants than those born in the UK. Given the extended time it takes migrants to begin their intended self-employment, social services to this group should focus on ways and means to decrease the number of years before the realization of self-employment. The need for such social services is apparent as those who become self-employed in their new residence are less likely to be self-employed in their home country, indicating that, when beginning, they have less experience with self-employment (Giambra and McKenzie, 2021).

"Practicing privilege. How settling in Thailand enables older Western migrants to enact privilege over local people" (Scuzzarello, 2020) is a 2020 publication qualitatively investigating a group of migrants who migrate to demonstrate their privilege over the residents where they migrate. Any related pity for these migrants might concern their lack of consideration for others. Their associated fear does not regard the potential loss of property or jobs as it might be with other migrants. Instead, the fear related to them concerns their aim and ability to exploit members of the receiving country to take up employment that reduces their rights such that finding exploitable people and situations are the social services sought by this group. However, from the point of view of the native residents, social services should educate them to respect others and to use their wealth to benefit the receiving country rather than enhance their selfish motives. Yet, in contrast, these selfish motives may, in the long run, improve the lives of the exploited. Marriage of young Thai women to older Western men is an example. Although these marriages may initially start as exploitive,

over the lifetime of the marriage, the wife gains increasing independence and opportunity (Statham et al., 2022). This type of study may do much to reconceptualize the social services provided to older Western men wanting to migrate to Thailand for marriage—stressing how they can help their wives to independence earlier in their marriage.

### 3.1.4. Events

Migration drivers are associated with unexpected negative influences, such as environmental change, food insecurity, and violence (Morales-Muñoz et al., 2020). Therefore, it is unusual to think of events as what migrants are heading towards. A 22 September 2024 Google Scholar search of "events to which migrants head in their migration" demonstrated the disparity between events as drivers and as draws for migration. Of the "about 16,900 results", those appearing on the first few pages predominantly regard events as migration drivers (see **Table 5**). Yet, there are examples of events guiding migration in these returns. The first appears in the middle of page one, "Internal Migration and the Role of Intergenerational Family Ties and Life Events" (Thomas and Dommermuth, 2020). The following relevant article appears as the third entry on page three, "Families in comparison: An individual-level comparison of life-course and family reconstructions between population and vital event registers" (Van Den Berg et al., 2021). The third relevant article is from the middle of page four of the returns, "Defining and transforming local migration policies: a conceptual approach backed by evidence from Germany" (Schammann et al., 2021). Demonstrating how unusual it is to research events as a draw for migration, the final report under consideration did not return until the middle of page ten of the Google Scholar search, "Rapid Evolution of Refugee Policy in Poland: Russian Invasion of Ukraine as a Focusing Event" (Andrejuk, 2023).

**Table 5.** Relevant details of the four top returns of relevant publications regarding migrate as a noun concerning events to which the migrant heads listed in order of return for a search conducted on 22 September 2024 of google scholar.

| Title of Result from Google Scholar Search [Cit. #] | Year | Type | Method | Where Returned |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Internal Migration and the Role of Intergenerational Family Ties and Life Events (Thomas and Dommermuth, 2020) | 2020 | Article | Quantitative | Middle, Page 1 |
| Families in Comparison: An Individual-Level Comparison of Life-Course and Family Reconstructions Between Population and Vital Event Registers (Van Den Berg et al., 2021) | 2020 | Article | Quantitative | 3rd Return, Page 3 |
| Defining and Transforming Local Migration Policies: A Conceptual Approach Backed by Evidence from Germany (Schammann et al., 2021) | 2021 | Article | Multi-methods | Middle, Page 4 |
| Rapid Evolution of Refugee Policy in Poland: Russian Invasion of Ukraine as a Focusing Event (Andrejuk, 2023) | 2023 | Article | Qualitative | Middle, Page 10 |

"Internal Migration and the Role of Intergenerational Family Ties and Life Events" (Thomas and Dommermuth, 2020) is a 2020 publication that quantitatively assesses survey data and stresses that life events can draw people to migration. These events influencing either adult children or grandparents to migrate can include the birth of a grandchild. Other events that can trigger migration are separation from or the death of a spouse, with the remaining partner migrating to the home of another family member. These events initiate migration because they represent a period during

life when needs are acute and resources are low. They are also associated with the giving and receiving of care. Regarding the social services relevant to these types of migrants, the argument is that these needs should be considered from the perspective of aging as a migrant (Ciobanu et al., 2020)—as such, focusing on various events in the life trajectory as guiding migration.

"Families in comparison: An individual-level comparison of life-course and family reconstructions between population and vital event registers" (Van Den Berg et al., 2021), first online in 2020, is another article examining survey data regarding events drawing migrants from a similar position to the first article. In this case, beyond birth, marriage is included as an event to initiate migration. Nevertheless, this paper focuses on life events registration rather than migration. There is little information provided on how life events draw people to migration. Other reports highlight their marriage as a significant reason for people deciding to migrate, especially Asian migrants (Chiu and Yeoh, 2021; Yeung and Mu, 2020). Little research is devoted to the experiences of women who relocate to their husbands' countries but are not given citizenship rights (Mu and Yeung, 2021). The social services they might require concern providing legal advice regarding their citizenship (Mu and Yeung, 2021).

"Defining and transforming local migration policies: A conceptual approach backed by evidence from Germany" (Schammann et al., 2021) is a 2021 article using multi-methods that looks at a change in government policy as the draw to migrants—granting asylum to migrants being one of the most significant. The article stresses that when this occurs, social services require the coordination of volunteers, where the various municipalities decide if and how to engage with migrants. Relevant to making decisions regarding social services is the flow of population over time rather than the population size. Local migration development also influences local policies. Activities are stimulated in particular if the perception of migrants is a welcomed element of the local society. When changes to government policies encourage migration through the granting of asylum, research has noted that it does affect migration, with the recognition rate, processing times, and the risk of repatriation shaping asylum flows (Bertoli et al., 2022).

"Rapid Evolution of Refugee Policy in Poland: Russian Invasion of Ukraine as a Focusing Event" (Andrejuk, 2023) is the final return under consideration regarding events that draw people to migrate. This qualitative paper is the most recent publication of the four, published in 2023. The event was a positive change in refugee policy from the perspective of increasing migration in Poland as a result of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Unlike the other articles considered regarding events, this report introduces the concept of a focusing event regarding migration—a sudden, shocking, unexpected, relatively uncommon, and attention-possessing situation. The political changes that took place led to the creation of new evolutionary legal regulations for refugees from Ukraine—ones that would incline their migration to Poland. The paper notes that migrants from Ukraine have represented the largest group of foreigners (mainly labor migrants) in this receiving country for years before these changes. Poland's desire to admit migrants primarily from culturally similar countries is the basis of this political change. Focusing events mobilize social services, and developing a Transformative Refugee Service Experience Framework that draws on marketing,

sociology, transformative service, and consumer research literature is seen to create hospitable service systems for these migrants (Boenigk et al., 2021).

### 3.1.5. Ideas

The conducting of a Google Scholar search of "ideas to which migrants head in their migration" took place on 22 September 2024, returning "about 16,800 results" (see **Table 6**). The first relevant return occurred in the middle of page one—"A theory of migration: the aspirations-capabilities framework" (De Haas, 2021). However, the pertinent return to follow did not appear until the second entry on the fourth page of returns—"Listening with displacement: Sound, citizenship, and disruptive representations of migration" (Western, 2020). The articles between these entries were regarding the meaning of migration, not the ideas to which migrants move. Page four in the middle also produced the third relevant return—"Onward migration and intra-European mobilities: A critical and theoretical overview" (Della Puppa et al., 2021). The final applicable article appeared on the sixth page as the third entry— "Vulnerability in the context of migration: A critical overview and a new conceptual model" (Gilodi et al., 2024).

**Table 6.** Relevant details of the four top returns of relevant publications regarding migrate as a noun concerning the idea to which the migrant heads listed in order of return for a search conducted on 22 September 2024 of google scholar.

| Title of Result from Google Scholar Search [Cit. #] | Year | Type | Method | Where Returned |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| A Theory of Migration: The Aspirations-Capabilities Framework (De Haas, 2021) | 2021 | Article | Historical | Middle, Page 1 |
| Listening with Displacement: Sound, Citizenship, and Disruptive Representations of Migration (Western, 2020) | 2020 | Article | Ethnography | 2nd Return, Page 4 |
| Onward Migration and Intra-European Mobilities: A Critical and Theoretical Overview (Della Puppa et al., 2021) | 2021 | Article | Historical | Middle, Page 4 |
| Vulnerability in the Context of Migration: A Critical Overview and a New Conceptual Model (Gilodi et al., 2024) | 2024 | Article | Qualitative | 3rd Return, Page 6 |

The 2021 article "A theory of migration: the aspirations-capabilities framework" (De Haas, 2021) has as its primary concern developing a particular migration theory. Based on a historical examination of aspirations and capabilities, its focus is not the verb migrate. As such, it concerns other aspects of migration than migration divers. Still, this paper does not focus on the nouns migrants move toward. Instead, its similarity concerning a concentration on nouns is to self-reflection regarding migrant skills and where those skills are best applied concerning migration. Yet, as part of this theory development, the authors note that people migrate to search for the "good life"—representing why the paper mentions an idea to which people migrate. These authors relate that international migration is strongly associated with material and social success regarding their view of the good life such that many youths focus obsessively on leaving and that this 'culture of migration' has contributed to rapidly evolving ideas of the good life, contributing to increasing disaffection with traditional, agrarian lifestyles. However, simultaneously, there is another view of the good life as an idyllic rural life that some middle-class families seek (Friedman, 2023). As such, the types of social services acceptable to those who migrate based on an idea of the

good life will depend on the vision of the good life held by these migrants concerning their view of flourishing (Willen et al., 2021).

"Listening with displacement: Sound, citizenship, and disruptive representations of migration" (Western, 2020) is an innovative ethnographic assessment of the importance of listening to migration sounds published in 2020. As part of this examination of sounds during migration, the authors point to the relevance of people migrating to locations where they believe they will be listened to so that the idea they seek in migrating is recognition within the noise of sounds. A 2019 paper discusses the appropriateness of developing narrative biographies of migrants to support this desire to be heard (Lechner, 2019). The value of this point of view is evident in the inclusion of the paper as a chapter in a 2022 book as part of a more general account of biographical research (Caetano and Nico, 2022). Listening to migrants is a significant feature of the social services that social workers engage in with migrants, as is apparent from the number of recent publications on this topic, including the need for cultural competence (Käkelä, 2020), presenting a unique challenge with unaccompanied minors (Barn et al., 2021).

"Onward migration and intra-European mobilities: A critical and theoretical historical overview" (Della Puppa et al., 2021) is a 2021 publication that presents the idea of migration that is considered evident in the literature—people migrate to improve their position in the labor market and increase their income (Clemens and Mendola, 2024). However, the 2021 paper sees this idea of migrating as based on a myth, as migration generally does not realize the intended idea (Lam and Triandafyllidou, 2024; Lumley-Sapanski, 2021). Given the disappointment migrants often encounter who move with the idea of a better job and making more money, the role of social services when this is the reason for migration is to provide migrants with realistic information concerning their job prospects as well as relevant contacts to help them become more likely to meet their expectations (Kosny et al., 2020).

The final paper considering the noun "idea" of why people migrate is a 2024 publication of a qualitative study, "Vulnerability in the context of migration: A critical overview and a new conceptual model" (Gilodi et al., 2024). Although the intent of changing the focus of considering migrating from a verb to a noun is that, in doing so, the narrative changes from migrants representing those who are to be pitied and feared, the idea presented in this paper is that certain people migrate because they consider that they are vulnerable and need the support of humanitarian aid to achieve their migration goal. As such, these migrants consider their aim to be a receiver of social services and, with this intent, they hope for pity on their arrival at their destination. Perhaps paradoxically, it is these migrants who are least likely to receive the social services they crave (Lupieri, 2022). This result is especially so because they have unrealistic expectations regarding what to expect in migration, believing that everything will work out because of the supposed support they should receive in migrating (Ikafa et al., 2022).

### 3.2. Mental health of migrants

One of the types of nouns to which migrants can migrate is place. It represents the only noun investigated in migration studies. **Table 7** presents the results of the

search conducted for this 2023 scoping review, where nine returns of the 34 studies published since 2020 identify migration to a place regarding the mental health of migrants. In this scoping review, these nine results are analyzed in sixth table of that article. **Table 7** below summarizes that table for this study (Ermansons et al., 2023).

**Table 7.** Citation numbers of articles considering the importance of place to the mental health of the migrant regarding the country, environment, the mental health issue, and the key findings. Based on the sixth table of (Ermansons et al., 2023), the author created this table.

| Cit. # | Country | Environment | Mental Health Issue | Key Finding |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| (Beza et al., 2022) | Greece | Refugee camp vs. urban apartment | The Mental Component Scale of the Health-Related Quality-of-Life | Lower mental health in refugee camp/higher mental health in urban apartment. |
| (Gillespie et al., 2020) | US and Canada | Urban | Post-traumatic stress symptoms | Interpersonal violence, discrimination, financial insecurity, housing instability, ad unsafe neighborhoods. |
| (Glorius et al., 2020) | Germany | Rural | Well-being and place attachment | More social contact with local residents leads to better mental health. |
| (Herslund and Paulgaard, 2021) | Norway and Denmark | Rural | Stress and well-being | Harsh climate and short daylight in winter is stressful, offset by social interaction with other refugees. |
| (Lincoln et al., 2021) | US and Canada | Urban | Anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress symptoms | Discrimination worsened symptoms of all mental health outcomes. |
| (Liu et al., 2020) | Canada | Urban | Resiliency and well-being | Environment and access to natural space improved wellbeing. |
| (Salhi et al., 2021) | US and Canada | Urban | Anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress symptoms | Resettlement violence produces poor mental health outcomes. |
| (Ziersch et al., 2020) | Australia | Rural | Well-being and health | Strong sense of safety but stress from lack of secure employment. |

The studies indicate that migrants to rural locations (Glorius et al., 2020; Herslund and Paulgaard, 2021; Ziersch et al., 2020) are more likely to have positive mental health than urban migrants (Lincoln et al., 2021; Liu et al., 2020), but this is only if they have strong social connections (Herslund and Paulgaard, 2021) and are especially likely to experience poor mental health in urban areas without social connections (Gillespie et al., 2020), with the reason being the violence and discrimination they face. Yet, migrants are overburdened with mental health issues compared with urban dwellers if they have migrated to a refugee camp (Beza et al., 2022). In all, this scoping review did not differentiate between migrants who have self-directed to their place in contrast to those who felt forced to migrate. Therefore, the extent of feeling a lack of control over their mental health condition is unclear. Making this differentiation is significant because self-directing their behavior in choosing where to migrate is a problem-focused form of coping—and problem-focused coping strategies are those reducing stress in migrant populations by directly addressing the problem (Idemudia and Boehnke, 2020).

## 4. Discussion

This discussion will first analyze **Table 1** regarding what the results signify. Following is a discussion of a theoretical foundation regarding the types of social services that can benefit migrants—ones interpreted from examining those nouns in

defining migration that improve migrant mental health from the perspective of one coping theory. Lastly are the limitations of this study.

## 4.1. Nouns regarding migration

In representing the five types of nouns to which migrants head, based on the four relevant reports of a Google Scholar search returning with the highest rank, there are notable features of **Table 1**. The first is that none of the nouns are the same. This result is significant because it was unanticipated, as the general understanding of what leads people to migrate is to be with family (Kofman et al., 2022) or to obtain a better job at an increased salary (Della Puppa et al., 2021). Although family remains the most influential reason regarding OECD countries for migration (Scholten, 2022, p. 286), and economic factors are additionally consequential (Colgate University, USA, and IZA, Germany and Simpson, 2022), they are not the only reasons. What **Table 1** shows is that various nouns distinguish what people value in migration.

Also notable from **Table 1** is that not all the types of nouns produce positive reasons for migrating. As such, not all would relate to the reason for focusing on nouns concerning realized self-direction by migrants. The bases of all the nouns associated with "ideas" are hopes and wishful thinking but not actual self-direction. Moreover, two nouns related to ideas are features of entirely other-directed people. When people migrate to be heard (Western, 2020) or to have others provide them with aid (Gilodi et al., 2024), they consider that they have no control over their lives and that others are required to look after them, as the more a person relies on social assistance, the weaker their motivation to be self-directed because of a lesser tendency to develop a strong sense of self (Milyavsky et al., 2022). Two other nouns regarding persons also suggested that the migrant is other-directed in the migration rather than self-directed—those who migrate to find themselves as tolerated by others (Dahinden et al., 2021) and migrants returning to locate the younger version of their parents in the ancestral country (King and Kuschminder, 2022). The nouns associated with these two types of persons focus on others and not migrating with a strong sense of independence; however, unlike the nouns connected with "ideas", mentioned above, it is not entirely clear that people migrating for these reasons are not self-directed. In wanting to find themselves as tolerated, they may merely want fair treatment, although this is difficult to differentiate from status-seeking regarding others (Rathbun et al., 2022). In the second case, the sense of self that the migrant has developed may be tied intimately to the stories their parents related about their youth in the ancestral home (Levitt, 2009). Still, the possibility is that people migrating for either of these reasons do so because they are entirely other-directed (Lucarelli and Grassi, 2022), and, as such, these nouns are not relevant as ones demonstrating actual self-direction in migrants.

Although not as popular as migrating to be with family, the nouns associated with events are the most compelling regarding migrating for self-directed reasons. Each of the birth of a grandchild (Thomas and Dommermuth, 2020), marriage (Van Den Berg et al., 2021), a receiving country granting asylum (Schammann et al., 2021), and a policy change by a government to improve the prospects of immigrants (Andrejuk, 2023) provides the type of rational reasons that someone might migrate. These reasons are rational because migrating produces more benefits than costs under these

conditions (Colgate University, USA, and IZA, Germany and Simpson, 2022). This reasoning is in contrast to those who migrate for a thing. Although the decision to migrate may appear somewhat rational in migrating to obtain citizenship (Kofman et al., 2022), get better internet coverage (Belloni, 2020), become self-employed (Dahinden et al., 2021), or have the ability to display privilege over the native population (King and Kuschminder, 2022), the reasons relate to hopes that may not be realized initially (Alencar, 2020; Ellermann, 2020) or in the long run (Maher and Lafferty, 2014), or they may take many years to accomplish once at the destination (Statham et al., 2022)—producing a higher cost than benefit.

If the type of noun that is the focus is place, from the reports returned, it is difficult to claim that those who focus on a place in their migration are self-directed. The examples returned are people who migrate to the first place they arrive, staying in place (Gusenbauer, 2019); those who migrate to be part of a concentrated ghetto of others of the same nationality (Gusenbauer and Haddaway, 2020); people who migrate to be able to travel from place to place with no determined destination, remaining unsettled (Nguena Nguefack et al., 2020); and those who want to escape city life and move to the idealized tranquility of rural life (Göttgens and Oertelt-Prigione, 2021). To be self-directed, the migrant must have an achievable intent for which they have decided to work and take responsibility, even under changing circumstances (Gunasekara et al., 2021). Although a person migrating from city to country can be self-directed, wanting this transition more frequently is to reduce burnout (Duan et al., 2020).

One unique noun related to persons is migrating to find one's older self (Belloni, 2020). This aim may be entirely self-directed as a process of achieving wisdom (Kutor et al., 2021), or it may be involuntary and part of the culture to which the migrant belongs in reaching adulthood (Conrad Suso, 2020). Thus, knowing a person is migrating to achieve their future self is insufficient information to realize if they are self-directing in their migration.

In summary, the hypothesis was that, with noun-dependent migration, the migrant is potentially identifiable as self-directing their migration and seeking aid. The results from the narrative review support this hypothesis partially. Not all nouns related to migration can be associated with self-direction regarding what or whom the person migrates towards, although the migrant may begin the migration process self-directed towards what they value. The finding is that only those migrating based on an event do so because of self-direction. Those who migrate based on an idea do not self-direct because they do not take responsibility for the outcome of the migration. Regarding those who migrate to persons, places, or things, whether their migration is self-directed will depend on the particulars related to the noun. As evidenced by the four examples studied for each of these five nouns, this self-direction requires determination on a case-by-case basis.

## 4.2. Theoretical foundation of social services support for migrant mental health

In the results provided concerning the various nouns found in the Google Scholar searches performed regarding the five types of nouns, relevant social services were

mentioned. They were presented as unique to each noun and appeared without any theoretical foundation. This section indicates a valuable theoretical foundation that applies to the 1984 coping theory of Lazarus and Folkman (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984). What is significant is that in differentiating migration as a noun in contrast to a verb, there is an identification of why both problem-focused coping (directly addressing the problem) and emotion-focused coping (attending to the associated emotions) are successful for migrants. Problem-focused coping strategies are identified as more adaptive in controllable situations, while emotion-focused coping strategies are more adaptive in uncontrollable situations (Acar et al., 2021; Folkman and Moskowitz, 2004). In conceptualizing migrate as a noun, the purpose was to identify those types of nouns to which or to whom people self-direct to migrate. The finding is that not all nouns relate to self-direction in migration. The coping strategies that some nouns require are problem-focused and others are emotion-focused in the coping theory of Lazarus and Folkman. The problem-focused coping results from the migration undertaken in a controllable situation. Emotion-focused coping concerns uncontrollable situations.

Regarding the Google Scholar search, only those migrants who self-direct to migrate because of an event (birth of a grandchild (Hanhörster and Wessendorf, 2020), marriage (Schwarz, 2020), the granting of asylum (Riethmuller et al., 2021), or a government policy change (Steiner, 2023)) are those who are in control of their situation. This result is not to say that all events can promote self-direction in migration. Only those events that permit rational problem-solving are those that involve self-direction. In this regard, not all cases of people migrating towards people are self-directed based on problem-focused coping. When the migrant heads to a person to find an individual that they have imagined (such as a future self (Belloni, 2020), a non-discriminated-against self (Dahinden et al., 2021), or meeting younger versions of parents (King and Kuschminder, 2022)), emotion-focused coping for improving mental health is more significant as the results of the migration are not controllable by the migrant. This lack of control is even more so if migrants head towards an idea that has sustained them, irrespective of the reality, as can be the case when migrants head towards the good life (Bock et al., 2020), being heard (Kone et al., 2021), a better job and pay (Scuzzarello, 2020), or to obtain aid by others (Thomas and Dommermuth, 2020). In these situations, emotion-focused coping is what can produce positive mental health. Things to which migrants head also may be realistic or merely dreams. From the Google Scholar search, these things include obtaining citizenship (Belloni, 2020), reliable internet service (Dahinden et al., 2021), self-employment (King and Kuschminder, 2022), and being able to exercise white male privilege (Crawley and Jones, 2021). If obtainable, the migrant can be self-directed using problem-focused coping. When these things are outside their reach and directed by external forces, the mental health of the migrant is maintainable through emotion-focused coping. Involving place, as was seen in the analysis of the nine returns of a 2023 scoping review (Ermansons et al., 2023), whether the migrant self-directs to place, the defining feature of the mental health of the migrant is creating positive social connections. This result, although migrating to a climate very different from the country where the migration begins (Herslund and Paulgaard, 2021), can negatively impact mental health and necessitate emotion-focused coping. Problem-focused

coping through self-directed behavior is found most likely in rural destinations (Glorius et al., 2020; Herslund and Paulgaard, 2021; Ziersch et al., 2020) in comparison with urban, although urban destinations compare more favorably to refugee camps (Beza et al., 2022). Yet, these findings cannot determine if problem-focused coping will result from migrating to a place. In each of the in-place migrations (Gusenbauer and Haddaway, 2020), migration to a ghetto (Nguena Nguefack et al., 2020), unsettled migration (Göttgens and Oertelt-Prigione, 2021), and rural migration (Kofman et al., 2022) returned in the Google Scholar search; none were self-directed migrations, although these nouns might have been. In each of these particular cases, emotion-focused coping maintained mental health rather than problem-focused.

Problem-focused and emotion-focused coping are the types of coping that have been found most relevant to positive mental health in migrants (Poudel-Tandukar et al., 2020). Regarding the variety of social services that are pertinent to problem-focused coping and those that concern emotion-focused coping, for those migrants who are self-directing their migration, it is the problem-focused coping that can help them. The types of social services that will aid them are reliable information available when and where the migrant needs it. Self-directed individuals are most likely to use online services to inform them (Morris and Rohs, 2021). Consequently, the direction of social services should be to create relevant online information for migrants regarding events and places and to maintain this information (Liao et al., 2024). For those migrants who are heading to people, places, things, or ideas that may be in contrast to actuality, social services that are most relevant are those that permit the migrant to engage with emotion-focused coping (Idemudia and Boehnke, 2020). Online resources remain most applicable for those who initially started as self-directed, but dissolution altered their coping from problem-focused to emotion-focused. These include counseling services through telehealth; however, accessing these services will depend on migrant readiness (Bernardsdóttir et al., 2023), personal resources (Bujek-Kubas et al., 2020), and on these migrants actively seeking help (Brea Larios, 2024). Strategic communication with migrants in these situations to promote positive mental health depends on a value basis congruent with that of the migrant (Dennison, 2020) and related to conceptions of the good life for migrants (Kira et al., 2023).

### 4.3. Limitations

A limitation of this study is that in reconceptualizing migration as a noun from a verb to note the self-direction of migrants to a person, place, thing, event, or idea, this different perspective does not take into consideration those migrants who are forced from their homes by causes such as climate change (Kaczan and Orgill-Meyer, 2020), war (Jolof et al., 2022), natural disasters (Mitchell and Pizzi, 2021), sexual violence (Ozcurumez et al., 2021), gang violence (Clemens, 2021), or disease (Kashnitsky and Richter, 2022). The point of reconsidering migration as a noun rather than a verb is not to claim all migrants have a choice in where they go; it is to say that when considering it as a noun, migrants can have improved mental health from their noun-specific self-direction.

A second limitation is that the conducted searches were neither a scoping nor a systematic review. These reviews would be required to follow PRISMA guidelines (Page et al., 2021; Tricco et al., 2018) and would have produced a more extensive range of reports regarding each type of noun. There was no undertaking of these PRISMA reviews because the narrative review was to find examples of the four most relevant publications regarding the five types of nouns concerning migration. It was not to identify all publications that represent these nouns. The reason is that treating migrate as a noun rather than a verb is a new concept that needs consideration with a narrative review before assuming that PRISMA reviews would be relevant. The testing of this study has demonstrated that conducting both a scoping review and a systematic review with meta-analysis would, based on the results of this study, now be relevant.

The review also concerned only Google Scholar, which has been found valuable for grey literature searches but not recommended for primary searches (Gusenbauer and Haddaway, 2020). Google Scholar was selected rather than a review that follows PRISMA guidelines because the point was not to return as many reports that fit the inclusion criteria as possible. Instead, the purpose was to find the most searched relevant articles related to each of the nouns as representative of the five types of nouns. In this regard, Google Scholar is not only an acceptable database to search; it is the most appropriate one (Martín-Martín et al., 2021). As a crawler-based search engine, it returns the most searched and relevant articles first (Falagas et al., 2008; Gusenbauer, 2019). Given that the purpose of the search was to identify these types of articles, there is no discrepancy in using Google Scholar for this search of the four most relevant articles related to each of the five types of nouns. Furthermore, selection bias is not material because this was not a systematic review and meta-analysis (Lu et al., 2022).

Conducting this study by one researcher is another limitation—cognitive bias (Neal et al., 2022) is a potential outcome. One way to counteract this bias is to employ additional researchers to check results (Soprano et al., 2024). This report is single-authored, so this method is unused. What was employed is a version of the "SLOW" tool used for clinical accuracy (Fernández Pinto, 2023; O'Sullivan and Schofield, 2019). This acronym follows a checking process: "Sure about that? What is lacking? What if the opposite were true? Worst case scenario?" Conducting the Google Scholar search identified publications that relate to each of the five types of nouns to check the accuracy of whether migration is considerable as a noun regarding migrant self-direction. The purpose of the search was to locate some examples of each type of noun, not to do a meta-analysis of the findings. The information regarding each report returned is provided in the reference list, with their synopsis in the results section, providing sufficient detail for anyone to check the interpretation of the content of the studies selected. In this way, identifying possible cognitive bias is facilitated.

Determining what is lacking was an evaluation of the four included reports identifying migration as a noun for self-direction in the migrants. The finding was that identifying migration as a noun sometimes does not result in migrant self-direction—other-direction becomes the outcome most often. In this case, where the outcome is the opposite, positive mental health can still result if social services focus on emotion-focused rather than problem-focused coping relevant to self-direction (Snoubar and Zengin, 2022). In the worst-case scenario, migration is ill-considered a noun—more

so if resulting from forced migration. In this case, the expectation is that the social services provided do not extend beyond pity and may include fear of the migrant. It is a limitation that reconsidering migration as a noun rather than a verb does not always identify the migrant as self-directed in their migration, meaning that they are not necessarily related, only contingently.

Regarding the mental health of migrants, it is a limitation that the only study regarding their mental health from the perspective of considering "migrate" regarding an associated noun concerns places. There are no studies about persons, things, events, or ideas. Future research on the mental health of migrants that investigates it from the perspective of these other nouns would be valuable.

Another limitation is the selection of the Lazarus and Folkman coping theory (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984). There are several coping theories (Budimir et al., 2021; Haan, 1969; Menninger, 1954; Stephenson and DeLongis, 2020; Vaillant, 1995). However, there is a consideration of no others. The reason for choosing the Lazarus and Folkman version of coping theory is that these authors have provided good reasons why coping must involve a process that changes with circumstances. This view is in contrast to other coping theories that consider coping trait-based. That migrants can start as self-directed, depending on problem-focused coping, but resulting from disappointments faced in the migration, they need to readjust their coping to emotion-focused is a reason for the choice of the coping theory of Lazarus and Folkman. The Lazarus and Folkman version of coping theory supports, anticipates, and incorporates such coping modification.

Concerning the interpretation of the Lazarus and Folkman coping theory, it is a limitation that the account offered here concerns only two forms of coping—problem-focused and emotion-focused. Several other forms remain unmentioned (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984)—this is not an oversight. This study was to concentrate on the aspects of this coping theory that produce positive mental health in migrants. The finding is that only problem-focused and emotion-focused coping behaviors produce positive mental health in migrants (Poudel-Tandukar et al., 2020). It is for this reason that there was no consideration of other forms.

## 5. Conclusions

Considering migration as a verb, those who migrate lack control of the process. This understanding of the meaning of the term encourages social service providers to pity migrants and possibly fear them. These views decrease the mental health of migrants as a result. If, in contrast, migration is considered a noun, the view of them can be as self-directed in their choice of destination and the social services with which they engage. As such, they can maintain their mental health.

This study has investigated the range of nouns to which (or to whom) people can migrate. In doing so, the identification is that not all nouns produce self-directed behavior. For those that do, problem-focused coping leads migrants to search out appropriate social services—preferably online. With those nouns that result in other-directed behavior, the migrant can maintain positive mental health by initiating emotion-focused coping. It is also the case that a migrant may start with problem-focused coping, only to take up emotion-focused coping if their expectations are unmet

in the migration. For social service providers, the relevant role is to provide reliable and current information regarding the noun in question. This approach contrasts with expressing pity or assuming a fearful attitude toward migrants.

Reconsidering migration from a verb to a noun is novel. Consequently, there is no other research on this topic. Suggested future research would involve having social service providers survey the type of noun that has led an individual to migrate and then adapting the social service offered to that noun. The concentration would be on relevant and well-maintained online services. The further intention would be to (1) investigate if the migrants were self-directed and then to use problem-focused coping, or, if other-directed, rely on emotion-focused coping; and (2) study if with either of these two means of coping the migrant is successful in maintaining positive mental health as earlier research has suggested. With research of this kind, there is the possibility of improving migrant mental health and breaking the current theoretical impasse of migration studies.

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